

SPORTS

Brack Following in Foyt's Footsteps with Indy 500 Win

By BRUCE MARTIN
SPORTS TICKET

INDIANAPOLIS (Ticker) — Kenny Brack never was able to find a Formula One ride that suited him, so he ended up coming to the United States three years ago. On Sunday, the native of Sweden won the most famous race in the world in the 83rd Indianapolis 500.

"I had won a lot of races in Europe, and I had testing in Formula One, but it didn't work out," Brack said. "I came over here and looked at both IRL and CART, and an opportunity arose for me in the IRL."

"This has been the biggest race of my life and nothing compares to it."

It was also the biggest paycheck of Brack's life as the victory was worth \$1,465,190 of the largest purse in motorsports history.

The total 1999 Indianapolis 500 purse of \$9,047,150 was an event and motorsports record. The previous event record was \$8,722,150, set by last year's Memorial Day classic. Brack's winner's purse was the second largest in event history, trailing only the \$1,568,150 won by Arie Luyendyk in 1997.

One day after winning the biggest race of his life, Brack admitted he was still overwhelmed by it all. Although the quiet driver from Sweden exhibits supreme confidence in his driving ability, off the track he does not consider himself a celebrity.

That all changed on Sunday when he led six times for 66 laps and took the lead for good when Robby Gordon ran out of fuel and

had to pit at the end of lap 198.

On Monday, Brack was continuing to grope with the demands on his time.

"It's been chaotic, but I hope it's over soon," Brack said. "I have a race in a week and I have to get back in focus. I feel like I'm not pleasing everyone. There are people I can't get to, and people who can't get to me."

"I race because I want to race. That's my only concern. But this has been the biggest race of my life and nothing compares to it."

After winning the IRL championship in 1998, Brack's season began slowly as he was taken out in crashes at Disney World and Phoenix. During qualifications for the Indianapolis 500, he ran eighth and was far from the focus.

That was fine with him, however.

"I'm very happy the season started off the way it did," Brack said. "It gave me a lot of peace and quiet, and time to prepare. I've stayed home, I've focused on this race, and I think it's paid off. I think you get good at whatever you focus on."

Brack also believes it's a benefit that team owner A.J. Foyt grabs for the spotlight, deflecting some of the attention away from the driver.

"I enjoy that A.J. got a lot of attention yesterday," Brack said. "He deserved it. He has won more races than everyone."

Foyt was the first four-time winner of the Indianapolis 500 and won 67 Indy car races in his storied career. Brack became the all-time winning driver in the IRL's brief history with his fourth win.

Portland Had Spurs Reeling Before Elliott's Game-Winning Shot

By KELLEY SHANNON
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The Portland Trail Blazers dominated the San Antonio Spurs for 47 minutes, 51 seconds before everything came crashing down with Sean Elliott's off-balance, game-winning 3-pointer.

After enjoying an 18-point lead, and appearing as though they were headed to a victory on San Antonio's home court, the Blazers watched their lead evaporate Monday.

The Spurs edged closer as the clock ran down and finished the game with a 10-3 run capped by Elliott's bomb from the sideline as Portland's Rasheed Wallace surged toward him.

"That last shot by Sean Elliott was incredible," Blazers coach Mike Dunleavy said. "I'd give him a hundred bucks to see him make that shot again. It was one of those shots you dream about making."

The Spurs took their only lead of the game on Elliott's sixth 3-pointer and won 86-85 to take a 2-0 lead in the best-of-7 Western Conference finals.

Game 3 is Friday at Portland's Rose Garden.

Though most Blazers-Spurs games this season have been close, Dunleavy described Monday's outcome as "gut-wrenching."

A dejected Isaiah Rider said: "We choked. We choked."

"This was our game. We should have won it," added Blazers forward Brian Grant. "It just hurts right now."

Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said the hard-fought game was typical of the teams this season.

"This was like every game we've had with Portland all year. It was a war," he said. "Wego after each other."

Jim Jackson and Walt Williams both missed shots in the final seconds for Portland. Jackson tried to take it to the basket and draw contact but was forced into a short jumper.



AP Photo by Eric Gay

San Antonio Spurs center David Robinson (50) is double-teamed by Portland Trail Blazers' Kelvin Cato, center, and Stacy Augmon as he goes for the basket in the second quarter of Game 2 of the NBA Western Conference Finals Monday, May 31, 1999, in San Antonio.

No foul was called.

"I definitely got the look I wanted," Jackson said. "If the ref doesn't call it, no matter what I think, it wasn't a foul."

Williams then missed with the rebound.

The Trail Blazers came out strong and led 31-20 after the first quarter and 48-34 at halftime. Portland upped its lead to 52-34 early in the third quarter.

But then the Spurs went to work

chipping away. A 14-0 run midway through the third quarter took a big chunk out of the lead and pulled the Spurs within 56-51. But the Blazers kept holding San Antonio back and led 67-60 entering the final quarter.

"It's definitely disappointing," Portland guard Greg Anthony said. "This was possibly a gift, but that's basketball. Our guys battled, but they came out with the plays."

Grant said losing the large lead

was where the Blazers lost the game, not simply on Elliott's huge shot.

"We had a big lead. They cut it. That's where the game was lost," he said. "We just didn't close it out."

The Blazers can only hope to put the devastating defeat behind them as the series shifts to Portland. They'll have until Friday to try and do it.

"They don't have the upper hand on us," Anthony said. "We'll see them on Friday."

Mariners 10 Orioles 6

By JIM COUR
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As well as Ken Griffey Jr. is swinging the bat, Alex Rodriguez is hitting even better.

In 16 games since returning following knee surgery, the All-Star shortstop has eight home runs and the Mariners are 11-5 despite their overall 6.16 ERA, worst in the majors.

On Monday night, Rodriguez hit two homers in the Mariners' 10-6 victory over the Baltimore Orioles. Griffey hit his major league-leading 20th and Butch Huskey also homered.

Rodriguez had a three-run homer in a six-run second inning, and led off the sixth with another blast for his second two-homer game since coming off the disabled list May 14.

Rodriguez is making up for lost time. He's hitting .413 (26-for-63) with seven doubles, 16 RBIs and 25 runs scored since starting the season 0-for-6.

"I feel like I can be better," Rodriguez said. "I have some pretty good numbers to show for it, but I'm not quite as comfortable as I need to be."

Rodriguez, 23, normally doesn't show much emotion on the field, but he did in the first inning after home-plate umpire Tim Welke called him out on strikes.

"I felt like I was getting perfect pitches or my vision wasn't real good," he said. "I thought they were questionable strikes. But I got even. I felt I got some good pitches to hit after that and drove 'em out of the park."

The Mariners bounced back impressively after losing to Tampa Bay 15-7 on Sunday night. The four homers give them a total of 102 in their first 50 games, making them the fastest team to get 100 homers.

They also tied the major league record for homers in a month with 58, matching the Orioles' mark set in May 1987.

The Mariners move from the cozy Kingdome to new Safeco Field on July 15. Will they hit home runs at such a prodigious pace when they move across the street?

"We can hit homers anywhere," Huskey said. "We've proved that."

CONFERENCE FINALS SERIES

WESTERN CONFERENCE

No. 1 Spurs vs. No. 2 Trail Blazers

Game 1: May 29

San Antonio 80, Portland 76

Game 2: May 31

San Antonio 86, Portland 85

Game 3: June 4

San Antonio at Portland, 9 p.m.

Game 4: June 6

San Antonio at Portland, 6:30 p.m.

Game 5: June 8

Portland at San Antonio, 9 p.m.*

Game 6: June 11

San Antonio at Portland, TBA*

Game 7: June 13

Portland at San Antonio, TBA*

EASTERN CONFERENCE

No. 2 Pacers vs. No. 8 Knicks

Game 1: May 30

New York 93, Indiana 90

Game 2: June 1

New York at Indiana, 8:30 p.m.

Game 3: June 5

Indiana at New York, 9 p.m.

Game 4: June 7

Indiana at New York, 9 p.m.

Game 5: June 9

New York at Indiana, 9 p.m.*

Game 6: June 11

Indiana at New York, TBA*

Game 7: June 13

New York at Indiana, TBA*

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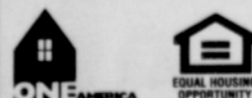
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