

## TEAM RENO WINS AT HOME IN ACRL FINALE

Reno, NV, September 25 — It was a Wild West shoot-out in the streets of Reno, as the American City Racing League finished out their season at the Kinko's - sponsored finale in the Biggest Little City. Local driver Rick Lee of Team Reno planned to stay with the lead group from his fourth-place starting spot, and avoid the inevitable problems that would occur on the tight, bumpy 1/.27 mile Reno Hilton course. The scenario played out just as he figures, and he scored the track's inaugural win for the home crowd. Lee moved to third on the first lap, second on lap three, and into the lead when polesitter Steve Knapp crashed in Turn Seven on lap 10. Leo Sismani hounded Lee for 29 of the 30 lap distance until Memo Gidley, subbing for Team Santa Barbara's Brad Krause, shouldered his way past Sismani on the final go-round. Lee Lucas, charging through the field after a first lap spin, briefly held second spot on lap 28, but bobbed on the next-to-last circuit and fell to fourth. Peter Zarcades rounded out the top five with a great run from the back of the field that included the fastest lap of the race and helped Las Vegas win team honors over San Diego by 19 points. S2000 driver champion Joe Gioski added to his point total with the "B" category win, 10th overall. Team Fresno took the next two "B" spots, with newcomer Steve Romak beating boss John Ostlund to the flag.

Qualifying took place Friday afternoon, with the new track just beginning to sport a buildup of racing rubber in the turns. The Hoosier spec tires were getting good grip, and the Daeco racing gas proved equal to Reno's

4500 foot altitude. The new Carbir chassis debuted with newly crowned FF2000 champ Steve Knapp in the cockpit. The Carbir was immediately recognized as the car to beat, and Knapp's considerable skills added to the package's potency. The Team Vancouver entry blazed to pole position more than 4/10 second ahead of second fast qualifier Jeff Glenn (San Jose). Mike Wright of Team Vancouver BC became the second series newcomer in the Top Five with his third-place qualifying run. ACRL veterans Lee and Lucas rounded out the Daeco Top Five. Team Las Vegas, the only team with a mathematical chance of taking the Blackaller Cup from Team San Diego, had a disastrous qualifying session. Engine and differential problems sidelined both Chris Ronson and Peter Zarcades, who would start the race from the back.

Some first-time ACRL competitors showed at Reno, a fact that bodes well for the 1997 season. Newcomer Knapp, Wright and Romak were also joined by ACRL veterans Bob Doricott Sr. and Jeff Clegg in their first 1996 start.

Team San Diego drivers Margie Smith-Haas, Marc Zurlinden and Ian Wood carried the team banner at Reno, and Zurlinden's sixth and Smith-Haas' seventh place took second in team points in the race secured the 1996 team championship for San Diego. San Diego driver Bob Schader was absent from the ACRL grid, having already clinched the drivers' crown. At the awards banquet Schader became the first recipient of the Vasser Cup, a newly-instituted perpetual trophy named for former ACRL competitor and current CART/PPG Indycar champion Jimmy Vasser.