

No luck for Justin at Mosport

Justin entered round 9 of the 2010 Playboy MX-5 cup championship with a slim points lead in the championship. He knew that Mosport, outside Toronto Canada, was a high speed track with not much room for error and little room for off track excursions. Given his performance in the prior 8 races, no finish worse than 4th, he also knew that he had "insurance" as his finish in any of the remaining races in the season series could be no less than 4th (the rules allow the drop of a competitors worse finish)... as long as he had a strong showing at Mosport. So the strategy was set... finish high enough to maintain his points lead, fight hard for the win, but keep his insurance in reserve.

The track proved difficult... from test days through practice.... Justin was fighting for better times and trying to learn the difficult race track. He worked hard with his crew and engineers to get the right setup for the track. In qualifying, he had his best time of the weekend, but he could finish no better than 6th... .7 secs off of his teammate's Nick Evans pace. The good news for team MER and Justin was that 4 of the top 6 positions were held by MER. So he would have a lot of friends around him.

Conditions on race day were perfect, and the track would be fast since Playboy followed ALMS practice. Justin had a good start and moved immediately into 5th place .. by the time he finished his first lap he was up to 4th place and was driving with a purpose.... by the end of lap 2 he was in 3rd place, showing faster times than anyone else on the track... in lap 3, coming into the last turn at Mosport, Justin made a pass for P2, gained the position and entered the last right hander tucked in behind his teammate, Nick Evans, the race leader. Then all hell broke loose... Justin was hit from behind by the opponent whom he had just passed, was put into the wall and his car was severely damaged. He limped into pit lane, with the hope that the crew could get his car underway and at best hope for a full course yellow which would get him back on the lead lap, or at minimum finish at least half of the required laps to garner some points in the championship. The crew through a yeoman effort got the car underway but it was too severely damaged with practically no steering capabilities, Justin limped around the track and showing the pride and passion that he is known for finished the race, albeit 8 laps behind the leaders. The crowd gave him a standing ovation for his efforts.

It was the best of times... observers say it was the best race Justin had run all year, Justin moved flawlessly through the pack, and after the unfortunate incident, showed his sportsmanship and temerity by completing the race in a severely damaged car without interfering with the lead pack...

It was the worst of times.... Justin finished last, his worst showing ever in his racing career; his car was severely damaged and may not be available for the final race weekend; he fell out of first place in the championship points, AND he used his insurance.

The car that forced him into the wall, a teammate of the now championship points leader, was fined and placed on 2 race probation.

Round 10 and 11 of the Playboy MX-5 cup series moves to Salt Lake City Utah on Sept 11 and 12. You can follow all of the action on www.mx-5cup.com.

You can follow Justin's career at www.justinpiscitellracing.com