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Rain just a bump after Whitlock winter

BY JIM CRESSMAN
Free Press Sports Reporter

DELAWARE — Last night's rainout at Delaware Speedway was nothing compared to the dampened spirits Dave Whitlock experienced over the winter.

"This is just a little bump in the track after such a difficult winter," Whitlock said after time trials and the twin 100s to set up tomorrow's Mopar 300 were rained out.

Time trials will go this afternoon, but the twin 100s have been cancelled. It was felt anyone who wrecked today wouldn't have time to get their car ready for tomorrow afternoon.

WHITLOCK: Lost sponsor, ISA folded.

"All of us would have liked to race (last night)," Whitlock said. "It takes one points race away from us and it also would have been nice to have one pre-race setup for us for the 300.

"It helps to get that extra session, especially when our equipment is new territory for us."

The three-time CASCAR Super Series champion from Petrolia lost his sponsor, Ford of Canada (a relationship that went back 11 years), when the company sank its motorsports budget into the CART Champ Car Series.

Then, after hearing grandiose promises from the fledgling International Stockcar Alliance of a contract with Toyota, that deal didn't happen.

Toyota officials later said they never had discussions with ISA.

That meant Whitlock would have to convert the four Ford Tauruses and six motors he had in his program to meet ISA specs.

Then the ISA folded Jan. 31.

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MOPAR 300 WEEKEND

Today: Spectator gates open at noon; CASCAR practice noon-2 p.m.; time trials 2:15 p.m.; Delaware program, street stocks, open wheel modifieds, trucks, king of the hill 7 p.m.

Tomorrow: Spectator gates open 11 a.m.; drivers' autograph session 11:15 a.m. -12:15 p.m.; CASCAR Super Series Mopar 300 2:15 p.m.

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RAINED OUT: Driver and team owner Dave Whitlock stands on the empty track at Delaware Speedway after last night's events of the MOPAR 300 weekend were canceled due to the rainy weather.

WHITLOCK: Never won Super Series race at his home track

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Whitlock was left to scramble to put together a new sponsorship deal to purchase a fleet of seven Chrysler Intrepids and 10 motors for his three-driver team that would put him back in CASCAR.

A new car with motor is $80,000 and a motor alone $30,000, but Whitlock said he was fortunate to buy used equipment from former Super Series teams. It cost him $300,000 — instead of $650,000.

He dealt with John Logel, who owned cars driven by Robbie Thompson, and Al Turner, who sold his four cars. Turner retired after losing his Blue Streak sponsorship.

Whitlock also was able to sell off his Ford equipment, helping ease the financial burden of the changeover, but a lot of time, effort and money has been invested and he has his fingers crossed it pays dividends — either a championship for him (to add to 1991, '97 and '98), or Mark Dilley (who won in 1994), or a rookie title for Bryan Cathcart, who's joined the team.

Whitlock said he had made the decision to go with ISA "because economically the grass looked so much greener.

"I'm trying to run this motorsports business to make a living. But in the end we were led down the garden path and (CASCAR president) Tony Novotny was good about getting everybody back in his camp."

Whitlock said he went with Chrysler equipment "because they and Mopar are such a huge supporter of CASCAR with their contingency program. And quite frankly, Ford and GM don't have one.

"It wasn't to spite Ford, but we wanted to support the people who support CASCAR."

Whitlock said teams that went with ISA lost money but he doesn't see any lawsuits arising.

"We all want to get on with our lives but the whole ISA thing was obviously a detriment to CASCAR and Canadian motorsports."

Whitlock, 38, is aiming at a fourth championship and at ending his drought at Delaware. He's never won a Super Series race at his home track.

"We're still after that elusive victory here. Maybe this will be the weekend," he said as he's told the weather forecast was for better days ahead.

After the winter Canadian motorsports experienced, Whitlock is hoping it's sunny skies all around.