

# Charlie *Kimball*

## A LEARNING WEEKEND FOR KIMBALL AT DONINGTON PARK

Charlie Kimball continued up the learning curve of the World Series by Renault this past weekend, September 7-9, at Donington Park in the U.K. He contested rounds 10 and 11 of the highly competitive championship and although he did not score a point, he made huge strides in understanding the car and the peculiar driving style it requires. His practice pace was consistently in the top 10, but a poor tire choice in qualifying resulted in an 18<sup>th</sup> place grid spot. During the first lap of Race 1, Kimball was hit by Michael Herck and forced to retire. The DNF in Saturday's race meant Kimball had a huge mountain to climb from 29<sup>th</sup> on the grid. He made the most of all the laps on offer, as well as passing opportunities to finish an impressive 13<sup>th</sup>.

While the whole of the World Series field ventured onto the newly resurfaced circuit at Donington for the first free practice, Kimball began to set times that put him consistently in the top 5 times. As the grip improved, he maintained times in the top ten. As the session came to a close, Kimball and the Victory Engineering team tried a set up change which unfortunately did not make the car better while other drivers took advantage of the improving track conditions to go quicker, moving the American down to 14<sup>th</sup>. Kimball's second free practice session was interrupted by an electrical gremlin and his new tire run was delayed until 3 minutes from the end. This meant that without enough laps to get the tires up to optimal operating temperature, Kimball ended the session in 26<sup>th</sup>, even though he was only just over a second off the pace.

During the qualifying session for Race 1, Kimball and his team faced a difficult decision. A red flag came out to interrupt the session exactly halfway through. Even though the new tires were only just coming in, Kimball decided to put his second set of new tires on so that he had the best chance right at the end of the session. However, the new tires were not at their optimum by the last lap and as a result, the 22-year-old only qualified 9<sup>th</sup> in his group, meaning a grid position of 18<sup>th</sup>.

"That was always going to be a tough call to make, especially under the pressure of qualifying," Kimball said. "Most of the pit lane changed to new as well, but our set up takes a little longer to get the best from the tires."

Race 1 was to be a very short affair for Kimball. He made a tremendous start and had moved up at least two positions before the first corner. As he approached the second corner, he set up to make another pass for position, when the driver he was overtaking, Michael Herck, inexplicably moved over into Kimball. The resultant contact pushed Kimball into an innocent Clivio Piccione and meant that all three drivers spun off into the gravel and into retirement from Race 1.

"I have no idea what Herck was thinking," fumed Kimball afterwards. "He ruined two other people's races and basically my whole weekend."

## **Taking the American Dream to Victory Lane**

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With the results from Saturday setting the grid for Sunday, Kimball started 29<sup>th</sup>. He successfully negotiated the first lap and was making up places whenever possible. He had moved up to 17<sup>th</sup> when the Safety Car was called out to clear the wreckage of multiple stranded cars. As the race resumed, there was more chaos and Kimball moved up to 14<sup>th</sup> on the lap of the restart. At the end of that lap, the Safety Car was once again called out to recover crashed cars in dangerous places. For the last five laps of the race, Kimball fought an increasingly deteriorating car set-up and vibration due to degradation and graining of the rear tires. Even though he was fighting a less than ideal car, he still moved up to 13<sup>th</sup> place before the checkered flag fell. He may not have finished in a points scoring position, but he definitely had a race of which to be proud.

“That was a real battle from start to finish,” Kimball enthused. “It is so difficult to pass here, so every single place was a monumental battle. I am pleased with the progress I have made in my driving and confidence in the car.”

Kimball will not have long to wait before he can prove his racing prowess once again as the World Series by Renault travels to France in a weeks time, September 21-23, 2007.

About Charlie Kimball:

Charlie Kimball is a successful young American racing driver forging a career in the highly competitive world of open wheel racing. He has spent the last few years racing in some of the most competitive racing categories in the world including British Formula 3, Formula 3 Euroseries and the World Series by Renault. The 2009 season sees Kimball returning to the United States as he challenges for the title in the Firestone Indy Lights Championship.

For more information, please visit [www.CharlieKimball.com](http://www.CharlieKimball.com), or email [Charlie@CharlieKimball.com](mailto:Charlie@CharlieKimball.com).

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