



## **THE GRADUATE GOES TO LONG BEACH – DANE CAMERON, MAZDA’S NEWEST ‘LADDER’ CHAMPION MAKES HIS ATLANTIC DEBUT AMID HIGH EXPECTATIONS**

There’s not a driver racing at the Long Beach Grand Prix this weekend who has more going for him, or more expected of him, than rising open-wheel star Dane Cameron.

Cameron, winner 2007 Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear – and the full-season *MAZDASPEED* Motorsports Driver Development Ladder Atlantic sponsorship that goes with it – will be making his competition debut in the #19 Genoa Racing/*MAZDASPEED* Swift 016.a in Round One of the 2008 Atlantic Championship Powered by Mazda... a race that was won last year by Raphael Matos, the 2005 Star Mazda champion.

Add to that a stellar family racing pedigree and the three championships and three ‘Rookie of the Year’ awards he’s won during his climb up the motorsports ladder, along with the fact that he was fastest in both days of Atlantic series pre-season testing at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca. Pile on the widely-held view among motorsports insiders that he’s the next hot young American racer and the full weight of the expectations resting on the shoulders of this 19 year-old native of Sonoma, California becomes clear.

“Pressure is a part of racing and if I hadn’t learned along the way how to convert it into increased motivation, I wouldn’t be where I am today,” observes Cameron. “I’ve worked hard, with the help of a lot of long-time supporters, to get here, so a lot of expectations means I’ve had a lot of success and have a good career ahead of me as long as I can keep delivering. Genoa Racing is an extremely successful team made up of top professionals and based on how well we’ve jelled and the results we’ve had in testing, I think we can compete for victory here and the Atlantic championship in 2008.”

And Cameron has had a close-up view of just exactly what it takes to win at Long Beach over the years. In 1998, 2001 and 2002, he watched from the pits as his father, Rick Cameron, and uncle, Steve Cameron - the race engineer and team manager of the legendary Lynx Racing Atlantic team owned by Peggy Haas and Jackie Doty -- orchestrated Atlantic victories for Memo Gidley, David Rutledge and Michael Valiante. Cameron will race with Lynx Racing’s traditional #19 on his car during the 2008 season.

Bringing it all full-circle, Cameron and Valiante co-drove a Chip Ganassi Racing/Finlay Motorsports 500-horsepower Daytona Prototype in the season-ending Rolex Series event at Miller Motorsports Park last year. And the lead mechanic on his Genoa Racing Atlantic car, Mike West, was also the lead mechanic for Lynx Racing during several of those Long Beach victories. Another element in the mix is Genoa team principal, technical director and Cameron’s race engineer, Thomas Knapp, himself a former top open-wheel racer.

Cameron arrives at this major step in his career via an accomplished climb up the open-wheel ladder. In addition to the 2007 Star Mazda Championship, where he was both series champion and Rookie of the Year (only the second driver in the series' 17-year history to become champion in his first season), Cameron was the 2006 F2000 Rookie of the Year and finished second in the championship. As a Team USA Scholarship driver, he won the 2006 Palmer Audi Winter Championship in Europe. In 2005 Cameron was the SCCA Formula Jim Russell Series champion and Rookie of the Year. His karting career, beginning in 2000, was similarly successful, including the 2003 Jim Russell Karting 80cc Junior Shifter Championship and a 2004 finalist in the Red Bull Driver Search.

Cameron's participation in the 2008 Atlantic Championship Series powered by Mazda is made possible by the MAZDASPEED Motorsports Driver Development Ladder, as well as a variety of long-time personal sponsors; including the Finlay Motorsports Driver Development Program, Lynx Racing, Mockett.com, Rett.org, Nearburg Exploration, Red Line Oil and Sparco USA.

Genoa Racing is a team with a rich heritage in many forms of motorsports. Founded by successful San Francisco-based businessman Angelo Ferro in the early 1980s, the team began competing in the famed CanAm Championship, began competing in the Atlantic series in 1990 and in 1991 signed Jimmy Vasser, now a veteran Champ Car driver/team owner making a one-off return to the cockpit at Long Beach. Genoa moved into Indy Racing League competition in 1997-98 as Thomas Knapp Motorsports/Genoa Racing with driver Greg Ray, a period highlighted by Ray's front-row qualifying run for the 1998 Indianapolis 500. Genoa, in addition to Dane Cameron, will also field a car for Atlantic series veteran Alan Scutio.

"We know that Dane will be a force from his showing in the first two tests of the pre season and were super impressed with young Alan Scutio's commitment, focus and speed in the car," says Knapp. "We feel that these two champions will raise each other's game, as well as the team's championship focus. Both Angelo and I are extremely pleased with the team's depth of talent and can't wait to hit the streets of Long Beach with these two quick, young racers."

Team owner Angelo Ferro mirrored Knapp's enthusiasm by adding, "Thomas and the guys have put together a great team and with these two, incredibly talented young drivers, the level of excitement is beyond belief. I can't wait for Genoa to roll out at Long Beach, a place where so many great racing memories have been forged."

On-track activities for Round One of the 2008 Atlantic Championship Series Powered by Mazda begin with an 8:00 am practice session on Friday morning, followed by a one-hour qualifying session beginning at 3:00 pm that afternoon. While the first qualifying session determines which driver will start on the pole for the race, the second session, just 35 minutes long and scheduled to begin at 12:50 pm on Saturday, will determine the other front-row starter and the starting order for the remainder of the field. The race itself, scheduled for one hour, will take the green flag at 10:35 am Sunday morning.

The date and time of the television broadcast of the race will be posted on the Atlantic series web site, [www.atlanticchampionship.com](http://www.atlanticchampionship.com), as soon as the information becomes available. Round Two of the 2008 Atlantic Championship Series Powered by Mazda

takes place at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca on May 18, during the Monterey Festival of Speed weekend featuring the Grand-Am Rolex Series.

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For further information, photos or interviews with Dane Cameron, please contact Peter Frey at (818) 906-6997 or [Bstorm2000@aol.com](mailto:Bstorm2000@aol.com). To find out more about the Atlantic Championship Series Powered by Mazda, visit the series' web site at [www.atlanticchampionship.com](http://www.atlanticchampionship.com).

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For more information on the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear and the MAZDASPEED Motorsports Driver Development Ladder, please visit [www.starmazda.com](http://www.starmazda.com) and [www.mazdausa.com](http://www.mazdausa.com).

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