

Practice Report

Nikon Indy 300

Surfers Paradise, Queensland, Australia

October 24, 2008

RYAN HUNTER-REAY AND RLR STAND EIGHTH AFTER OPENING DAY OF AUSSIE INDYCAR PRACTICE

SURFERS PARADISE, Australia - Ryan Hunter-Reay (#17 Ethanol Dallara/Honda/Firestone) had been away from the streets of Surfers Paradise for nearly three full years, but the Floridian didn't need long to get reacquainted with the challenging Gold Coast circuit.

The winner on this same 2.795-mile street course just five years ago, Hunter-Reay finished his day in the eighth spot on the speed sheets, logging a fastest lap of 1:36.8863 (103.854 mph) in the Rahal Letterman Racing Ethanol-sponsored machine as practice opened for this weekend's Nikon Indy 300.

Hunter-Reay needed just five laps of the afternoon session to turn his best time of the day, and ended up splitting his total of 34 practice laps evenly between his morning and afternoon session, logging seventeen trips around the challenging Surfers Paradise street circuit in each outing.

"We have pretty high expectations for the rest of the weekend after today," said Hunter-Reay, whose fastest



lap had him at the top of the time charts for the first half of the day's final session. "The guys did a good job making the right changes on the car and I was able to go out and figure a couple of things out and we were going pretty good."

Hunter-Reay's best time was in the top three for much of the final session, but he dropped down to eighth among a final flurry of speed that saw most of the 24-car field trying to make simulated qualifying runs while dodging yellow-flag stoppages brought out late in the run by Anthony Foyt IV and Townsend Bell.

"We didn't really get to make the run we wanted on good (fresh) tires at the end of the session, so I don't think P8 is indicative of where we will be," Hunter-Reay relayed. "The competition level here is really ramped up, especially with a couple of the newer guys added in (Dario Franchitti, Alex Tagliani), so just getting into the second round of qualifying tomorrow will be an accomplishment - but I think our goal is to get into the Firestone Fast Six and see what happens from there."

The Ethanol machine will have another 30 minutes of practice session to prepare for tomorrow's Firestone Fast Six qualifying session. The field is split in half for the first phase of qualifying, while the top six in each session move on to a second outing. The top six out of that dozen drivers moves into the Firestone Fast Six, where times are erased and the six pilots have 10 minutes to post a polewinning time. Hunter-Reay is looking to get into the Firestone Fast Six in the first time that the format has been used at the Surfers Paradise circuit.

Local hero Will Power has atop the charts after the first day of practice, hanging up a best effort of 1:34.8084 (106.130 mph) to lead the way.

The Ethanol machine will be on track Saturday morning for a 30-minute practice beginning at 7:50 p.m., Eastern Time (Friday night) leading into Firestone Fast Six qualifying at 11:30 p.m.. Sunday's race can be seen live on ESPN Classic, starting at 10:30 p.m. Eastern Time on Saturday night, October 25.