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NATIONAL AUTO SPORT ASSOCIATION

NASA Midwest Inc.
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Chicago, October 14, 2010, NASA Midwest, Inc.

Factory Five Racers Take 2010 Midwest E1 Enduro Series Championship at Putnam Park

Friday October 8, 2010
Midwest Endurance Series

An exceptionally warm fall day greeted the Factory Five team Warbird Motorsports and its drivers Gregory Wellinghoff Jr. and Brian Sanders for Round 4 of the Midwest Endurance Series Championship. The Warbird Motorsports team arrived with a 45 point lead over their closest competitor and simply needed to complete more than 50% of the race to clinch the E1 championship. Gregory Wellinghoff Jr. took the first stint in the race, with the race plan being to take it easy and ensure the car would last through the first half of the race. You know what they say about best laid plans... The 77 broke third gear on the second lap of the enduro. With third gear gone, Wellinghoff Jr. was able to get the car into fourth gear and the team made the decision to stay out and try to make it as long as they could rather than rush a transmission swap. Wellinghoff Jr. ran the car for two hours and kept it out of trouble to clinch the championship (and second place in class) for the team. Sanders and Wellinghoff Jr. celebrated by replacing the transmission in the 77.

Brian Sanders and Lyle Riggen Claim Series Championships

Saturday October 9, 2010
Great Lakes and Midwest FFR Challenge Series

Excitement was in the air for the final two races of the Great Lakes Series Championship. Even though this was a crossover event and the final races for both the Great Lakes and Midwest Series, Lyle Riggen had already clinched the Midwest Series Championship earlier at Autobahn. In attendance were 2010 Midwest Series Champion Lyle Riggen – 9, 2010 Great Lakes series points leader Brian Sanders -49, Gregg Wellinghoff Sr. – 49, Gregory Wellinghoff Jr. – 77, and Julie Riggen driving Todd Ayers' car -91. Sanders and Wellinghoff Sr. were both in the running for the Great Lakes championship with Sanders holding onto a slim 10 point lead. Wellinghoff Jr. was mathematically unable to catch Sanders, but still hoping to race into a regional second place finish if he could pick up 30 points on Wellinghoff Sr. Lyle Riggen was simply hoping for a couple of wins, while wife Julie was simply shaking down Todd's car. Morning practice was uneventful with Sanders and Wellinghoff Sr. running nose to tail for much of the session. Qualifying saw Sanders on the pole, followed by Wellinghoff Sr., Wellinghoff Jr., and Lyle Riggen. Overheating issues kept Julie Riggen out of qualifying. With the starting grid set, the racers were ready to decide the championship.



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The race started with Wellinghoff Sr. jumping out to an early lead, followed closely by Sanders and then a few car lengths back to Lyle Riggen and Wellinghoff Jr. The overheating issue with Todd Ayers car caused Julie to retire at the start. For nine and a half laps, Wellinghoff Sr and Sanders ran nose to tail. The battle was so close that it is a wonder paint was never traded but Sanders car temperature climbed to 210+. During lap 10, Sanders got the opportunity he was waiting for, as Wellinghoff Sr. overcooked turn 7 and gave up the lead. As the race progressed, Wellinghoff Jr. passed Lyle on lap 12 into third place and caught up to Wellinghoff Sr. and put pressure on him. Wellinghoff Jr. was unable to get around his father and lost third position to Lyle on the last lap while making a last ditch effort to pass his father on the outside of turn 5. The racers would finish with Sanders in first place and a lock on the 2010 Great Lakes Series Championship. Wellinghoff Sr. would finish in second place and lock in second place in the 2010 Great Lakes Series Championship, Lyle Riggen in third, Wellinghoff Jr. in fourth and a lock on third in the Great Lakes Series Championships.

The racers retired to the paddock and congratulated Sanders on his fifth Great Lakes Series Championship. With the championship now decided, the racers were free to simply run for the win in the second race of the day. The long season had apparently taken its toll on the racer's vehicles. As the second race saw Wellinghoff Jr. retire with electrical issues on lap 5 and Sanders lose third gear in his transmission on lap 6. Julie again retired at the start due to heat. In the end, Lyle Riggen edged out Wellinghoff Sr. for the final win of the 2010 season.

Last year, the Great Lakes and Midwest Regions started having their season ending banquet on Saturday night, thus the reason for both points races on Saturday. Sunday would just be a "fun" day with a couple special format races. So some drivers decided to take off and not stick around for Sunday and get an early jump on their winter rebuilds.

However, Brian and Todd did hang around to sort out Todd's overheating issues. Since Brian was down without a 3rd gear, he and Todd scavenged a few parts from his car to put on Todd's and got him out for a couple sessions on Sunday.

Congratulations to all of the racers for a competitive season of hard but clean racing.

-Gregory Wellinghoff - 77

For complete results and a list of lap records, please see www.nasamidwest.com

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