

Charlie *Kimball*

KIMBALL MAKES THE MOST OF MAGNY-COURS

Charlie Kimball continued to show promise in his World Series by Renault campaign this past weekend at the French circuit of Magny-Cours. Unfortunately, it was another weekend without scoring any Championship points for the young American. The weekend began with a very strong showing in free practice where Kimball was 12th and 11th quickest. However, qualifying once again proved to be a bigger challenge as he could only manage 9th quickest in his group, placing him 17th on the grid for Race 1. After contact with Salvador Duran halfway through a torrentially wet Race 1 Kimball was forced into retirement and as a result, started Race 2 from 22nd. Due to the circuit's nearly non-existent overtaking places, Kimball made up only a few places to 17th position in Race 2. Although the weekend didn't net any points, Kimball's speed in Free Practice demonstrated his understanding of the World Series car and the required driving technique.

The 22-year-old Kimball started the weekend off right, when in the first half an hour of Free Practice 1 he was in the top 3 consistently. As the session drew to a close, Kimball was blocked by traffic and still managed a time that was good enough for 12th position in the session. At the beginning of Free Practice 2, on used tires, Kimball was 6th and consistently lapping in the top 10. When the whole field began to put new tires on, Kimball's run was disrupted by yellow flags, so that when the track was clear, the best of the new tires had gone. Even with the unlucky flags, Kimball still went 11th quickest, setting himself up well for a top 10 qualifying position.

Saturday morning's qualifying was a frustrating affair for Kimball as he couldn't convert Friday's practice pace into a representative grid position. Even though he was nearly a second quicker than Friday's lap time and with .6 of a second of the fastest time, he was placed 9th in his group. His group was the faster of the two qualifying sessions, meaning he would start Race 1 inside of the 9th row in 17th place.

"I still can't believe how close this Championship is!" exclaimed Kimball after Qualifying. "I am closer than ever to the front in laptime, and yet my grid spot is just as far back. We have to sort out qualifying if I am going to start scoring consistent points."

Race 1's conditions on Saturday afternoon couldn't have been more different than the morning Qualifying. While qualifying was clear, cool and dry, Race 1 was held under black clouds and heavy rain. Starting 17th on the grid meant visibility was practically zero as the field departed for the start of the race – Kimball was unable to see more than three feet in front of the nose of his car. He managed to survive the first few laps, even with the visibility problems, and was circulating at good speed. His laptimes were largely limited by the cars ahead of him as he couldn't close in or overtake because of the concentrated spray. After a typically quick and clean pit stop by his Victory Engineering team, Kimball rejoined in 15th place, up two spots from the start. However, as he was getting back up to speed, Salvador Duran went off the road ahead of him and Kimball moved to the inside to take the position. As the Mexican driver rejoined the circuit (and partially due to the difficult conditions and limited visibility), he turned in on Kimball, eliminating both drivers on the spot.

Taking the American Dream to Victory Lane

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“I couldn’t believe how little I could see on the first few laps,” said Kimball. “I was using the white line at the edge of the track as a guide so I didn’t go off and was having to lift down the straights as I couldn’t see the corner approaching!”

Race 2 for Kimball was to be a largely boring race as after the first two laps, progress was impossible due to the layout of the circuit. He moved up from his 22nd grid spot to 19th on the first lap and picked up more positions as other drivers eliminated themselves, moving him up to 17th. Even though he could easily have run faster than the cars ahead of him, legitimate passing opportunities never presented themselves and so Kimball finished in 17th, a far cry from where his speed should have placed him.

“It has been another significantly frustrating weekend,” Kimball said in retrospect. “I definitely had top-10 pace and yet I come away with no points. I am sure when we get qualifying right, I will be at the front and fighting for podiums.”

Kimball will now train and continue to work with A1 Team USA in the A1GP Championship for three weeks before returning to the World Series car October 18-21, at the Portuguese circuit of Estoril.

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, or email Charlie@CharlieKimball.com.

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