

April 29, 2001

FORT WORTH, Texas--Championship Auto Racing Teams announced Sunday that it was postponing the Firestone Firehawk 600 Presented by Pioneer at Texas Motor Speedway due to extensive concerns over the unprecedented physical demands being placed upon its drivers.

This weekend's event would have marked CART's first-ever appearance on the 1.5-mile, 24-degree banked oval located in Fort Worth. The event has not been rescheduled at this time.

"We are postponing the Firestone Firehawk 600 Presented by Pioneer due to concerns over the physical demands placed on our drivers when traveling at speeds of more than 235 miles per hour on this 1.5-mile oval," CART President/CEO Joseph Heitzler said. "We offer our sincerest apologies to the fans and our associates at Texas Motor Speedway, but I will tell you that as CART's President and CEO, I am confident that we have exhausted every available option to find a suitable resolution to these concerns at this time."

The concerns became magnified following Saturday morning's practice session, after which several drivers reported lightheadedness or dizziness when spending stints of 20 or more laps in the cockpit. The morning's fastest practice speed was recorded by Max Papis (Miller Lite Ford-Cosworth/Lola) of Team Rahal, at 236.9 miles per hour.

That was over three miles per hour faster than the fastest practice speed registered by Kenny Brack (Shell Ford-Cosworth/Lola) on Friday afternoon (233.785 mph), and some 20 miles per hour faster than the unofficial speeds posted by Brack during an evaluation test at the speedway in December. Brack earned the pole position Saturday at an average speed of 233.447 mph.

With the increased speeds came an attendant increase in the amount of gravitational force, both lateral and vertical, experienced by the drivers while in the cockpit. On the 1.5-mile oval, drivers sustained loads of up to 5* Gs for 18 of the 22 seconds it took to complete a single lap.

Twenty-one of the 25 drivers in the starting field reported disorientation as a result, and given the potential for a driver "grey out," or loss of consciousness, according to Dr. Steve Olvey, CART Director of Medical Affairs, the decision was made to cancel the event in the best interests of driver safety.

"A situation developed on Friday afternoon that in my 25 years of working in motorsports, I had never experienced," Olvey said. "Two drivers pulled off the race track after long stints at over 230 miles per hour. They pulled in because they were dizzy and disoriented and felt that they could no longer control the race car."

"On Saturday, a driver who came into the CART Mobile Medical Facility for another reason said that he couldn't walk for up to five minutes after getting out of his car. We brought in all of the drivers to explain this to them and found that all but four of them had experienced similar symptoms. We really couldn't send the drivers into a situation which was totally unknown with the risk of having them become unconscious, sick or disoriented."

Team Motorola driver Michael Andretti, CART's all-time victory leader with 40 wins, and Zakspeed/Forsythe Racing driver Bryan Herta said that the decision was staunchly backed by FedEx Championship Series drivers.

"I must say that in my 20 years of auto racing, I've never experienced the kind of forces I experienced here this weekend," Andretti said. "At this point, I've got to really applaud CART for standing up for drivers and safety and trying to find a solution and not going ahead with the event at this time. This isn't something we could predict. This was a problem we weren't aware of until 4 p.m. yesterday [Saturday] afternoon. I want to say that on behalf of all the drivers, we are truly sorry for the fans."

"This was a great decision," Herta said. "I applaud CART as all the drivers do. We look forward to finding a possible solution so we can come back and put on a proper show for these fans because they deserve it."

Firestone, title sponsor of the event and Official Tire of CART, also backed the decision, as did presenting sponsor Pioneer.

"It was an extremely difficult decision for CART to make," said Al Speyer, Motorsports Director for Bridgestone/Firestone, "but we understand and support that decision 100 percent. Obviously, we have mixed emotions as the race's title sponsor. But it is always best to err on the side of safety for both the participants and the spectators. This is unequivocally the right thing to do. Firestone will continue

[28 APR 01 // Firestone Firehawk 600 Presented by Pioneer - Saturday Afternoon Press Notes](#)

[28 APR 01 // Firestone Firehawk 600 Presented by Pioneer - Saturday Morning Press Notes](#)

[28 APR 01 // Take A Lap With Kenny Brack](#)

[27 APR 01 // Brack, Kanaan Set Pace In Texas Practice](#)

[27 APR 01 // Texas Friday Notebook](#)

[27 APR 01 // Firestone Firehawk 600 Presented by Pioneer - Friday Afternoon Press Notes](#)

[27 APR 01 // Firestone Firehawk 600 Presented by Pioneer - Friday Morning Press Notes](#)

[26 APR 01 // Firestone Firehawk Fast Facts](#)

[26 APR 01 // The Eyes Of Texas Are Upon CART](#)

[25 APR 01 // Ford Racing CART Texas Preview](#)

to work with CART, the drivers, Texas Motor Speedway and everyone involved to further analyze the situation and proceed in a practical manner."

The last time a CART event was postponed due to safety concerns was 1985 at Michigan Speedway, when the race, scheduled for July 21, was postponed after qualifying due to concerns over tires. The event was completed on July 28 and was won by Emerson Fittipaldi.

Monday, April 30, 2001

Page: 1

Facts [Glossary](#) [SMI](#) [Speedchart](#) [Tidbits](#) [Timeline](#)



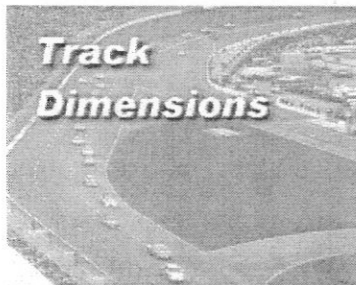
Mailing Address: PO Box 500, Fort Worth, TX 76101-2500

Physical Address: 3601 Hwy 114, Justin, TX 76247

Tickets and Information: (817) 215-8500

Website: www.texasmotorspeedway.com

TMS Guest Feedback: TMS_Guest_Feedback@texasmotorspeedway.com



Oval: 1.5 miles

Legends Oval: 1/4-mile

Width: 58 feet (minimum)

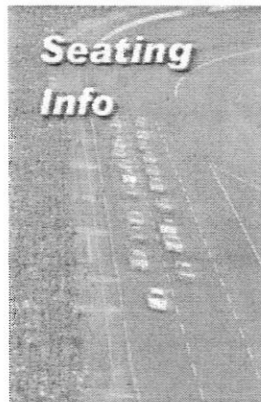
Turns: 750 Foot Radius

Banking: 24-degree banking – straights banked five degrees

Front Stretch: 2,250 feet long

Back Stretch: 1,330 feet long

Pit Road: 42 pit stalls



Permanent Grandstand Seating: 154,861

Infield Capacity: approx. 53,000

Total Estimated Capacity: 204,861

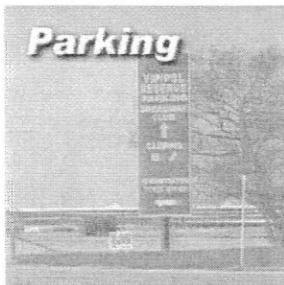
Front straightaway grandstand: 66 rows, 121,861 capacity

Back straight grandstand: 35 rows, 33,000 capacity

PSL seats: 36,000 with armrests

Luxury Suites: 194 with seating for 13,192

Handicapped Seating: Row 28 at portal entrance -- 1,595 handicapped seats available



Parking Area: 600 acres of parking -- 131 paved acres

Automobile spaces: 22,000 paved

Bus spaces: 300 paved

Handicap parking: Available on frontstretch outside Gates 2-6, backstretch outside gates 9 and 10

Camping: 1,100 reserved infield spaces, more than 5,000 spaces located outside grandstands