

## **BRISCOE WINS HONDA GRAND PRIX OF ST. PETERSBURG TO OPEN 2009 SEASON**

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla., (Sunday, April 5, 2009) – Ryan Briscoe kicked off the 2009 IndyCar Series season with a victory in the Honda Grand Prix of St. Petersburg. The win was Briscoe's third and Team Penske's 30<sup>th</sup> in the IndyCar Series. The combo also won the non-points race in Australia after the 2008 season.

Briscoe led 46 of 100 laps and held off Ryan Hunter-Reay by 0.4619 of a second to claim the victory. Justin Wilson finished third after leading a race high 52 laps.

Wilson took the lead in the first turn of the race as the field went four wide into the first corner. Graham Rahal, who a day earlier became the youngest pole winner in IndyCar Series history, was hit and spun sideways into the grass and fell back to 21<sup>st</sup>. The defending race winner drove back through the field to a seventh-place finish.

Wilson led the first 34 laps on alternate tires. Known as "reds," the tires will be used on all road/street course races as an alternative to the primary tires. The red-sidewalled tires offer more grip but less durability.

Briscoe took the lead when Wilson pitted and held the lead until the next round of pit stops when Wilson came out in front. Wilson was the leader on a Lap 86 restart when Briscoe moved to the inside heading into Turn 1 and passed for the lead. Hunter-Reay got past Wilson in Turn 4 for second.

Hunter-Reay turned in the best finish ever for Vision Racing, coming just one week after signing with the team. Wilson turned in the best IndyCar Series finish for Dale Coyne Racing in his debut with the team.

Dario Franchitti finished fourth in his first race since winning the series championship in 2007, and Tony Kanaan finished fifth.

The race was the first televised on VERSUS.

Also on Sunday, Junior Strous won the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg Race 2 Firestone Indy Lights event, completing a sweep of the doubleheader weekend. Strous edged pole sitter Sebastian Saavedra by .4428 of a second to become the third Firestone Indy Lights driver to open a season with two victories.

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