

In Spite of Glitches, Penske Pleased with Grand Prix

by Gerald Scott
News Dept.

Despite the big kerfuffle involving warping pavement during the 2012 Chevrolet Detroit Belle Isle Grand Prix, organizer Roger Penske is happy with the overall turn of events.

"The Belle Isle Grand Prix returned for the first time since 2008 and, given the challenges in putting the track and staging and sponsor support altogether at once, Penske was nonetheless very happy with what he saw overall."

"I was thrilled for the weekend, when you look at the number of people who traveled to Belle Isle and the Isle was a jewel as part of Detroit, to me, to see the support of resources we had from the city, state and (Detroit city) council and all those volunteers who worked on the island for weeks to get it ready, to me we had great racing," Penske said.

"I'm sorry we had to have a delay (due to warping track) but that happens, there's a rain delay sometimes in baseball, we had a little track de-



Roger Penske discusses what happened at the Detroit Grand Prix on Belle Isle in a briefing at Detroit city hall last week. In spite of the pavement issues, Penske praised his race management team.

lay in Detroit – we had some lessons to learn there," Penske said.

Indeed, it has been more than four years since there was any professional racing on Belle Isle and the track showed its wear-and-tear shape with pieces of tar and pavement buckling, causing a race delay.

But still, racing experts have said that the back-to-back, generally exciting races

first at the Indy 500 – won by Dario Franchitti – followed by the uneven race in Detroit won by Scott Dixon that drew more than 100,000 fans to the Isle throughout the three-day weekend, all bodes well for the future of IndyCar racing as a series that always seems to be in the rearview mirror of NASCAR.

Penske made his comments at Detroit city hall following an earlier press conference

that discussed progress being made between city, state and feds on the proposed M-1 rail line on Woodward, for which Penske's organization is playing a major part there.

Penske killed the proverbial two birds with one stone by participating in separate briefings on progress being made on M-1 rail on Woodward, followed by his take on the 2012 Chevrolet Detroit Belle Isle Grand Prix.

Overall, the racing impresario liked what he saw on Belle Isle in spite of the many challenges that are now familiar.

"To me, the people (fans) were happy and that's the deliverable I wanted – we showcased our city in a very positive way."

"We brought the young people down from DPS (Detroit Public Schools) on Friday so they could see about cars, technical, dynamic things," Penske said of the student visitors to the track and paddocks.

"The corporate community stepped up – certainly General Motors and Chevrolet really showcased this."

"Our bus transportation worked out well, we had parking downtown, we had over 140 buses (shuttling fans and media on and off the isle) and that worked out very efficiently."

"I want to thank Bud Denker and the whole team (which) did a really great job."

GM Plans Closing of Its Oshawa Plant, CAW Says

CHARMAINE NORONHA
Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) – The Canadian Auto Workers union said last week that General Motors of Canada plans to close its consolidated plant in Oshawa, Ontario, by June 2013, leaving what could be as many as 2,000 workers out of a job.

The consolidated plant, which produces the Chevrolet Impala and the Equinox, was originally scheduled to close in 2008, but market demand for the vehicles enabled it to remain in business.

However, beginning in the fourth quarter of this year, the third shift at the plant will be removed and the second shift will be removed in the first quarter of next year, General Motors of Canada said.

Chris Buckley, a local union president, said along with the possible direct loss of up to 2,000 jobs with the plant closure, an additional 18,000 spinoff jobs will also be lost.

The union called the closure disgusting and short-sighted.

"General Motors should instead be focusing on utilizing its Canadian facilities as it seeks to further rebuild the company," said union president Ken Lewenza.

"The decision to close this very productive line and put 2,000 more workers out of a job is ill-thought-out and could damage the company in the long run," he said.

The union said Chevrolet Impala production will shift to a neighboring flex plant that also produces the Chevrolet Camaro, Buick Regal and Cadillac XTS cars, which means some workers whose jobs will disappear in the plant that's closing could be hired at the flex plant if it adds a third shift, but GM has not confirmed that a third shift will be added.

The Impala will also be built at GM's Detroit-Hamtramck assembly plant in Michigan.

The Equinox will be built at the company's former Saturn plant in Spring Hill, Tenn. That

assembly plant, originally the home of GM's now-defunct Saturn brand, shut down in 2009, though an engine plant on the site remained in operation.

GM agreed to reopen the Spring Hill plant under a new GM-United Auto Workers pact that brings only a minimal increase in fixed costs for the automaker.

There is some speculation that the automaker's Canadian counterpart is announcing this impending plant closure in part because of upcoming negotiations with the Canadian auto union and an effort to get the union to bend as far as the UAW.

GM has been scaling back its overall operations in Canada as part of a North American restructuring begun two years ago under bankruptcy court protection.

That streamlining led to the loss of tens of thousands of jobs at the company's Canadian and U.S. operations and the shutdown of several plants.

In Canada, GM has already closed a truck plant in Oshawa and a transmission factory in Windsor, Ontario.

Buckley said the union has done everything GM has asked it to do with the intention of having jobs in the future.

"There's been nothing but downsizing over the last few years, nothing but devastation. GM workers don't ask for a lot, they ask that they can go to work every day and make a living," said Buckley during a press conference.

Buckley said the federal and Ontario governments should get involved because they remain major shareholders to the tune of CA\$8 billion (US\$7.7 billion) as a result of government bailouts of the auto industry.

GM Canada currently employs more than 10,000 people across the country. In its heyday, the automaker had more than twice that number of employees in major operations in Oshawa, Windsor, and St. Catharines, Ontario.

Global Brand Signs Manchester United

DETROIT – Chevrolet is entering into a five-year partnership agreement with Barclays Premier League giant Manchester United to become the club's Official Automotive Partner.

In today's announcement, Chevrolet is pledging that fans will be at the heart of its sponsorship with a constant focus on bringing the club supporters and football fans around the world closer to the game than ever before.

Details about the global partnership will be announced at a celebration event at the Shanghai Science & Technology Museum that will include representatives from Chevrolet, Manchester United and other special guests. The event will begin at 8 p.m. China Standard Time (8 a.m. EDT, 1 p.m. BST).

"Manchester United has some of the most passionate supporters of any sporting club in the world," said General Motors Global Chief Marketing Officer Joel Ewanick.

"The Chevrolet family is proud to partner with Manchester United and is fully committed to putting these fans at the center of everything we do."

Said David Gill, Manchester United CEO: "Although part of two very different industries, Chevrolet and Manchester United share many of the same values."

"Like the Club, it is steeped in history, having recently celebrated its centenary, and it has also grown to be a global brand, selling cars in more than 140 countries. Above all, it too strives to be the best in



Manchester United superstar Ryan Giggs, the most decorated player in English football history and holder of the club record for competitive appearances, makes an appearance in Shanghai, China, with a Chevrolet Malibu. Chevrolet is entering into a five-year partnership agreement with Barclays Premier League giant Manchester United to become the club's Official Automotive Partner. It's notable for a U.S. marque to support English soccer.

its field and I am delighted to welcome Chevrolet as our Official Automotive Partner."

Richard Arnold, Manchester United commercial director, said: "With 659 million United fans and followers around the world, the commitment that Chevrolet is making to football and its plans to bring these fans closer to our club is very exciting for us."

"This is also the first time we have teamed up with a U.S. automotive partner and with the growing popularity of the Club and English football in America, we are hoping the relationship will allow us to further expand our fan base in the country."

Manchester United is the world's most popular football

club, with an estimated 659 million fans and followers and was recently named by *Forbes* magazine as the most valuable sports club in the world. Founded in 1878, the Club has won a record 19 English league championships to add to its record 11 English FA Cups, 3 European Cups, 1 European Cup Winners' Cup, 1 FIFA Club World Cup, 1 Intercontinental Cup and 4 English League Cups. Its Manager, Sir Alex Ferguson, is the most successful manager in British history.

Off the field, the Club enjoys similar success with record turnover for a British club and the highest operating profit levels in world football, which is called soccer.

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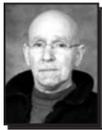
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