

(This is one in a series of columns by Idaho's Davey Hamilton, driving for Vision Racing, who qualified in the 18th provisional spot with a four lap average of 222.017 miles per hour as he prepares for the 92nd running of the Indianapolis 500.)

SPECIAL TO THE TIMES NEWS

By Davey Hamilton

It's not exactly where I would have wanted to qualify the Hewlett-Packard/KR Vision Racing car in the field, but we're good. The car was a lot quicker last weekend. I really thought I had a shot for the 12th or 13th spot and unfortunately we didn't get that. We had some problems this morning and the car had some lift in Turns 1 and 2. But I'm happy to be in the Indianapolis 500.

Honestly, I probably should have put more intention into qualifying. We concentrated on the race and I've lost some spots because of it. We were 13th last week and ahead of a lot of the guys who are up there now.

I'm an old-timer. I really don't like the qualifying format here. I think it would be a lot fairer to be prepared for this race if you could qualify when you want to qualify and keep the time when you want to keep it. If you get bumped out because of it, that's your problem. But, to give it credit, it does make it more exciting.

As a driver, you always want to win and be the fastest. I'm glad I'm back with the Vision Racing team, with Hewlett-Packard and Kingdom Racing. But we're all farther down the chart than we expected.

This is Indy. It's a guessing game. We've been limited on practices and with the different weather conditions we've had this month, who knows what it is going to be like on race day.

Because we had to wait an extra week to qualify, it's a huge setback. Combine that with the rain limiting track time and it made matters worse. This past week, I had to try the car in race setup but keep qualifying in mind.

I'm thrilled to be back in Indy. After my accident in Texas in 2001, I was very fortunate to have a goal of getting back into racing. It was my passion to want to race again. If you have a passion you have to strive for it. If you're down, God's giving you a chance to go out and find what you love to do and go after it. Sometimes, He gives us a break to re-focus and that's what happened to me.

Qualifying at Indy is the toughest four laps in motorsports. There is nothing tougher than what I did today to make this race.