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TUESDAY JULY 9, 2002

Local CASCAR veteran takes third at Indy

By STEVE LeBLANC

The Champion

Campbellville's Robin Buck now has some company in an elite Molson Indy fraternity.

The CASCAR veteran went into Saturday's Castrol Super Series event as the only two-time winner in Toronto. Unfortunately, hopes of prolonging that — as well as defending last summer's title — were vanquished at the tail-end of the 36-lap race.

Armed with a rented engine in his #15 Pontiac Grand Prix, Buck led pretty much the entire way but had used up his tires a little too much in holding off the pack. This, plus a late caution, allowed Edmonton's Kevin Dowler to complete his back-to-front triumph and become only the second stock car racer to win more than once at the Indy.

Buck and Concord's Joe Goncalvas battled for second spot over the last two laps, with the local driver going wide on the final turn and having to settle for third.

"I just didn't have enough tires or brakes left at the end to hold them off, and they got me on a restart," said Buck, who first won the Toronto Indy in 1999 and did so again last year. "I had a five-second lead with five laps to go and had it not been for that caution, I don't think he (Dowler) would have caught me."

A tough finish aside, Buck's Toronto Molson Indy performance has to be considered a success.

Backed by a pit crew led by Miltonian Al Haringa Jr., the NAPA Auto Parts sponsored racer grabbed the pole position earlier in the day with a track record time of 1:19.041 — which eclipsed the previous benchmark that he set in 2001.

And Saturday afternoon's third-place finish was by far his best effort of the year, which until then had not included a top-10 showing.

Explained Buck, "We've been suffering a ton of engine problems this season. Power wise, we've just not been competitive."

That is, until Saturday.

"Oh yeah — reaching the podium is very positive, very encouraging. Hopefully this'll be a turning point."

Meanwhile, Milton's Rob Neely moved up more than a dozen spots from his qualifying placement to finish 19th in his #97 Intrepid. Like Buck, Neely enjoyed his best showing of the year in Toronto Saturday.

Taking 23rd and 24th respectively were fellow Miltonians Scott Watkins and Howie Scannell Jr.

— With files from CASCAR



Photos by GRAHAM PAINE

Campbellville's Robin Buck (above and inset) raced his #15 Pontiac Grand Prix to third-place honours in Toronto Saturday afternoon.

Mavericks dumped in first round opener

By STEVE LeBLANC

The Champion

The Jr. B Mavericks' return to playoff action was met with anything but hospitality in Elora Sunday.

Milton qualified for the post-season in its first year back — following a two-year hiatus — but appears to be headed for a speedy exit, if game one with the powerhouse Mohawks is any indication.

Glen Little's charges knew they'd be facing a towering task against Founder's Cup contender

Elora, and Sunday night's best-of-five series opener only solidified that realization.

The Mohawks struck twice before the game was a minute old and enjoyed an embarrassment of riches for the balance of the contest en route to dismantling Milton 21-4.

Paul Pedulla scored a hat-trick for the underdogs, while also denting the twine and picking up an assist was captain Kyle Hagel. Single helpers went to Derek Blanchard, Matt Decaire, Kyle Goertz, Chad Henry, Bobby MacDonald and Drew Petkoff.

Jordan Lumb saw the lion's share of netminding work after replacing Adam Elias late in the first period.

Elora's Jamie Rooney led the hit parade with five goals and four assists. Close behind with a pair of goals and six helpers was Danny Booker.

Milton hosts game two tonight at John Tonelli Sports Centre. Game time is 9 p.m. Game three is set for tomorrow at 8 p.m. in Elora. If necessary, games four and five will be played Thursday in Milton and Saturday in Elora respectively.

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