

NEWS JOURNAL

MANSFIELD, OH
THURSDAY 40,000
JUN 8 2000



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CART comes calling at Mid-Ohio course

By Rob McCurdy 38391717
News Journal

LEXINGTON — Paul Tracy is feeling KOOL this week — as he should.

Six races into the 20-race season, the veteran driver leads the CART FedEx Championship Series points list.

"It's a nice situation to be in," the Team KOOL Green racer said. "We've had a pretty good season so far. The last couple of weeks haven't gone so well, but that's the way things go."

Wednesday and today all the CART teams were in Lexington testing their cars and getting them fitted for the second part of the year which is dominated by the twists and turns like those found at the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course.

Fittingly, the season's also had its share of twists and turns, even while competing on five ovals to start. Some of the storylines

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entering the summer months include:

■ CART hasn't been this deep into a year without a multiple winner since 1991;

■ Poor weather delayed races an unprecedented three times in Pennsylvania (snow), Japan (rain) and Wisconsin (rain);

■ Ford, which was the preseason pick to be the dominant engine, has been solid, but not overpowering in winning three races;

■ Defending champion Juan Montoya gave Toyota its first CART victory in five years and 78 races, but it didn't come until Monday afternoon of the rain-delayed Miller Lite 225 at The Milwaukee Mile;

■ Roger Penske's team finally found the winner's circle and won his elusive 100th CART race with Gil de Ferran in the cockpit, Marlboro's first victory since 1997;

■ Tracy holds a 59-52 advantage over

Roberto Moreno in the points chase, despite running mostly ovals so far.

"It's a good feeling," Tracy said of his lead. "We didn't have a great car the first three races, and we had one win and two podium finishes. Those are the times you have to relish."

Tracy admitted Team KOOL Green has trouble on oval tracks which makes his early lead even more special. His lone win came on the street course at Long Beach, one of his fortes.

"To be leading is a bonus," Tracy said. "We're going to do the best we can now that we're leading the championship and entering the part of the year where we usually do well."

However, Tracy isn't the only driver feeling good about the season. Everyone's optimistic in this year's wide-open version of

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