

Press Release

*** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ***

RACE REPORT By Michael Mora WINNER of the BSRKC Grand Prize trip to Brazil to compete in the 500 Milhas De Granja Viana.

The 500 Milhas De Granja Viana is one of the biggest charity kart races in Brazil that brings together some of the biggest names in motor sports. This year the list included such drivers as Felipe Massa, Rubens Barrichello, Tony Kanaan, Antonio Pizzonia, Vitor Meira, Christian Fittipaldi and Dan Wheldon, to name just a few. This is quite an event. Four days of intense practice, qualifying, "Super Pole" and a midnight start underneath a plethora of fireworks where there's no time for rest. The field is made up of 74 teams totaling 450 drivers competing on primarily three types of chassis: Kart Mini, Birel and Fittipaldi Racing Karts. The grip is provided by MG's AZ compound that offers a consistent, long-lasting rubber. The power is supplied by a Honda 15HP tweaked motor with average speeds in the 60 mph range.

Monday

I was feeling a little restless while we were waiting to board the plane and I began to pace back and forth. I was anxious about flying. No, let's be honest, I was afraid of flying. Weird, I know, I could race a go kart at over 100 km/h just an inch off of the asphalt yet I was nervous about flying. "*Air Canada Flight 90 to Brazil now boarding,*" the lady announced. As everyone began to board the plane I realized that the moment I had been waiting for was finally here.

Tuesday

I breathed a sign of relief when the plane landed. The flight hadn't been so bad after all. As soon as my dad Vince and I got off the plane, we cleared security and picked up our luggage. We were met by Luis Ruibal and Wagner Rossi from Mg Tires. Soon the other members of our team arrived. Our team would be made up of Jordan Taylor, Kyle Kougger, Michael Mora, Brendan Langlois, Tom, Jim and Casey. After checking in at the hotel we were escorted to the track. What a site! Brazil is such a beautiful place. The track is truly breathtaking. It's surrounded by lush forest and some of the nicest facilities. The track incorporates an array of elevation changes and many unique elements like fast off camber corners to slow hairpins. It even features a banked corner.

The #108 Mg Tires/Kart Mini/Alfano kart was being prepared by the crew from Sabia Racing and would not be ready for the practice session. So the objective of the day became to familiarize ourselves with the track configuration and pit lane procedures. I analyzed the track and tried to see what the fast guys were doing. At the end of the day a noticeable groove was beginning to form.

After our walk through the facilities we all headed back to the hotel. It got late and that long journey back made me quite hungry. So I decided to grab a bite and go sightseeing. After all, I was in Brazil. The restaurants and cafés down there are excellent. I had fun trying out Brazilian dishes and the different cuisine. I met up with a friend that lived in Brazil and ended up going to a Churrasqueira. It's a restaurant that I now have to look for in Toronto. On the table there's a two sided button. One side is red meaning that you are not ready for your meal. The other side is green. In racing green means go but I've never seen meat dishes come at me so fast before. In an instant skewers of meat were being served rapid fire and I was eating like no tomorrow.

Wednesday

The day began early. Meet time was 6am sharp in the lobby and after a quick breakfast we departed for the track. Today would be our first time on the track and none of us knew what to expect. When we arrived at the track our kart was already prepared. All that was missing was the driver. So we all suited up and got ready to do some Brazilian karting. Together with the crew each driver weighed in and recorded how much lead would need to be added to the kart to ensure the minimum total kart weight was reached. After all these technicalities were worked out we finally got to put in some laps. Apparently the weather changes rather quickly in Brazil because as soon as I got on the track it began to pour making my maiden voyage a tricky one. Rain on and off. And in my case, it was more on than off. However at the end of the practice session we had a dry track and were able to really improve the times in our morning

sessions. Everyone better watch out for us.

Thursday

Most of the big names began to arrive and I could see them just by taking a stroll through the pits. Massa showed up in a stylish Maserati compliments of Fiat. Barrichello in a trendy Audi sedan. This was the moment we realized we would have to step it up to see how we would compare to the entire field. During my session I had an experience I will never forget. Straight ahead of me I could see a red Ferrari suit. It was Felipe Massa. I could not believe my eyes. I tried my best to follow him around the track, but he sure does clear traffic rather quickly. As a team our times were definitely good enough to be in the top 20 karts.

Friday

I woke up knowing that we would be having our qualifying sessions. Who would be the one to qualify us? Where would we end up in the standings? Could we really compete with the top stars in racing? All these questions were running through my head at the same time. To say the least, it was a tense day. The day began with a 50 minute practice session. I was chosen to go first for the simple fact that any previous time I had even thought of going on the track it began to rain. So the mechanics wanted to get me out early to avoid the rain. And surprisingly it worked. In the time that I was out I brought the #108 kart up to 4th with a 57.014. That time stood until the very end of the session when Brendan bettered it and finished the session 3rd. We had a short break and afterwards it was time to qualify. The qualifying procedure was as follows. Two groups of 30 karts would each qualify for 15 minutes. The top 5 karts from both sessions would be combined along with the group of stars teams. Altogether a "Super Pole" session would determine the final starting position for the top 23.

The Super Pole session went extremely well. Our final time was a 57.453. That was good enough for 9th out of the 23 karts in the session. We found ourselves ahead of drivers such as Rubens Barrichello, Nelson Piquet Jr. and Felipe Giaffone. This terrific time meant that we would be starting 9th out of the 75 plus karts, something I would never have predicted. The #110 and #109 MG Tires karts found themselves 2nd and 8th respectively. The whole team was overjoyed. We were happy and quickly became the topic of conversation down the pit lane.

Saturday

A Drivers Meeting is something that all of us have become accustomed to. They are necessary to ensure a safe and positive race day. The flags are reviewed, rules mulled over, and important issues were brought up. I remember being told that the Mg Tires/ WR Team was invited to attend the stars drivers meeting that took place in Barrichello's room. I could not believe that I was standing around such talent, the feeling was surreal. My team mates and I walked into the room and saw professional racers like Tony Kanaan, Dan Wheldon, Vitor Meira. People we watch and cheer on TV were now in the same room shooting the breeze. My personal experience was talking to one of my favourite drivers, Ferrari's Felipe Massa and afterwards he signed my helmet. I'm definitely not using it again.

The clock was ticking and as a team we had to decide which stints each of us wanted to do. The start of the race was a very crucial time because everyone is battling for position, and with over 75 karts on the track there's not much breathing room. An incident this early on would certainly spell disaster. First to go would be Jordan Taylor, second Kyle Kouger, myself third, and last Brendan Langlois.

The atmosphere before the start was unreal. At midnight the fireworks were going, stadium lights fully lit, fans cheering, I just wanted to hop in the kart and go.

Sunday

All the drivers lined up on one side of the track with the karts aligned down the other side as in true Lemans style. In an instant everyone jetted across the track hopped in and were off. After gaining a few positions on the start we found ourselves slipping backwards. And before we knew it our kart was 23rd in line. Thankfully on the second stint Kyle brought it back up to 13th and I found myself 8th at the end of my turn. Racers I encountered during my turn were Kanaan and Barrichello. I couldn't believe my eyes. I looked beside me to see the bright green 7Up suit. We started to get into an ever important groove and Brendan reached 5th before the unthinkable. I went to go catch a snooze when I peered into the monitor,

equipped in all of our Formula 1 type pit booths. We began to drop back. To 10th, 20th, something had to be wrong. By the end of it we were 30th. The clutch failed and by the time the kart was brought in, replaced and made our way back on the track we'd lost a total of 14 minutes. I admit this was a disappointment because of our better than expected position, but it only meant we would have to push harder to gain them all back. And that we did. The second round of stops came and we carved our way back up the field. It began with Jordan, then Kyle, me and Brendan, and we gave it everything. As I got on the track I found Piquet Jr. and his team mate bump drafting in front of me. I vowed to catch them and by the end of my shift, I had. I pitted and stood from the sidelines until the end of the race. As the remaining time turned from hours to minutes our kart had settled in 11th. A big gain considering we were practically half way down the race order.

The finish was incredible. The MG Tires #110 piloted by Bruno Pacett, Eduardo Ventre, Francesco Ventre and Otávio Bonder had won the race in style and the celebration was on. Because of our teamwork on the track I was honoured that they wanted us to get up on the podium with them. We all stood tall knowing that we accomplished something special. The bonbonieri and Champaign was flying in every direction and we were having the time of our lives.

What was advertised as a chance of a life time became just that and then some. This is an experience that I will cherish and never forget. I must thank those who made it possible for me to compete with some of the best drivers in the world. First my parents whose help and support have allowed me to continue karting and achieve success. The Brian Stewart Racing Karting Championship Series for presenting me with this incredible opportunity. The MG Tires organization especially Luis Ruibal, Wagner Rossi and Mike Adams for their support. Kart Mini for an awesome chassis and Sabia Racing for providing some of the best mechanics I have ever worked with.



Start Finish Line at the KARTODROMO INTERNACIONAL GRANJA



MG Tires hospitality tent



Canada/USA team photo
From left: Michael Mora, Kyle Kougger, Francesca from MG Tires Brazil,
Mike Burrell, Jordan Taylor, Brendan Langlois



Kart #108 Michael Mora during Practice Session



Kart #108 Michael Mora Last Practice before Qualifying



Kart #108 Michael Mora Practice before "Super Pole"



MG Tires team takes checkered flag



MG Tires team podium celebration