



STAR MAZDA CHAMP MATOS TO DRIVE IN BOTH INDY LIGHTS AND ALMS FOR ANDRETTI/GREEN THIS WEEKEND AT MID-OHIO



2004 Star Mazda champion Raphael Matos will be one busy driver this weekend. Since joining the Andretti Green Racing organization earlier this year as a driver in their Indy Lights program, he has scored two wins and now stands second in the championship battle. And this weekend he will join Franck Montagny in AGR's #26 XM Satellite Radio Acura for the Acura Sports Car Challenge at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course.

This is Matos' first start for AGR in the American Le Mans Series (ALMS). However, Matos has three ALMS starts in the 12 Hours of Sebring and one at Petit Le Mans. His best finish came at Sebring in 2007 when he scored a ninth in the GT2 class.

Currently, Matos stands second in the Firestone Indy Lights championship and has driven the #27 AFS Racing/Andretti Green Racing entry to a pair of wins this season, one coming on the streets of St. Petersburg and the other coming at Watkins Glen International. Matos won the 2007 Atlantic Championship and also captured a GT class win in the 2008 24 Hours of Daytona.

Matos will be driving in three races as part of this weekend's action at Mid-Ohio. He will take the wheel Saturday for both the ALMS Acura Sports Car Challenge and the first race of the Mid-Ohio 100 for the Firestone Indy Lights Series. He will drive in the second race of the Firestone Indy Lights doubleheader on Sunday.



"I'm very excited to be driving the XM Acura at Mid-Ohio in addition to my duties for the Firestone Indy Lights Series," says Matos. "I got to test AGR's ALMS car at Mid-Ohio earlier in the season, which I think will help me get up to speed much quicker. I am looking forward to driving with Franck as I know that we will be able to work well together to set up the car. Hopefully we can give Acura a win at their home track and give AGR their first win of the season."

Matos made his debut in the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear in 2004, scoring a 5th-place finish in his first-ever race at Mid-Ohio. He also sat on the pole at Mosport and scored a season-best 2nd-place finish at Road America. He finished 7th in the championship. 2005 was to be his big year in the Star Mazda Championship, scoring four consecutive victories, three poles, eight podium finishes and ten top-5s on his way to the championship.

He moved up to the Atlantic championship in 2006 with sponsorship from the MAZDASPEED Motorsports Driver Development Ladder and won the pole in his first-ever Atlantic race at the Long Beach Grand Prix. He scored his first Atlantic win in San Jose and also drove four Indy Lights races, winning both races of the double-header at the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg. He also finished 5th in the LMP2 class at the 12 Hours of Sebring and Drove for A1 Team Brazil, finishing 6th and 7th in the double-header at Beijing.



Matos went on to win the 2007 Atlantic Championship, finishing all 12 races in the top-10, scoring six wins, 10 top-5 finishes and six poles. He also drove in the 12 Hours of Sebring and competed in select events for A1 Team Brazil.

Other recent Star Mazda Championship graduates making news on the national motorsports scene include IRL race winners Graham Rahal and Marco Andretti and NASCAR Sprint Cup rookie Michael McDowell. And Matos will be racing head-to-head this weekend in the

ALMS event with two other notable Star Mazda alumni, Gerardo Bonilla and Ben Devlin, co-drivers of the #8 B-K Motorsport/Mazda/BP LMP2 prototype.

Over the past eighteen years, the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear has grown into one of the most prolific and successful driver development series in all of auto racing. This year's series' prizes total \$1.5 million and includes a full-season sponsorship from the MAZDASPEED Motorsports Development Ladder for the 2008 Star Mazda series champion to move up and race in the 2009 Atlantic Championship Powered by Mazda.

"The Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear offers an opportunity to race in the United States in one of the most successful and affordable manufacturer-supported driver development series," says Star Mazda Championship founder and President Gary Rodrigues. "The Star Mazda Championship is also a gateway series to many other forms of racing because once you learn to drive an open-wheel car competitively, it becomes much easier to adapt to – and excel in – other kinds of cars. Graduates of the Star Mazda Championship have gone on to salaried rides in F1, IRL, Champ Car, prototypes, sports cars and stock cars. As this weekend's results clearly demonstrate, the racing world is full of successful Star Mazda graduates and we're proud of them. But we also look forward every year to a new class of young hotshoes who will be the racing stars of tomorrow."

For more information on the Star Mazda Championship and its drivers, as well as the Mazda Motorsports ladder system, please visit www.starmazda.com and www.mazdausa.com.

On any given weekend, there are more Mazdas on the road-race tracks of America than any other brand of vehicle. At the track, you'll see MX-5 Miata, RX-8, MAZDA3, MAZDA6, RX-7 and other vintage Mazda models competing, because every Mazda has the Soul of a Sports Car.

For more information on the various Mazda spec series, visit:
www.champcaratlantic.com www.starmazda.com
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