



Tagliani Scores Conquest Racing's Best IndyCar Series Start of the Season

- Canadian Tagliani to start seventh with Camara 20th on the grid -

Surfers Paradise, Australia (October 25, 2008) – Conquest Racing scored its best IndyCar Series start of the season today, with a seventh place by Alex Tagliani during qualifying for the Nikon Indy 300. Tagliani's teammate, Camara, despite showing much improvement from his last street course, will be starting 20th.

Segment 1 of qualifying got underway at the same time as the rain started falling on the streets of Surfers Paradise. And even if the conditions became very slippery quickly, Tagliani showed his competitiveness with a second place in his group. The position meant he would move on to Segment 2.

Teammate Jaime Camara was not as fortunate in Group two. The driver of the #34 car was on his way to recording a fast lap but a yellow flag came out at the inopportune moment and hampered his effort. The rookie Brazilian will be starting tomorrow's race in 20th place, his best road or street course qualifying of the season.

Once Segment 2 got underway, the track was quickly drying and after only a couple of laps on Firestone rain tires, Tagliani, like his fellow competitors, headed to the pits for a set of Firestone Firehawk slicks. Tagliani was sitting in fifth place when a yellow flag flew with six minutes to go.

Things were looking good for the Canadian, but with only three minutes left in the session when it returned to green, Tagliani was caught out by his pit position as he was unable to cross the scoring line in time to do a second timed lap that would have placed him in the top six. Tagliani was sitting fourth when three cars that were able to get an extra timed lap in bumped him out of the Firestone Fast Six and into seventh.

The Nikon Indy 300 takes place tomorrow, October 26 and will be televised live on ESPN Classic Saturday, October 25 at 10:30 pm eastern time. The race will also be rebroadcast on ESPN Sunday, October 26 at 11:00 pm eastern.

QUOTEBOARD

7th - Alex Tagliani, #36 Conquest Racing Dallara/Honda/Firestone

"I think we showed that Conquest Racing is a very competitive team. I also think we deserved a lot better than P7. We had a car that could easily be in the top four this afternoon. We definitely should have been in the top six in qualifying. Our position in the pits, being at the end of pit lane, hurt us quite a bit. It made qualifying pretty difficult because we were quick, but other guys in front of us were able to get out of the pit earlier and were able to complete one extra lap. Throughout qualifying, we were consistently at the top and looking good to move on to Segment 3 but unfortunately guys that did extra laps got us. The team has worked really hard and done a great job. We're confident for the race tomorrow. We feel that we have a car that can compete with the guys in front of us. Starting seventh is not a bad spot, we just have to stay out of trouble and do our best."

20th - Jaime Camara, #34 Sangari Dallara/Honda/Firestone



"Qualifying was alright. The rain stopped and the track dried a little bit so it was getting better and better. Unfortunately the yellow flag that came out near the end didn't help me at all. I had a good momentum going and was on a good lap when it came out. Then when the track went green again, I only had one lap so I had to push real hard but in the end it wasn't good enough. Now we'll just focus on the race tomorrow."

Eric Bachelart, Conquest Racing Team Owner

"We were expecting to be competitive here in Surfers Paradise and our seventh place starting position does not reflect entirely our potential. Tag has done a very good job and it's a shame that our pit position prevented us to do that extra lap that would have put us in Q3 and in the top 6.

"We are working very well together and in just a few races we have progressed well towards the front of the grid. Jaime has done a good job as well but he was a bit short on his last qualifying lap. This is not an easy track and we should keep in mind that he has very limited experience on this kind of track."