

# Charlie *Kimball*

## SUCCESS FROM A STRUGGLE IN GERMANY FOR KIMBALL

Charlie Kimball continued his progress in the 2007 World Series by Renault championship this past weekend, May 4-6 at the Nurburging circuit in Germany. Kimball's whole race weekend was hampered by a very severe handling problem that wasn't cured until Race 2. This meant that the American racer could only manage a qualifying position of 17<sup>th</sup> and finished Race 1 in 16<sup>th</sup> place. However with a much more sorted car, Kimball made the most of Race 2 and scored another 3 valuable championship points with an 8<sup>th</sup> place finish. More important than the result and the championship points, Kimball and his team made great strides in improving the car and gathered valuable information about how the Dallara World Series car reacts to set-up changes.

Kimball's weekend started with problems when a severe under-steer affected his free practice lap times and resulted in the 17<sup>th</sup> fastest lap time, unrepresentative of both team and driver's potential. Despite making some set-up changes overnight for qualifying, the car was not significantly improved and Kimball's disappointing weekend continued. His problem with the handling of the car resulted in his being 9<sup>th</sup> in his qualifying group, meaning he would start Race 1 from 17<sup>th</sup>.

"At least the results are consistent, even if they are disappointing," joked Kimball after qualifying. "An under steer this severe is a completely new problem this year and my engineer, Paul Wallace, and I have yet to reason out what the exact solution is. However, I do have the advantage of a pitstop in Race 1 to move forward."

Race 1 for Kimball proved to be as difficult as the rest of the weekend and included some added issues alongside the car's handling problems. The 22-year-old made a very good start and had made up a few places by the first corner. His hard work was undone when chaos was unleashed with the second place car of Mikhael Aleshin being tipped into a spin. Kimball's good start and forward progress was reversed as he had to take avoiding action. He finished the first lap in 16<sup>th</sup>, but was confident that his pitstop strategy would allow him to leapfrog up the field. However, all the pit stop practice in the world could not prepare Kimball for the Pons racing car of Molina being released into his path in the pit lane. Being forced to take avoiding action to enter his pit box cost Kimball as many as 10 seconds and innumerable places. Still Kimball kept a level head and tried to take advantage of every lap possible to learn as much about the continuing handling problems. With passing being very limited Kimball finished in 16<sup>th</sup>. After Alvaro Parente was awarded a penalty for starting the first corner melee, Kimball would start Sunday's Race 2 in 15<sup>th</sup>, quite a ways from the points of the top-10.

"The pit stop wasn't supposed to happen like that!" exclaimed Kimball. "We practiced coming into the box and exiting, but never with a car coming out of his box nearly into the side of me. At least I survived and we get another shot at curing this under steer tomorrow."

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

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After implementing 6 set-up changes, one of them on the gird, Victory Engineering and Kimball were able to solve the under steer problem! In Race 2 Kimball made the most of the start and the first lap to move from 15<sup>th</sup> on the grid to 10<sup>th</sup>. As with the first race, passing was extremely difficult due to the circuit layout, but not impossible as Kimball passed Daniil Move for ninth on lap 3. Then with 18 laps to go in the 23 lap race, Kimball got caught up behind the slower car of Yelmer Buurman. The speed differential wasn't large enough for Kimball to make a serious passing attempt right away. The Californian bided his time and then after spending 14 laps behind the Dutchman, Kimball capitalized on a large mistake by Buurman to take 8<sup>th</sup> place. Within a lap, Kimball had stretched the gap over Buurman to over a second and began to close on the group of cars ahead. However, the checkered flag fell before Kimball could mount a challenge for 7<sup>th</sup>. Still, it was a great result considering his starting position and the problems faced during the weekend.

Kimball said after the race, "For the first time this weekend, I could trust the car to turn. I made the most of other people's mistakes and took positions when I could, but more importantly we learned a lot about the car and make significant steps in the right direction."

Kimball's next race will introduce yet another challenge as he will tackle the famous Monte-Carlo street circuit as a support race to the Formula 1 Grand Prix of Monaco, May 24-27, 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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