



Westphal Powers to Pacific F2000 Double at Willow Springs



Rosamond, Calif. (April 6, 2008) - Rosamond, Calif. (April 6, 2008) - Jeff Westphal had a point to prove when the Pacific F2000 Championship Presented by Hankook Tires visited historic Willow Springs International Raceway this weekend.

After an electrical gremlin robbed him of a potential clean sweep in the season opener at Auto Club Speedway last month, the 21-year-old from San Carlos, Calif, bounced back to score a maximum 68 points - two poles, two race wins and two fastest race laps - in rounds three and four.

"We had a strong car right off the truck and just put our heads down and went session to session," related Westphal modestly, "and fortunately we came out on top."



Westphal posted a new lap record in qualifying on Saturday, at an average speed of 115.045mph. His #39 Cacci Construction/TNT Demolition/PR1 Motorsports Van Diemen was never headed during the 17-lap race.

Robert Podlesni, from Thousand Oaks, Calif., qualified the #84 Terminal Velocity/Alpinestars/Dave Freitas Racing Van Diemen less than a tenth of a second slower and again couldn't quite match Westphal's pace on Saturday afternoon. The 2006 series champion had to be content with finishing second, almost five seconds adrift.

Shaun Modisette, from Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif., finished an unchallenged third in the #26 Carson Trailer Van Diemen, followed by PR1 Motorsports teammates Nicky Freytag, from Paradise Valley, Ariz., and Max Hyatt, from Sante Fe, N.M. Hyatt did well to battle through from 12th on the grid after experiencing a brake master cylinder failure in qualifying.

Peter Hansel, from Huntington Beach, Calif., won the Experts (over 35) class with a strong sixth-place finish aboard the #65 GS610 Maximum Performance Brakes/Comar Performance Van Diemen.

Chuck Hulse, from Yorba Linda, Calif., claimed Masters honors (over 51), finishing seventh in the #21 Silicon Salvage/DFR Van Diemen.

Strong winds made life difficult for the drivers on Sunday but nothing could deflect Westphal, who once again showed a clean rear wing to his pursuers en route to a 9.374-second victory.

"It was a good weekend to recoup some points from the first race of the season when the car failed to start," said Westphal. Indeed, Westphal's pair of wins have catapulted him into the championship lead. He now holds a slender five-point advantage, 106 to 101, over Podlesni, who once again took runner-up honors.

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“We didn’t come here to finish second,” said Podlesni, “but sometimes you just have to take what the car gives you. That was the case for us this weekend.”

Freytag, the youngest driver in the field at just 16, produced another polished performance to earn his second-ever podium finish. The result enabled him to draw level on points with Modisette, who survived an off-course excursion while chasing Podlesni and had to settle for 10th after a precautionary visit to the pits.

One of the best performances of the weekend came from perennial hard-worker Nick Kodenko. The Fresno State undergraduate doesn’t have the benefit of a full-time crew or a fancy transporter. He prepares the race car himself, with help from his father, Paul, and travels to the races in a 1983 truck, towing his race car on an open trailer. Despite the humble approach, Kodenko drove a heady race and was rewarded with a magnificent fourth-place finish.

“The day of my life,” declared a justifiably delighted Kodenko. “It was amazing. I think the key was to come in early during qualifying to save the tires for the race. I think it was a good strategy and it really paid off.”

Kodenko made a series of impressive passes, including one on the final lap when he took advantage of a slight slip by Masters winner Peter Hastrup at the final corner and won the drag race to the finish line by a scant 0.18 seconds! Hulse also was a part of the action, finishing just a half-second back in sixth.

“We should have been fourth,” lamented Hastrup, from Madera, Calif. “I messed up in Turn Nine and Nick just got me. But we were competitive, so that’s what matters. We struggled [in testing] on Friday but my crew chief, Jason Byal, and the Dave Freitas Racing team just did a great job to get us back up to speed. It was fun.”

Hansel again won the Expert category, finishing seventh, despite a couple of “offs” in the early stages.

**Next races: Rounds 5 & 6
Buttonwillow Raceway, Bakersfield, Calif., May 3/4.**