

Sharp eager for action at Indy 500

The Wilton native will make his 13th start at Indianapolis Sunday afternoon

By CHARLIE MITCHELL
Hour Motorsports Writer

It has played with his heart, embarrassed him and rattled his head but Scott Sharp will return to Indianapolis Motor Speedway Sunday for the 91st running of the Indianapolis 500.

"It's my favorite track. I love it," Sharp said Monday, when talking about the 2.5-mile track that is the most famous in the world.

He was in New York City with the other 32 starters to participate in the annual media day that includes the drivers (in uniform) lining up in Times Square in the order they will start the 500.

The former Norwalk resident will be making his 13th start in the 500. He has only finished five of his previous 12 races at the venue known as "The Brickyard."

The heartbreak came in the 1998 event when his car broke with 19 laps remaining. He was fifth at the time and on the lead lap.

The year before he missed the 500 after sustaining a head injury when the A.J. Foyt entry he was driving crashed during practice. He returned a few weeks later, but sustained head injuries again in a crash at Pike's Peak Speedway that finished him for the season.

On Sunday he'll start 12th in his first ride at Indy for Rahal Letterman Racing, which he joined this year.

Sharp, who won the coveted pole position for the 2001 race got below the white line going into the first and crashed before completing a lap. He made a mistake that bothered him the rest of the season.

His fortunes have changed



AP photo

Wilton native Scott Sharp, right, celebrates with a crewman after he qualified for the Indianapolis 500 with an average speed 223.875mph on the second day of qualifications at Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Sharp and the rest of the 500 starters were in New York Monday.

AUTO RACING

the past two years. The former Trans-Am champ has finished seventh and ninth and on the lead lap.

That is the plan for Sunday. "You have to be patient. Have to stay on the lead lap and be at your best late in the race," said Sharp, whose No. 8 is sponsored by Patron Tequila.

RLR was the last team to switch to the Dallara chassis. "It's hurt us a little, but we're getting better. We're catching up," Sharp said.

"The car is not always good in traffic. If we get behind other cars the turbulence forces you to let up (on the accelerator). I think we'll get it right for the race," said Sharp, who is in his first season with RLR.

The Rahal Letterman Team is certainly one with Connecticut ties. Co-owner David Letterman lived in New Canaan and Sharp's teammate in a second RLR car is Jeff Simmons, who was born in Granby.

Simmons, who began his career racing quarter midgets in Meriden, starts 13th Sunday.

Another driver who started his career in Meriden pulled off the biggest win of his career Sunday.

Sixteen-year-old Joey Logano of Middletown, won his third Busch East Series race in four starts this season. The driver he beat was Kevin Harvick, who 12 hours earlier won the NEXTEL All-Star race and \$1 million.

Logano, who drives for Joe Gibbs Racing, and Harvick swapped the lead 15 times before Logano took control with six laps remaining. Matt Kobyluck of Uncasville crashed and finished 36th. Former DIRT star Tim McCreadie finished 10th. He is in the Richard Childress Racing developmental program.

All eyes on Hornish

Two-time winner Helio Castroneves won the pole for Sunday's 91st Indy 500, but all eyes are on Team Penske teammate Sam Hornish Jr.

Even after Castroneves' pole-winning run May 12, a spokesman for Team Penske said Hornish had booked all but 15 minutes for the rest of the month. Castroneves' schedule, in contrast, was still pretty much open.

"I have to say I am a little more relaxed and that's good," he said. "I can focus a little more on my job and a little less on all those other things."

Norwalk LL off to flying start

Contributed reports

There has been some heated competition for the first three weeks of the inaugural season of the new Norwalk Little League.

In the Ben Whone Division, VFW is 6-2 and has taken the early lead with a number of exciting wins. On Mothers Day, VFW beat Rotary — leading the Spinola Division with 4-3 record — 9-6 with a walk off grand slam home run by Derick Edwards.

LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL ROUNDUP

Jared Smith, Richie Henderson and Conor Mulford got hits for Rotary. Keegan Roberts (3-0) for VFW and Ryan Evans (1-0) for Rotary started and pitched well through five innings. Trevor Tomlinson (1-0) relieved Roberts and got the win.

Also, the Jaycees (5-4) beat Laurel AC (3-3) 14-10.

In another game Monker Grotto beat Rowayton Hardware (2-2) 5-0. Pitching for Grotto (3-3) were Tyler Annunziata, Will Ayles, James McQuillan, Matt Savona and Brad Zaremski. Tristan Opdahl had three hits, including a home run and three RBIs, Tyler Annunziata had a home run, Jordan McDonald a double, Will Ayles one hit and one RBI while Peter Ferguson and Nick Lampman each had a hit.

Eric Freeman, Jack Hefferan and John Morgan each played well in the field.

Kiwanis (4-2) beat Rotary in another hotly contested match 7-6. Kevin Love, Ryan Edwards, Trevor Remy and Ernie Young all got hits for Rotary and Dylan Morsunutto and Richie Henderson each had home runs.

VFW won an exciting game over Rowayton Hardware, 1-0. Dallas Blue, Mike Bottex and Trevor Tomlinson got hits for VFW.

Derick Edwards (2-1) started and got the win and Trevor Tomlinson picked up the save.

In a slugfest at the beach, Laurel AC rallied late for a 14-8 win over International Lions. The game featured five lead changes.

For Laurel AC, Ricky Mydland cracked a clutch three-run double in the sixth. Mydland and Peter Ostasiewicz pitched five innings of solid relief. Ostasiewicz and Tyler Singewald added three RBIs apiece for Laurel AC.

The Lions were paced by Rickey Murphy with a long triple and single, Teddy Faroni with three RBIs and Dan Molina and Aaron Correau with key hits.

The Eagles (4-3) beat the Jaycees 6-5 with some clutch hitting. Jamie Restivo, Quinn Ryan and Patrick Odierno got hits for the Jaycees.

Triple AAA Division

Snellman Construction beat John Glover 14-1.

Alex Barone, Brian Beaumonte, BJ Buckle,

James Campbell, Mathew Crowley, Harrison Hefferan, Conor Madden, Ryan Restivo, Jack Stafford and Evan Uva all got hits for Snellman (6-2). BJ Buckle started and got the win.

Also, Norwalk Pizza and Pasta (4-3) defeated Diamond Deli (2-6) 8-2.

The pitching combination of Justin Jimenez and Brendan Hanzlik allowed no earned runs, struck out nine and allowed only three walks in six innings.

P&P also hit the ball well with Tommy Benincaso's single and RBI, Justin Jimenez with two singles, two runs scored and two RBIs and Matt Jimenez with two singles and two RBIs.

Also chipping in was Mike Powers single and two RBIs, Shawn Hanzlik with a single and run scored and Alex Waring with a single, run scored and a sacrifice fly.

C & C Landscaping also defeated Stew Leonard's 6-4.

Daniel Romanello (three IP, seven strikeouts), Michael Stein (two IP, five strikeouts) and Jesse Rodriguez (one inning, one strikeout) handled the pitching duties for C&C (6-2).

Rodriguez and Evan Viscardi both singled twice and scored. Dylan Viscardi and Devin Monroe also picked up singles.

For Stew's (2-6), Connor Halloran hit an inside-the-park home run to drive in three runs and he also singled. Cole DeBeradinis doubled and Billy Passero, Eddie Marcarelli and Sam Zaref and Jasmine Kishimoto all picked up singles.

Matarese Service Station (3-4) beat Rowayton Pizza (1-2) 9-3. Joseph Bartlett, Michael Boguski, Nathaniel Cutting, John Flynn, Chris Lato and Andrew Starr all had hits for Matarese (3-4). Mike Boguski got the win.

Snellman beat Norwalk Pizza and Pasta 10-3. The Snellman offense was led by Ryan Restivo's two triples, two singles, and two RBIs. Drew Pace & Matt Crowley also had two RBIs.

BJ Buckle had two hits and Harrison Hefferan & Jack Restivo each had a single. Matt Crowley was the winning pitcher and threw three shutout innings to start the game.

Harrison Hefferan also pitched two strong innings and Brian Beaumonte finished the game strong. For Norwalk Pizza and Pasta, Brendan Hanzlik and Mike Powers singled and Justin Jimenez had a two run single. Brendan Hanzlik also pitched two innings giving up one run, striking out two and walking no one.

Heritage Carpentry (7-0) beat Stews 10-3. Paul Salata, Ryan Edwards and Brent Besterce combined for 12 strikeouts in the win for Heritage Carpentry.

Brendan Mills singled three times and scored twice. Corey Hayes tripled, singled and scored. Matt Salata singled twice. Besterce and Edwards also singled. For Stew's, Bobby Butler singled and scored twice and Billy Passero picked up a single.

Three NJSA teams advance

Contributed reports

The Norwalk Tides U-13 girls travel team advanced to the Elite Eight in Connecticut Cup play, defeating Newington 5-0.

Corey Blattman scored the first goal assisted by MaryKate Fornshell. Lindsay Macri scored the next two goals for a 3-0 halftime lead. Assists went to Lorena Sferlazza and Stephanie Gonzalez, who stopped four shots in goal in the first half.

In the second half, Deven Machette scored on an assist by Morgan Machette and Kate Bullesbach scored the final goal with an assist from Emma Stein.

Defensively, Jocelyn Bruno, Christina Randall, Maya Carter, Buellbach, Mirofora Kalogeridis and Morgan Machette helped in the shut out. Macri stopped two shots in goal in the second half.

The Norwalk Strikers U-16 boys travel soccer team advanced to the quarterfinals in the Connecticut Cup with a convincing 7-0 victory over Stamford.

Jay Cronin started off the scoring, followed by Taylor Sasloe and Juan Valencia, who had two goals each. Ricardo Valencia and Matt Surace also scored.

Kenny Coppola had three assists. Cronin had two assists and Henry Carvajal and Surace had an assist each. Goalkeeper Alex Hurd recorded the shutout for the Strikers (7-0).

The Norwalk United Seniors U-19 boys travel team also advanced to the Elite Eight quarterfinals of the Connecticut Cup with a 2-1 win over Monroe in Monroe. United is now 7-0 overall.

Wilton storms Westport

The Wilton U-10 blue boys soccer team posted a 6-5 victory over Westport in an exciting, hard-fought match.

Wilton's speedy forwards Jimmy Colihan (two goals), Spencer Overbeeke (goal), Konrad Kotonski (goal) and Michael Lynch led Wilton to a 4-2 halftime lead.

Overbeeke tallied for a second time and Grant Sweeny, after stealing the ball from a

YOUTH SOCCER

defender, drilled a left-footed shot past the Westport keeper.

Nitros tie Fairfield

The NJSA Norwalk Nitros U-11 travel soccer team tied Fairfield 2-2. Jonathan Ceja and Jack Blattman scored goals for the Nitros. Michal Nowicki had an assist. Kamil Boguski and Chris Randazzo shared the goalkeeping responsibilities.

Wilton Blue wins two

The Wilton U-11 team advanced in the third round of the Connecticut Cup with a 6-0 win over Hartford. The first goal was scored by Oliver Quantock, assisted by Justin Shepard.

Oliver Quantock scored two more goals to complete a first-half hat trick. Mackinley Ross scored the fourth goal and Conor Eckert, assisted by Oliver Quantock, scored the fifth goal. Eric Houska scored the final goal with the help of Chauncey Allers. Goalies Brendan Devane and Shawn Brosko combined on the shutout.

Wilton Blue also defeated Ridgefield 6-0 over the weekend. Egor Greenlee scored twice, A.J. Galimi and Kyle Dedrick had a goal and one assist each while Oliver Quantock and Eric Houska also scored. Matthew Przbysz, Connor King and Mackinley Ross had assists.

Knockouts roll on

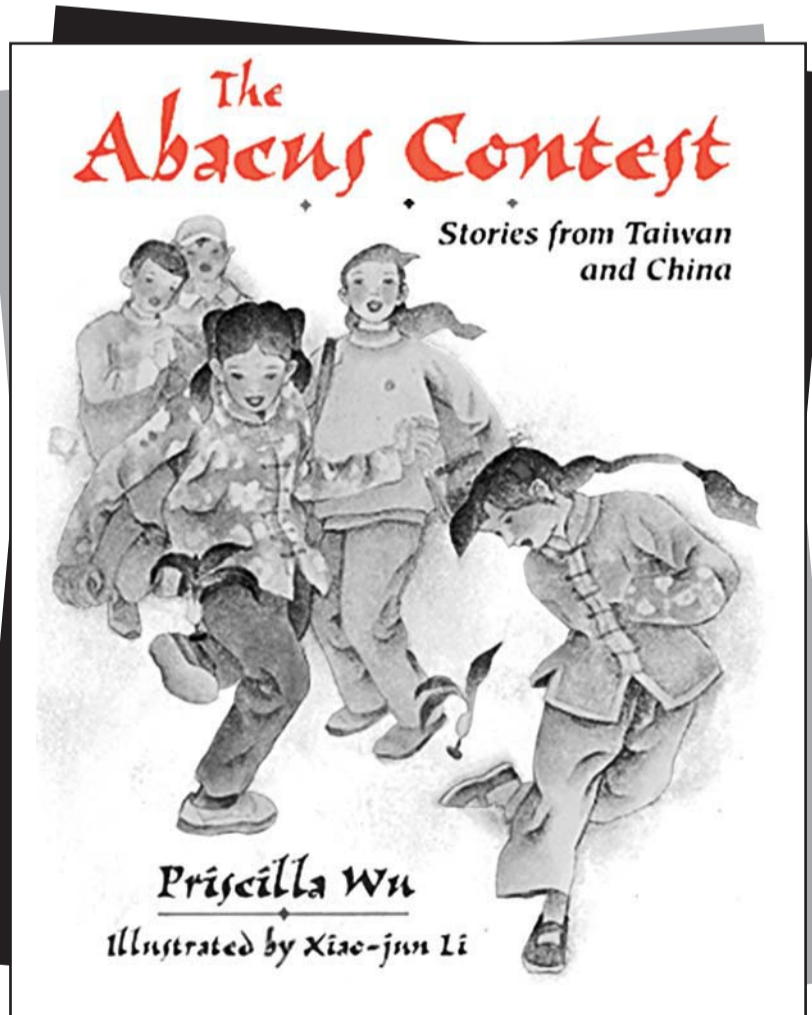
The Norwalk Knockouts U-11 boys team posted their third win of the season Sunday against Westport with an impressive 5-1 victory.

Matt Cappamolla recorded a hat trick and Jason Campos scored twice for the Knockouts (3-0-1). Providing assists were Christian Bonebrake, Michael King, Conor Mulford and Andrew Melitsanopoulos. Norwalk had 17 shots on goal, including shots by Jeffrey Mitchell, Justin MacIntyre, Nate Cutting, Brandon Conte, Ian Seal, Connor Finn and Tristan Pears. Solid on defense were George Theodoridis, Jonathon Weekes and Evan Jones.

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