

# PRESS RELEASE

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## Valentine Perseveres Through Tough Grand-Am Finale



**Daytona, FL, November 1, 2003** – Starting from 8<sup>th</sup> position at this past weekend's Grand-Am Weekend of Champions Rolex Series race, RJ Valentine and Darius Grala finished a grueling race 7<sup>th</sup> in class. On what Valentine would say was a challenging weekend, the team and drivers overcame mechanical and racing adversity, holding on to finish a race that would have undone lesser drivers.

Dealing with a finicky car has proved difficult for a generation of drivers, and having helped the development of the #3 Cegwa Sport Toyota Daytona Prototype, Valentine wasn't expecting to drive a beast this weekend.

“It was a tough weekend for us – we just never got the car right. The thing was just diabolical all week. We chased the setup, and at times, it was downright scary to drive the car,” said Valentine, owner of F1 Boston, one of America’s premier karting facilities.

Valentine’s co-driver Darius Grala started the race, and managed to tame the car until it was forced off track by a late-braking GTS car. He came into the pits barely 40 minutes into the race, and after an emergency taping job on the bodywork and a quick change of tires, was back out until his scheduled fuel stop at the 1:00 hour mark of the race.

Valentine charged out of the pits to make up lost time, but quickly discovered that the car was nearly undriveable. “The car just wouldn’t handle well at all,” he said. “When Darius got pushed off the track, we went down two laps repairing the car, so I went after the guys ahead of me with a vengeance. I drove the car as hard as it would go – but it wasn’t giving me any confidence at all. We ended up doing the entire race on two sets of tires, while all the other teams used four sets, so as they deteriorated as the stint went on, the grip level kept getting worse and worse.”

Delicately, Valentine pedaled the car around the track, still closing on the 6<sup>th</sup> place car. “I was having to muscle the car around,” the Boston businessman said, “but in the end, driving it was like trying to stick a wet noodle through the eye of a needle. To make matters worse, my cool suit malfunctioned, so I got good and hot in the car. All in all, it was a challenging weekend, but I’m glad that we finished as high as we did.”

In the end, the #3 Cegwa Sport Toyota Daytona Prototype driven by RJ Valentine and Darius Grala finished 7<sup>th</sup> in class, as Valentine sweated out lbs. of weight throughout his stint. For the year, Valentine finished on the podium four times, with two second-place finishes as his top results. He is currently formulating plans to race in Grand-Am again in 2004.

To learn more about Valentine’s businesses, visit [www.mbagroup.com](http://www.mbagroup.com).

To learn more about F1 Boston, visit [www.F1Boston.com](http://www.F1Boston.com).