

FORD RACING CART PREVIEW – Round Three

Firestone Firehawk 600 – Texas Motor Speedway – Fort Worth, Texas

WHEN: April 29, 2001

TRACK LAYOUT: 1.5-mile oval

RACE DISTANCE: TBD

TELEVISION COVERAGE (ET): ESPN; 3:00 PM (live)

DEFENDING CHAMPION: inaugural event

DEFENDING POLESITTER: inaugural event

2001 DRIVER POINTS (2 races): Cristiano da Matta (37), Gil de Ferran (30), Helio Castroneves (27), Paul Tracy (26), Jimmy Vasser (18)

2001 MANUFACTURER POINTS (2 races): Honda (38), Toyota (37), Ford-Cosworth (14), Ilmor-Phoenix (0)

DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEXAS – Ford-Cosworth heads to the Texas Motor Speedway (TMS) for the third CART race of the 2001 season with the inaugural Firestone Firehawk 600. The event marks the first of four consecutive races on oval tracks as the Champ Cars make their first-ever appearance on the banked 1.5-mile circuit. Although Kenny Brack managed a second straight front row qualifying effort at Long Beach three weeks ago, Ford-Cosworth looks to rebound from an otherwise disappointing result as just one Ford-powered driver managed a top 10 finish (Bryan Herta – 10th).

FORD-COSWORTH EXPERIENCES SUCCESS ON OVALS – Ford-Cosworth has been very successful in the last 10 CART races held on oval tracks. Ford-Cosworth had at least one driver appear on the podium in each of the last 10 oval races dating back to Fontana in 1999, scoring five victories (twice at Fontana, Motegi, Rio and Homestead), seven runner-up finishes (twice at Fontana, Gateway, Chicago, Michigan, Milwaukee and Homestead) and five third-place results (Gateway, Milwaukee, Nazareth, Motegi and '99 at Fontana).

DALE COYNE TO MISS TEXAS – Dale Coyne Racing has withdrawn its two entries for this weekend's Firestone Firehawk 600, ending the team's streak of 177 straight CART appearances. Although owner Dale Coyne indicated that he hoped to return to the series in the near future, he cited a difficulty in finding financial support for his two cars driven by Luiz Garcia, Jr. and Michael Krumm.

KENNY BRACK MAKES HIS RETURN TO TMS – Team Rahal's Kenny Brack is the only current FedEx Championship Series driver who has had any previous experience racing on the high-banks of the Texas Motor Speedway. Brack raced five times at TMS between 1997 and 1999 with the Indy Racing League, posting a top qualifying effort of 3rd in 1997, and top finishes of 3rd and 5th in 1998.

FORD-COSWORTH STILL SEARCHING FOR ITS FIRST VICTORY – Heading into the third race of the season, Ford-Cosworth is still in search of its first victory. This season marks the first time since 1996 that Ford-Cosworth has not won one of the first two races on the CART schedule, and just the second time it has happened since Ford re-entered the series nine years ago (1992).

FORD FAVORITES AT TEXAS MOTOR SPEEDWAY – Although there are several drivers capable of winning a race in the FedEx Championship Series, Ford-Cosworth drivers Kenny Brack, Max Papis and Patrick Carpentier each stand a strong chance of sipping champagne this weekend. Here's a quick look at each of these drivers and why they should be considered favorites:

Kenny Brack – Has qualified first and second in each of the first two races this season, posting a fifth-place finish in Mexico. Brack posted four top-five finishes on ovals last season, highlighted by a third-place result at Nazareth, and is the only current CART driver to have raced at the Texas Motor Speedway. The Swedish driver raced five times at TMS from 1997 to 1999 with the Indy Racing League where he posted top finishes of 3rd and 5th in 1998 (18th in 1997, 13th and 16th in 1999).

Max Papis – Posted five top-five finishes on oval tracks during the 2000 campaign, highlighted by his first CART victory in the season-opening race at the Homestead Motor Speedway. Papis was running among the top 10 competitors at both Michigan and Fontana last season before mechanical problems forced him to retire early. Papis scored his only CART pole position at Chicago in 1999, and has recorded two of his four career-best finishes on oval tracks (1st – Homestead '00, 2nd – Fontana '99).

Patrick Carpentier – Has been a strong oval track driver throughout his four-year Champ Car career with four of his five career best results coming on ovals (Gateway twice, Milwaukee and Michigan). In addition to scoring top-five finishes last season at Homestead (5th), Milwaukee (3rd), Michigan (4th) and Gateway (2nd), both of Carpentier's two career pole positions (Nazareth and Milwaukee in '98) and his best career finish (second at Gateway in '97 and '00) have come on oval circuits.

I DEMAND A RECOUNT! – Following a recount of its wins, it has been determined that Cosworth Racing has scored 205 victories in USAC- and CART-sanctioned races since entering North American open-wheeled racing in 1976. Cosworth has won 159 CART-sanctioned races and 46 USAC-sanctioned races, including five victories in 1996 with the Ford-Cosworth XB engine in the inaugural season of the Racing League (IRL) (was sanctioned by USAC). Michael Andretti has won the most races using a Cosworth Racing engine (25), followed by Rick Mears (20), Bobby Rahal (18), Mario Andretti (16) and Johnny Rutherford (916).

SPARK PLUGS – Bryan Herta is Ford-Cosworth's most experienced CART driver this season with 102 career Champ Car starts ... four of Patrick Carpentier's five best CART results have come on oval tracks (Gateway twice, Milwaukee and Michigan) ... Bryan Herta's last oval track podium appearance (second) came in 1996 at Michigan ... drivers with Ford power have won six of the last seven CART races on 1.5-mile ovals dating back to 1997 ... Oriol Servia's best career finish on an oval was fifth at Gateway last season ... Michel Jourdain's best career start (5th) came at the California Speedway in 1997.