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Klein Knocked Off Pole In Final Minutes at Watkins Glen

Rookie Jonathan Klein came within minutes of recording his first Indy Pro Series pole Saturday at Watkins Glen International Raceway. But a drying race track and a late decision by series officials to extend the qualifying session by five minutes dropped him to sixth on the final starting grid.

The 19-year-old Star Mazda racing series graduate vaulted to the top of the time charts with just 10 minutes remaining in the scheduled 30-minute qualifying session, after pitting for adjustments and set up changes to his Klein Tools/Turn Key Forging and Design machine.

But shortly after setting his fast time, Klein's chassis bottomed out exiting Turn One, which caused him to spin and make light contact with the barriers. Instead of ending the session under caution, the decision was made to extend qualifying by five minutes on a drying race track. As track conditions had improved during the caution, Klein dropped to sixth overall when his competitors ran their final flying lap of qualifying.

Jonathan Klein, #27 Klein Tools/Turn-Key Forging and Design Dallara/Firestone

"This is the first time I've driven the Klein Tools/Turn Key Forging and Design car in the rain, so every lap I was just working on getting more and more comfortable. That is where we found our speed – just with me getting more experience in these conditions every lap. We kept trying to change the set up and we ended up bottoming out real hard in Turn One, which put me over the curbs. That unloaded the front of the car; I spun and kissed the wall a little bit. There's only minimal damage. It's just a shame they extended the session for no reason, because we would have had the pole, but I guess that's the way it goes. We'll do what we can in the race and go from there."

