

NEWS SNIPPET

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OUR MEMBERS AND
OUR EVENTS



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ROAM
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THE MAKING OF A
SUPER ST..CAR
JASON OLIVER



SMOKE GETS IN
YOUR EYES
ERIC NORMAN

JUSTIN BARBRY



[TireRack.com](#) ChampCar Endurance Series | The 14hrs of Road Atlanta | Team Baby Shark

Justin Barbry along with his co-drivers from Team Baby Shark participated in the ChampCar Endurance Series

Photography
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Ketchledge

season opener at **Michelin Raceway Road Atlanta** February 8th, 2020. ChampCar is touted to be North America's home for Real, Affordable, Competitive road racing. the races take place at world-famous track like Road America, Laguna Seca and Daytona. This race took place at Road Atlanta, a 2.54 mile road course located north of Braselton, Georgia. The track has 12 turns. The 14-hour Enduro event started on Feb 6th and ended on Feb 8th. This is our recap.

Team Baby Shark went to Road Atlanta on Saturday, February 8th for the opening round of the **2020 Champcar Endurance** series in their **2.4L Ecotec Fiero**. It will probably be remembered for one of the craziest races in Champcar history. The race was scheduled for 14 hours beginning at 8am and finishing at 10pm, but the weather would end up playing a major role in the race.

Team Baby Shark showed up with three drivers...**Justin Barbry, Daniel Wendel, and Justin Mitchell**... to handle the 14 hour race along with 3 crew members to help with pitstops. The team got stuck in the tech inspection line for almost 4 hours on Friday afternoon as the inspectors were being extra picky since it was the first event of the year and some cars were not up to par with the regulations. The Baby Shark Fiero had no issues with the inspectors, but due to the line was only able to get 4 laps of testing in before the end of the test sessions. A

*Great content of
the event from
Joseph Dale*



Joseph Dale is the creator of SouthrnFresh website, a site dedicated to the car scene in the South East region. Take a moment to check out this gem at www.southernfresh.com

small adjustment was made to the new 9 Lives Racing 65" rear wing and the car was ready for 14 hours of Road Atlanta.



The team was back at the track Saturday morning at 6am to make final preparations and go to the driver's meeting. The car had sat outside all night in sub-freezing temperatures and there was some ice in the cooling system. There was some antifreeze mixed in, but it wasn't enough. There was no damage, but it took some effort to clear the cooling system and get proper flow. At the driver's meeting they did a random draw to set the field positions for the start of the race. This was done by pit stall number. Team Baby Shark was

sharing stall #38, the last pit stall, with Himarc Racing. The random number drawn was #9. That meant the teams in pit stall #9 would be the lead cars and everyone in stalls 1-8 would go to the back. Not much help for baby Shark, but at least we wouldn't be starting dead last.

Justin Mitchell was going to be the first driver and the green flag was thrown shortly after 8am with Team Baby Shark officially starting in 71ST position out of 80 cars. Mitchell began to gain positions easily, but reported a vibration in the car at high speed. The



refuel and switch driver's having gained around 20 positions.

Daniel Wendel took the second stint and things started to get interesting. It wasn't long before a heavy snow started to fall. We were expecting some weather, but what was headed our way was big. Wendel was putting in work in tough conditions.

vibration got worse and turned into a noise that the team could hear as the car passed the pits on the front straight. It sounded like something flapping under the car and hitting the track. The car was brought in and the team discovered the rear diffuser had partially come loose and was dragging. It was quick to remove entirely and the car was sent back out without too many positions lost. There was a lengthy full course caution for a car on fire between turns 5 and 6. This helped extend the time the car could stay on track before it ran out of fuel. The track eventually went green again. After an hour and forty five minutes another caution came out and the Justin Mitchell brought the car in to

Lap times were sometimes 10 to 20 seconds faster than the cars around us. We were again gaining positions almost every lap as other cars had issues with fogging windshields and radiator grilles clogging with slush. We had to pit



briefly again mid-stint to fix a loose windshield wiper. It eventually started snowing so much and the track conditions deteriorated so quickly that the race went full

course caution behind the safety car. The officials wanted to keep cars circulating on the track in an attempt to keep snow from accumulating, but it eventually got to the point that some cars couldn't negotiate Road Atlanta's steep elevation changes in the slippery conditions. At this point the race was red flagged and all the cars were parked on pit road. The race would remain under a red flag stoppage for 4 hours as 4" of snow fell and turned Road Atlanta in a North Georgia winter



and snow ball fights happening on pit road as all the race teams found ways to stay warm and fight off boredom. Eventually the snow stopped, the track crew brought out their jet drier and multiple vehicles to clear the track of snow off the

surface. An announcement was made that the race would resume shortly.

Team Baby Shark put Daniel Wendel back in the car as he was driving in similar tricky conditions before the red flag and was best suited for the still slippery track.

Cautions were frequent as cars failed to deal with the treacherously wet Road Atlanta. Turn 12 and its adjacent concrete walls claimed several cars during this time, but Wendel kept Baby Shark on the track with only a pair of minor spins as he kept turning the wick up on the rest of the field. Staying on the racing surface was paramount



wonderland. There were snowmen

as everything but the track



into the snow covered gravel traps and tire walls, but most appeared to be single car incidents where driver's just ran out of talent all by themselves. This caused a few full course cautions to get them out of harms way which bunched the field up behind the safety car and made

pavement was under several inches of snow and any trip into meant you would be stuck for a while. Another timely full course caution came out toward the end of our fuel window and the car was brought in for a driver change and a refuel having gained another 20 or so positions in the rough conditions and multiple cautions. Justin Barbry hopped in and the car was back out on the still wet track to handle the last stint in daylight. It was a fairly routine stint as reported from the driver's seat. The cars that were still turning laps were playing nice and the driving from most of the field was exceptional in those conditions. A few cars still found their way

for prime opportunities to gain positions on restarts. One restart had the Baby Shark Fiero getting past 16 cars in one lap (17 if you count one that crashed on the front straight)! The radio communications between the car and the pits was only partially working during this time. The driver could hear the crew, but the crew couldn't hear the driver. Luckily this



wasn't an issue and Justin B just kept turning laps moving up to 18th position over all when the team called him in during another well timed full course caution for more fuel and a driver change. It was Justin Mitchell's turn again as dusk turned to dark...and it gets really dark at Road Atlanta. The weather had one more curveball to throw before this race was over and Justin M. caught the brunt of it. As darkness fell a thick fog creeped in. During the previous pit stop we had to fix the windshield wiper again and didn't think about cleaning the Lexan windshield. During Justin B's stint the wet track combined with cars

dragging mud and other stuff onto the surface and then kicking it up in the air had dirtied up the windshield quite a bit. It didn't



become noticeable until the thick fog restricted visibility further and Mitchell found that he couldn't see well enough to turn safe laps. It was during this time that race control, citing the terrible visibility, decided to stop the race 2 hours early at 8pm. We had to get the car in and clean the windshield and Daniel Wendel, having prior simulator experience at Road Atlanta in heavy fog... (don't ask me why), said he could finish the race and bring the car home. Visibility continued to get worse, but Wendel kept it on track until it got so



bad you couldn't see the corner stations from the cars on track and the race ended around 7:45pm.

Team Baby Shark finished in 21st place completing 160 laps. Just finishing this race was a major accomplishment. The car drove back onto the trailer short a rear diffuser, but with no other damage. Not a bad showing for it's first real race with the new Ecotec motor. The team is looking at a few upgrades to take care of before showing up at Charlotte Motor Speedway in April for another 14 hour race on the Roval with Champcar.

