

Baltimore Grand Prix in jeopardy amid promoter debts

AutoWeek, November 8, 2011

The Baltimore Grand Prix--which debuted in September to rave reviews from competitors and fans--could disappear from next year's Izod IndyCar Series and American Le Mans Series schedules unless its promoter finds a way to settle outstanding debts.

Despite the fact that approximately 150,000 fans packed the Inner Harbor area for the race weekend, the *Baltimore Business Journal* reports that Baltimore Racing Development must pay more than \$1.5 million to the city by Dec. 31. Otherwise, city officials told the *Journal*, they will end their five-year contract with the group.

Baltimore Deputy Mayor Kaliope Parthemos said in an official statement that Baltimore Racing Development “must immediately restructure and recapitalize or sell itself to investors in order to make the event profitable in the future.”

City councilman William H. Cole IV said, “The only way I could see [the races] happening [in 2012 if the debt is not paid] is if someone came in and bought the whole thing, including the debt. They have to reorganize and refinance, or sell.”

In addition to its debt to the city, Baltimore Racing Development is allegedly also facing lawsuits from unpaid vendors and lenders.

Visit Baltimore last week released a report that said the race weekend generated \$47 million in increased spending in the area, but that number fell \$23 million short of what promoters had said was possible.