

Three Names to Remember



Formula For Competition

U.S. F2000 National Championship
by Eric Prill

With Walt Disney World off the 1999 U.S. F2000 National Championship schedule, teams and series organizers have more time to prepare for the new season, and this column will do the same. Leading up to the first race, March 28 at Phoenix, we'll look at some of the teams looking for glory in 1999. Back to defend its 1998 title is the Van Diemen factory

team, **Primus Racing**, which has inked three top rookies—**Mark Dismore**, **Daniel Muniz** and **Daniel Wheldon**—each with hopes of equalling David Besnard's amazing 1998 run or following **Sam Hornish Jr.** to a top KOOL/Toyota Atlantic drive.

Mark E. Dismore, 18, is the most recognizable of the three to SCCA members. Not only is the Greenfield, Ind., driver the son of Indy Racing League star Mark A. Dismore, but he's also the 1998 SCCA Club Racing Rookie of the Year after his second-place performance in the 1998 Formula Continental Valvoline Runoffs.

Dismore's career started with karts in 1992, where he spent five years before campaigning a Van Diemen in Club Racing Nationals last year. He also got his first taste of ovals in 1998 in the form of a midget. Dismore enters the series with assistance from the online job

opportunity service www.monster.com.

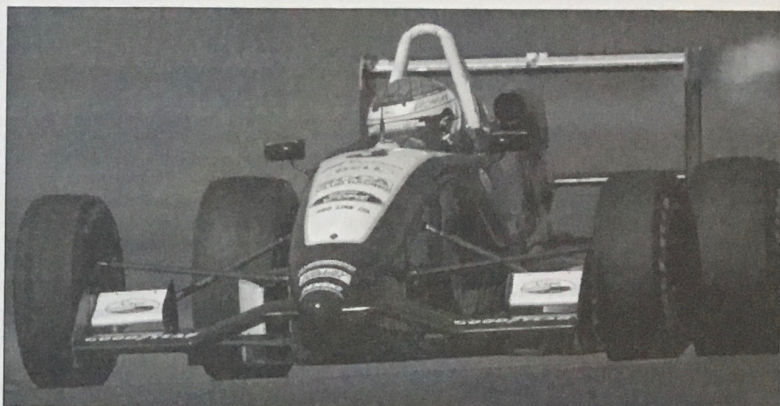
"We're just going through our initial tests right now to get acclimated with the Yokohama tires," reports Dismore. "Last year, I ran Goodyears in Nationals, which are a lot softer than the spec tires. The three of us are sharing a car, so there isn't a whole lot of data coming from testing yet. Once we all have our cars in February, we're going to hit the testing hard, and I'll have some more track time. So far, things have gone pretty well."

First FFIP Recipient

Wheldon's name has appeared in this column before, when he was **David Besnard's** teammate on the Duckhams Van Diemen team at the Formula Ford World Finals, in Brands Hatch, England. Coming off a sensational season of four wins to finish third in the British Formula Ford Zetec Championship (behind Mygale drivers **Jensen Button** and **Derek Hayes**), the 20-year old Englishman finished second to Button in the World Finals—again the top Van Diemen. Initially believed to be staying in Europe for Formula Renault Sport or Formula 3, Wheldon becomes the first recipient of the Formula Ford Incentive Program (FFIP), announced at the World Finals in October, giving free series entry fees to FFWF podium finishers.

Wheldon brings to the U.S. F2000 the most impressive European credentials the series has seen to date, including two-straight top-four British Formula Ford Championship rankings, seven career Formula Ford wins and a runner-up finish in the 1996 Formula Vauxhall Junior Championship. Wheldon is also a two-time finalist for the McLaren Autosport Young Driver of the Year (1996 and 1997), recognizing the top up-and-coming drivers in Great Britain.

"I'm very happy to be in the States with Primus Racing," says Wheldon. "I'd never



Mark E. Dismore is set to contest the full U.S. F2000 season with Primus Racing after a strong performance at the Runoffs earned him a silver medal.

really been away from home before now and the whole team has really accepted me and treated me like a member of the family.

"As for the preseason testing, I got my first taste of an oval at Lakeland," he adds. "It's quite different from what I expected. When you watch the Indy car drivers on television, they make it look easy, but it's actually a lot more difficult than I expected. It takes a lot of focus lap after lap. Once I became accustomed to the track, the test went very well. John Hayes (team engineer) is excellent—the best guy I've come across yet."

No Stranger to the U.S.

Muniz, 19, is from Costa Rica, but he's not entirely a stranger to the United States and its tracks. After finishing second in points and earning Rookie of the Year honors in the Skip Barber Southern Formula Dodge Championship in 1997, he was selected to participate in the final Elf Formula Campus round at Catalunya, Spain. Driver manager

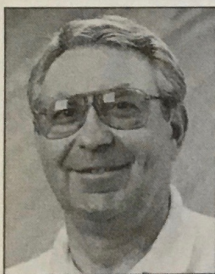
Henri Pescarolo deemed Muniz overqualified for the Campus race, and instead placed him on the Formula Renault Elf team.

In 1998, Muniz contested the Star Formula Mazda Championship, finishing seventh. He was also invited to and won the Master Kart series Race of the Stars in Cuba against such karting superstars as **Roberto Moreno**, **Phillipe Alliot**, **Arturo Merzario** and **Xavier Pompidou**.

"Muniz is a guy who should surprise people," says Primus team manager and Van Diemen importer Jon Baytos. "He comes off a recommendation from **Bobby Unser**, who has known his family for some time. All three drivers have great potential. We're counting on race wins and a championship, and will be disappointed otherwise."

"As for the series, I see 10 really good shoes this year," states Baytos. "We've now got a steady flow of interest from Europe for this year and beyond as a result of the World Finals." ■

ACRL 101



Team Rules

American City Racing League
by Roger Diez

101. There will be a quiz later.

There are two classes of cars competing in the American City Racing League: Super Sports 2000 and Sports 2000. The Super Sports 2000 car is an evolution of the Sports 2000 car familiar to SCCA Club racers. Both classes are sports/racing machines utilizing a monocoque tub made up of epoxy-bonded aluminum or carbon fiber. This makes for an extremely strong, light chassis. The driver is offset in the cockpit, which makes the car theoretically a two-seater, although most carry fire extinguisher systems and data acquisition gear in the passenger space. As Sports 2000 chassis were originally built in England, right-hand drive is the norm. Suspension is fully independent front and rear, and is fully adjustable. The latest racing technology is employed, including pushrods, rocker arms, and double- or triple-adjustable racing shocks.

The bodywork consists of aerodynamic molded panels made of carbon fiber, kevlar or lightweight fiberglass. Most of the bodywork

can be quickly removed for access to the car's mechanical components. Wheels are 13-inch, center locking type, light alloy construction, with maximum widths of six inches front and eight inches rear. VP Fuels supply the spec fuel, while the tires are a spec compound provided by Hoosier, with slicks for dry conditions and treaded rain tires for use in the wet. Because of the strict cost limitations on the allowed equipment, the ACRL has gained a reputation as the most cost-effective pro series in the U.S.

The SS2 cars use the Cosworth YAC engine, a two-liter, DOHC, 16-valve power plant based on the Ford NEA four-cylinder block. The Cosworth version puts out approximately 190hp, compared to 145hp for the single overhead cam version used in the Sports 2000 class. The SS2 cars may also utilize an optional spec rear wing to add downforce and stabilize the car at high speeds. SS2 cars must weigh at least 1325lbs including driver, while the S2 minimum weight is set at 1310lbs. The final difference in the two classes is that the SS2 cars can use a spec aluminum four-piston brake caliper.

The Team Concept

What makes the American City Racing League unique is the "team" concept. Teams are named for, and in some cases receive support from, major cities. As many as five cars per team have appeared in ACRL events. The racers compete for the overall and class win in each race, as well as for points toward the drivers championship. The S2000 drivers get their own victory stand and compete for a class Drivers Championship. In addition, two cars per team can score team points in each race, with the highest aggregate points score winning the team title for the race. Team points are also counted toward an overall team championship. Drivers must discard points from one race when calculating points for the

driver's championship, but team points from all races count toward the team title.

The overall Drivers Champion is awarded the Vasser Cup, named for former ACRL competitor and CART champion **Jimmy Vasser**. The Team Champions receive the Blackaller Cup, in honor of former ACRL driver and America's Cup skipper, the late **Tom Blackaller**. Most of the ACRL regulars will be back in 1999 for the series' 12th season, with possibly a few returnees from previous years. In addition, several new drivers will be joining ACRL, and we welcome them aboard. Here are a few of 1999's freshman class:

Jeff Anderson, of Bakersfield, Calif., is expected to join Team Reno. Jeff has extensive Sports 2000 racing experience, running a Tiga successfully in Southern Pacific Division club racing. He has acquired a Swift DB-2 previously campaigned in ACRL by **Marc Zurlinden** and **Edd Ozard**.

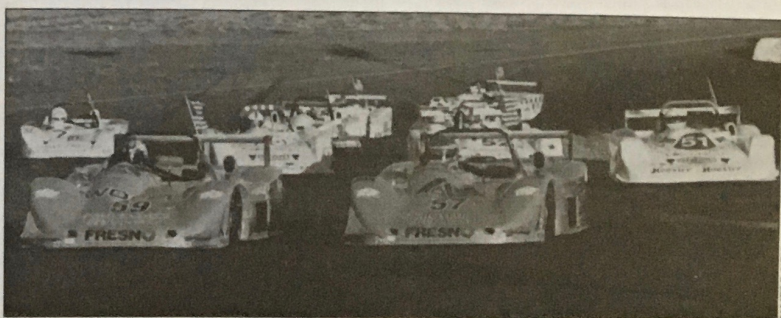
Michael Scully of Oxnard, Calif., has extensive experience in both driving and in race car design and preparation. Starting in an E Production Volvo P-1800, he helped develop the Lola SR-71 Sports 2000 after getting his engineering degree. He currently works as a designer for West Coast BMW Design Works, and has raced his SR-71 very successfully, even defeating current ACRL Drivers

Champion **Steve Romak** in a National at Sears Point in 1996. Scully will run in the S2000 class, with his team as yet undetermined.

Sandy Popescu of San Diego, Calif., is the first new female driver to enter ACRL in quite some time. She comes from a racing family. **Husband Val**, a Formula Atlantic driver, is preparing the ex-**Jeff Glenn Swift DB-5** for her, and nine-year-old **son Alex** races go-karts. Sandy has a wealth of racing experience, campaigning a Formula Ford in National and Regional races since 1993, and scoring numerous podium finishes. She will join Team San Diego and run in the Super Sports 2000 class.

Tom Vigil of Meridian, Idaho, is a life-long racer. Starting in karts as a youngster, he ran in Super Vee and Trans-Am in his 20s, and has kept his hand in over the years running with the Porsche Club of America and recently wheeling a Super Stock car on oval tracks. He is excited about the opportunity to run with ACRL and is talking seriously with the Carbir factory about running a car out of their Portland shop. Vigil is a research physician who admittedly "has the racing bug bad."

Next month we'll cover the schedule, team rosters and the winter meeting which promises some nice surprises for the S2000 competitors. ■



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