

A Disappointing Weekend At The Glen For Alex

Isle Of Man racing driver Alex Lloyd completed another round of the Indy Pro series at the historic circuit of Watkins Glen in the AFS racing car on the weekend 2nd-4th June.

It was an extremely successful test day on the Friday, with Alex topping the timesheets in the sessions by a substantial amount. Weather was consistent throughout, dry and reasonably warm. The day finished with Alex setting a new track record of 1min 38.2 secs – over half a second clear of the field - the previous record being 1 min 39.6 secs. This set Alex in a good position for the rest of the weekend.

“Testing went very well,” Alex said. “We were trying a brand new set up – we were really quick out of the box, and made big improvements throughout the day. It was nice to be so dominant, as it really shows that the hard work that every individual within the team has put in over the last few races is really paying off. The track was great, loads of undulations and fast corners. The type of track that any driver loves.”



Alex dominated Friday testing

By the Saturday, weather conditions had changed considerably - it was wet and temperatures had dropped dramatically. With the conditions being so bad, the 1st of the 2 qualifying sessions had to be cancelled as the safety helicopter was unable to take off with the low cloud cover. When qualifying eventually took place the track was still wet. Alex, who has never driven this car in the wet, was on pole position for most of the session, having set a quick lap at the beginning. As the session continued it stopped raining and began to dry out, leaving lap times getting quicker, which in turn meant everybody was frantically trying to put a lap in at the end of the session. Alex unfortunately got held up in some slow traffic and so he missed the opportunity of a clear lap at the end, but he still qualified on the front row in second position.



The start of a very wet race

“The session was a bit of a lottery. With the track drying and so many yellow flags it was very difficult to get a good run. It all came down to the last lap. I really pushed hard but got caught behind some slower traffic – that cost me the pole.”

On Sunday, race day, conditions were constantly changing. Just before the start of the race, it stopped raining and started to clear, so it was unclear as to what set up to use during the race as the track was not completely dry, although there was a dry line forming. Alex and the team decided to go for an intermediate set up. This would mean the start of the race would have to be sacrificed, as some drivers had gone for the full wet set up, but as the track dried out, Alex hoped it would play into his hands.

Sitting on the grid, moments before the green flag waved to start the race, the heavens opened and it started to rain heavier than it had all weekend, but by this time it was too late to change the set up and the race started. Alex was experiencing severe aquaplaning, having several big moments on the straightaways, and lost one position taking him down to third. As the race continued it was clear the set up just wasn't right for the conditions, and the leading two cars eased away. On the 10th lap, visibly skating on the surface of the track, Alex touched the slippery white line on the outside of turn 8 and slid off into the barrier, ending his race on the spot.

"I'm gutted" said a somber Alex afterwards. "It was a gamble with the set up that we chose, and unfortunately with the unpredictable weather conditions it didn't pay off. I was pushing 110% to try and stay with the front 2 but they kept pulling away. As I came into turn 8 I just went in fractionally too hard and that was that. I feel really bad for the team as we really wanted the win, and after our dominant performance on Friday, nothing else was good enough. As disappointing as this is, we can still come away with great positives with our dry performance and the speed we had. We know there is still more to come and I look forward to going for the win at Indy in a few weeks."

Alex's next race is on July 1st on the road course at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway as the support race on the F1 weekend.

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