

Friday, August 14, 2015

Francis Jr., Wolfe and Schwartz Win in Round 10 at Mid-Ohio

Written by Series Staff



LEXINGTON, Ohio -- Ernie Francis Jr., of Davie, Fla., scored his third Pirelli World Challenge TC win of the 2015 season in Round 10 at the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course, part of the OPTIMA Batteries Grand Prix presented by MOMO. Jason Wolfe, of Mount Vernon, Ohio scored his second TCA win of the season, while Johan Schwartz, of Huntersville N.C. won his sixth TCB race of 2015.

From the rolling start, polesitter Corey Fergus, of Columbus, Ohio in the No. 00 USLED/Axis Roofing/AERO/RSS/Motul Motorsports Promotions Porsche Cayman took the lead over second-on-the-grid Vesko Kozarov, of Salt Lake City, Utah, in the No. 3 Skullcandy Team Nissan Altima and third-on-the-grid Jeff Altenburg, of Ellicott City, Md. in the No. 15 HPA Motorsports VW Jetta GLI. Francis Jr., in the No. 98 Breathless Racing/Time4Learning Mazda MX-5 started 6th.

In TCA, polesitter Wolfe, in the No. 36 Wolfe Trucking Kinetic Motorsports Kia Forte Koup took the lead over Toby Grahovec, of Little Elm, Texas in the No. 24 Classic BMW Motorsports BMW Z4 and Patrick Seguin, of Ottawa, Ont. in the No. 39 helpkevinproject.com Team Ost Racing Honda Civic SI. Grahovec, who started third, passed Seguin on the opening lap of the race to slot in behind Wolfe.

In TCB, Glenn Nixon, of Mission, B.C., in the No. 58 LaptopScreen.com/ClubRacing.com/Nixon Prosports/HPD Racing.ca Honda Fit moved into first with P.J. Groenke, of Toronto, Ont. in the No. 8 Verax.ca/Tundra/Mulligan Gold/Clairhaven Ltd/Clorox Pool&Spa/Martinrea International Inc/Pelto Agri Investments/Warp Speed Computers Inc. MINI Cooper in second and championship points leader Schwartz, in the No. 25 Tech Sport Racing/ZERO Cancer/CAS Group Chevy Sonic in third. Of note, TCB polesitter Kevin Boehm, of Marysville, Ohio, in the No. 90 Honda Performance Development Honda Fit started from the back of the grid as the team is testing the 2015 Honda Fit B-Spec kit and not running for points this weekend.

Through lap 2, Nixon and Schwartz went side-by-side across the start/finish line and up through the turn 2 keyhole, with the driver of the No. 58 Honda Fit holding off the challenge to maintain the lead. But on lap 3 Schwartz completed the pass, moving Nixon into second with Tom O'Gorman, of Mason, Ohio, in the No. 94 Black Armor Helmets/Full Throttle Indoor Karting/SCCA Track Night In America/Kutney Motorsports/HPD Honda Fit into third.

Through lap 4 in TC, Fergus still led Kozarov and Altenburg, with Alex Welch, of Englewood, Colo., in the No. 16 HPA Motorsports VW Jetta GLI in fourth, and Francis Jr. into fifth.

In TCA, Wolfe still led Grahovec and Seguin, with class points leader Tony Rivera, of Vista, Calif., in the No. 86 Tiburon Motorsports Brass Monkey Racing Scion FR-S in fourth.

Through lap traffic on lap 6, Kozarov moved into the TC lead over Altenburg and Fergus, who through the three-way battle, dropped

back to third. In TCB, Schwartz gapped Nixon by over a second through lap 8

On lap 9, Kozarov and Altenburg made contact battling through turn 5 allowing Fergus to jump into the lead. Kozarov came into pits after the contact and did not rejoin the race.

Through lap 15, Fergus maintained his lead over Altenburg with Francis Jr. now in third. Wolfe still led in TCA over Grahovec and Seguin, with Schwartz still leading Nixon, while Boehm had come through the TCB pack to move into third.

By lap 14, Francis Jr. began pressuring Altenburg for second, while Fergus built a 1.176 second lead over the Altenburg.

Then on lap 18, Francis Jr. and Altenburg went side-by-side through 10, with the driver of the No. 98 car completing the pass for second. Altenburg slowed slightly battling with Francis Jr. and John Weisberg, of Webster, N.Y., in the No. 50 REDCOM Laboratories/Red Line Berg Racing Mazda MX-5 passed and moved up to pressure Francis Jr. Weisberg then moved up to second with a great pass through the carousel on Francis Jr., only to be repassed by the driver of the No. 98 machine through lap 19.

Francis Jr. then set his sights on catching Fergus and through lap traffic on lap 23 passed the driver of the 00 machine for the lead.

As the checkered flew, Francis Jr. won over Fergus and Weisberg. In TCA, Wolfe was never challenged and went flag to flag for the win, with Grahovec and Seguin in second and third respectively. In TCB, Schwartz took the win over Nixon and Boehm.

Of note, TC points leader Adam Poland, of Mount Vernon, Texas, in the No. 33 EASTEX Motorsports Mazda MX-5 started the day 5th on the grid ultimately finishing 8th after he was given a drive through penalty for contact early in the race with Cory Friedman, of Charleston, S.C. in the No. 04 Mac Papers/Hastings Fiberglass Autometrics Motorsports Porsche Cayman.

Francis Jr. won the StopTech Brake Late Finish First Award, along with the Cadillac ATS-V Move of the Race Award for his pass on Fergus for the lead. Weisberg was awarded the Invisible Glass Clean Pass of the Race Award for his pass on Francis Jr. through the Carousel on lap 18. The VP Racing Fuels Hard Charger Award went to Wei Lu, of Richmond, B.C. in the No. 59 Racing.ca/Nixon Prosports/LaptopScreen.com/Miniusa.com MINI Cooper for gaining seven positions during the race. Paul Street, of Anniston, Ala., in the No. 93 Honda/HPD/Megan/RV6 Performance/MOMO/Spec Clutch Honda Accord won the Optima Batteries Best Start Award for gaining three positions off of the start.

"We didn't qualify as well as we wanted," said Francis Jr. "So I played it patiently and waited for the other cars to come back to us. The tire wear was important today. Traffic was really a key for us. I wanted to run consistent laps and see if the leaders would come back towards us. And that's what happened. I got by Corey (Fergus) coming down the back straightaway as he got caught up in some traffic. I was able to get a run on him coming down the hill on the long straight. I actually didn't get a good start and dropped back to eighth or so. Then I had to pick my way through the field."

"I took some stress off by qualifying on the pole and I was able to get a good start too," said Wolfe. "I am usually an instructor here at Mid-Ohio but I was off for this week's classes. I just concentrated on this weekend's races. I really needed the win here or I would never hear the end of it from the other instructors."

"We worked on the car immediately when we got here as we had an issue with the car at Road America," said Schwartz. "I knew Mid-Ohio was going to be a good track for the Chevy Sonic. I really like this track too, even though I have only been here once before. The car felt very good right from the start. The ZERO Cancer crew did a great job with some changes in practice and qualifying. I was able to get around Glenn (Nixon) in turn two for the lead. I went around him on the outside there and that isn't a bad place to make the move since there is room to run off if you can't get by."

Results are provisional until posted final.

LEXINGTON, OH - Results from Saturday's 25-lap 56.45 mile Pirelli World Challenge Championship TC/TCA/TCB Round 10 race, part of the OPTIMA Batteries Grand Prix presented by MOMO at Mid-Ohio Sports car Course, with finishing position, class, starting position in parentheses, driver, hometown, car, laps and reason out (if any).

1. TC, (6), Ernie Francis_Jr, Davie, Fla., MAZDA MX-5, 25.
2. TC, (1), Corey Fergus(R), Columbus, Ohio, Porsche Cayman, 25, -.438.
3. TC, (8), John Weisberg, Webster, N.Y., Mazda MX-5, 25, -6.276.
4. TC, (3), Jeff Altenburg, Ellicott City, Md., Volkswagen Jetta GLI, 25, -17.502.
5. TC, (7), Alex Welch, Englewood, Colo., Volkswagen Jetta GLI, 25, -22.784.
6. TC, (9), Fred Emich, Denver, Colo., Volkswagen Jetta GLI, 25, -26.213.
7. TC, (14), Jeff Ricca, Milford, Conn., Hyundai GenesisCoupe20T, 25, -27.941.
8. TC, (5), Adam Poland, Mt. Vernon, Texas, Mazda MX-5, 25, -40.457.
9. TC, (10), Nicolas Hammann, Elkhart Lake, Wis., Nissan 370Z, 25, -43.657.
10. TC, (13), Paul Street(R), Anniston, Ala., Honda Accord, 25, -53.447.
11. TC, (12), David Baum, Hasting, Mich., Porsche Cayman, 25, -59.423.
12. TC, (11), Austin Snader, Sealy, Texas, Mazda MX-5, 24, -1 lap.
13. TC, (2), Vesko Kozarov, Salt Lake City, Utah, Nissan Altima, 10, -15 laps.
14. TC, (4), Cory Friedman, Charleston, S.C., Porsche Cayman, 5, -20 laps.
15. TCA, (15), Jason Wolfe, Mt. Vernon, Ohio, Kia Forte Koup, 25.
16. TCA, (17), Toby Grahovec, Little Elm, Texas, BMW Z4, 24, -1 lap.
17. TCA, (16), Patrick Seguin, Ottawa, Ontario, Honda Civic Si, 24, -1 lap.
18. TCA, (18), Tony Rivera, Vista, Calif., Scion FRS Coupe, 24, -1 lap.
19. TCA, (22), Kris Wright(R), Pittsburgh, Pa., Kia Forte Koup, 24, -1 lap.
20. TCA, (19), Ron Yarab, Youngstown, Ohio, Honda Civic Si, 24, -1 lap.
21. TCA, (20), Steve Kohli, Iowa City, Iowa, Honda Civic Si, 24, -1 lap.
22. TCA, (24), Emilee Tominovich(R), Clarksville, Md., Honda Civic Si, 24, -1 lap.
23. TCA, (23), Samantha Tan(R), Gormley, Ontario, Kia Forte Koup, 24, -1 lap.
24. TCA, (25), Yiannis Tsiounis, New York, N.Y., Mazda RX8, 24, -1 lap.
25. TCA, (21), Jon Miller, Tustin, Calif., Honda Civic Si, 6, -19 laps.
26. TCB, (26), Johan Schwartz, Huntersville, S.C., Chevy Sonic, 22.
27. TCB, (27), Glenn Nixon, Mission, British Columbia, Honda Fit, 22, -2.644.
28. TCB, (37), Kevin Boehm, Marysville, Ohio, Honda Fit, 22, -2.793.
29. TCB, (30), Andrei Kisel, N. Vancouver, British Columbia, MINI Cooper, 22, -16.845.
30. TCB, (34), Wei Lu(R), Richmond, British Columbia, MINI Cooper, 22, -17.396.
31. TCB, (28), Van Svenson(R), Hyde Park, N.Y., Chevrolet Sonic, 22, -20.484.
32. TCB, (32), Nick Lougee, Minneapolis, Minn., MINI Cooper, 22, -21.867.
33. TCB, (29), PJ Groenke, Toronto, Canada, MINI Cooper, 22, -22.537.
34. TCB, (36), Jason Fichter, Jupiter, Fla., MINI Cooper, 22, -33.779.
35. TCB, (33), Jay Salinsky, New Port Richey, Fla., Honda Fit, 22, -46.695.
36. TCB, (35), Marc Sherrin(R), Lucas, Texas, Ford Fiesta, 21, -1 lap.
37. TCB, (31), Tom O'Gorman, Mason, Ohio, Honda Fit, 21, -1 lap.

Time of race: 40 minutes, 01.643 seconds.

Average speed: 84.617 mph

Margin of victory: .438 Seconds

Lap leaders: Laps 1-6, #00 Corey Fergus(R); laps 7-9, #3 Vesko Kozarov; laps 10-23, #00 Corey Fergus(R); laps 24-25, #98 Ernie Francis_Jr

Fastest race lap: #3 Vesko Kozarov, 1:34.322 (86.181 mph)

Fastest qualifier: #00 Corey Fergus(R), 1:33.569 (86.875 mph)

