

Six-time champions win American Solar Challenge

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Finishing more than two hours ahead of its nearest competitor, the University of Michigan Solar Car Team has won the American Solar Challenge for a third consecutive North American title.

The week-long, biennial 1,100-mile competition for solar-powered vehicles started in Broken Arrow, Okla., on June 20 and ended in Naperville, Ill., on Saturday, June 26. The U-M car was the first of 13 to cross the finish line at around 2 p.m. ET, for a final time of 28 hours, 14

minutes and 44 seconds.

This is the sixth North American title for the team, which won the inaugural event in 1990 with its first car, the Sunrunner.

"It's an unbelievable feeling," said engineering student Steve Durbin, the team's race manager. "This race means a lot to us because we're defending our home territory. It's great to see that all of our hard work paid off."

The team's car, Infinium, was reliable, Durbin said, whereas breakdowns dogged other fast teams. The U-M students faced only minor setbacks. Rain shorted out a lighting board, but they managed to fix it in five minutes on the roadside. A black widow spider moved into the spare battery pack, but the students removed it with a long pair of pliers.

"Everything went pretty smoothly," Durbin said.

This marks the end of the road for Infinium, the 10th-generation car. Each car runs two races—the North American race and the global race in Australia. In the 2009 Global Green Challenge (formerly the World Solar Challenge), Infinium placed third. That was the fourth time in the team's history that U-M has finished third in the world race.

Infinium is believed to be the university's fastest [solar car](#) ever. It reached 100 mph in testing. The car traveled the speed limit during the race, which passed through many small towns with traffic lights. On the highways, the limit was 65 mph.

With more than 100 members, Solar Car is one of the largest student organizations on campus, including students from the College of Engineering; College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Ross School of Business; School of Art & Design; and School of Education. Major

sponsors this year include Michigan Engineering, Ford, General Motors, Delta and AT&T.

More information: solarcar.engin.umich.edu/

Provided by University of Michigan

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