



Wheldon Climbs Up the Grid to Finish 10th in Surfers Paradise *Panther's Newest Pilot Jumps Several Spots Late in Race to Collect Top Ten Result*

SURFERS PARADISE, Australia – (October 26, 2008) – Panther Racing and newly signed driver Dan Wheldon overcame an 18th-place starting position, and a moment in the race where the No. 4 car was parked on the track, to bring home a Top Ten finish in the Nikon Indy 300 at Surfers Paradise, Australia.

Wheldon finished in the 10th position, after moving past two competitors on the final lap of the race. The 2005 IndyCar Series champion also beat fellow Brit Justin Wilson to the finish line by just three one-hundredths of a second, or a few feet on the racetrack.

A braking problem in the first practice session of the weekend set Wheldon and his Panther crew back, as both the driver and team had no experience on the 12-turn, 2.795-mile street circuit. Once the car's setup was heading in the right direction, a rain shower during Saturday's qualifications made conditions extremely difficult for all competitors in the series.

The team started 18th in the Delphi National Guard car, and Wheldon moved up four positions on the first lap of the event. An alternate fuel strategy had the No. 4 moving quickly up the grid, but Wheldon was nearly caught up in an incident on Lap 21 when the cars of E.J. Viso and Graham Rahal made contact in Turn Eight. Wheldon avoided contact with the two competitors, but his car was stopped on the track in a position where he needed assistance to continue, and several cars were able to pass the No. 4 under the yellow.

Wheldon rebounded late in the race with quick pit stops from his Panther team, and was able to climb into the Top Ten as the checkered flag waved.

The event was an exhibition non-points paying race and marks the conclusion of the 2008 IndyCar Series season. Officially, Panther finished 13th in the championship with former driver Vitor Meira and Wheldon concluded the year ranked fourth in the points with



Ganassi Racing. He also won races at Iowa and Kansas Speedway, marking the fifth consecutive season he has won at least two races.

The former Indianapolis 500 winner is set to lead Panther's IndyCar Series effort in 2009 behind the wheel of the No. 4 entry and the team has already announced drivers Martin Plowman and Pippa Mann will drive in the developmental Firestone Indy Lights for the team next season.

Dan Wheldon, No. 4 Delphi National Guard Honda Dallara:

"Obviously we're happy to be able to leave here with a Top Ten result. This weekend for myself and the Panther crew was a very tough baptism. The Australia track is a difficult one for people who have never been here before. We pretty much lost the first three practice sessions with a few little problems that put us on our back foot for a good part of the weekend. But the Delphi National Guard crew is in good place because now we know what we need to work on together throughout the off-season and we're in a much better position now as a team than we would have been if we hadn't been able to run here."

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