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## THE STAR MAZDA CHAMPIONSHIP PRESENTED BY GOODYEAR ANNOUNCES REVISED 2008 SCHEDULE

**Sebring, FL (March 13, 2008)** – With the unification of Champ Car and the Indy Racing League now official and a new open-wheel landscape beginning to take shape, the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear has announced a revised 12-race schedule for 2008 with all races in major markets and all of them broadcast on the SPEED Channel. A revised broadcast schedule will be announced shortly.

Events at Houston, Cleveland and Toronto have disappeared from the schedule, but the Star Mazda Championship will still begin its 18<sup>th</sup> season with its traditional date at the 56<sup>th</sup> annual Mobil1 12 Hours of Sebring International Raceway on March 14 and wind up the season at the Monterey Sports Car Championships at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca on October 18. The most substantial change to the schedule involves running two Star Mazda Championship races during the Portland weekend, July 26 – 27, and the addition of a double race weekend at the brand-new New Jersey Motorsports Park, September 13 – 14.

Previously-scheduled Star Mazda Championship races at Miller Motorsports Park, Watkins Glen, Portland (now a double weekend), Road America, Trois Rivierès, Mosport, Road Atlanta and Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca remain unchanged.

“Given the challenges and short time frame that the unification presented us with, this new schedule represents the minimum possible disruption while preserving the maximum possible benefits to our teams, drivers, sponsors and corporate partners,” says Star Mazda Championship President Gary Rodrigues. “We even wind up with three races where we are a featured event rather than a support race. I would like to particularly thank Mazda for their extraordinary efforts and their commitment to the *MAZDASPEED* Motorsports Driver Development Ladder, of which the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear is a proud and important part.”

### *Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear 2008 Schedule*

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>With</u>	<u>Circuit Type</u>	<u>Additional Info</u>
March 14	Sebring	ALMS	Airport Circuit	<a href="http://www.sebringraceway.com">www.sebringraceway.com</a>
May 17	Salt Lake City	ALMS	Road Course	<a href="http://www.millermotorsportspark.com">www.millermotorsportspark.com</a>
June 7	Watkins Glen	Grand-Am	Road Course	<a href="http://www.theglen.com">www.theglen.com</a>
July 26	Portland (*)	Feature	Road Course	<a href="http://www.portlandraceway.com">www.portlandraceway.com</a>
August 9	Road America	ALMS	Road Course	<a href="http://www.roadamerica.com">www.roadamerica.com</a>
August 17	Trois Rivierès	Feature	Street Circuit	<a href="http://www.gp3r.com">www.gp3r.com</a>
August 23	Mosport	ALMS	Road Course	<a href="http://www.mosport.com">www.mosport.com</a>
Sept. 12	New Jersey (*)	Feature	Road Course	<a href="http://www.njmotorsportspark.com">www.njmotorsportspark.com</a>
October 3	Road Atlanta	ALMS	Road Course	<a href="http://www.roadatlanta.com">www.roadatlanta.com</a>
October 18	Mazda Raceway	ALMS	Road Course	<a href="http://www.laguna-seca.com">www.laguna-seca.com</a>

*(\*) Indicates events with two Star Mazda Championship races on the same weekend*

Once again, the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear will be sharing the center stage spotlight with the American Le Mans and Grand-Am series on a combination of road and street circuits. More than twenty-five cars will be making the first standing start in Star Mazda Championship history at 2:50 pm (ET) Friday, March 14, with a unique diversity of nationality, gender, age and family relationships totally unique in the world of auto racing. Included in the mix are racers from the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Brazil, the U.K., Ireland and Gibraltar. There are three fast young female drivers, drivers ranging in age from 16 to 64, a father/son team and a brother/sister team.

“The diversity and depth of talent represented by the starting field at Sebring is the most eloquent statement I can imagine of the importance of the Star Mazda Championship as a major rung on the *MAZDASPEED* Motorsports Development Ladder,” says Rodriques. “This unification between Champ Car and the Indy Racing League is causing everyone to have to make some adjustments, but in the long run it’s the best thing that could happen to open-wheel racing. 2008 promises to be the most spectacular and hard-fought season in the 18-year history Star Mazda Championship.”

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. The 2007 prize fund approached \$1.5 million U.S.; drivers and teams will be battling for a similar amount in 2008, including a full-season Atlantic sponsorship for 2009.

Many top drivers began, or accelerated, their careers in the Star Mazda Championship. Recent alumni include such top open-wheel racers as Champ Car star Graham Rahal, IRL standout Marco Andretti and American F1 driver Scott Speed. 2005 Star Mazda Champion, Raphael Matos graduated via the *MAZDASPEED* Motorsports Driver Development Ladder to the Atlantic series, won the 2007 championship and will driver for Andretti-Green Racing in the Indy Pro Series in 2008. Dane Cameron, the 2007 Star Mazda Champion will drive a Mazda-sponsored full season in the 2008 Atlantic Series while Joel Miller, the 19-year-old racer from Hesperia, California who scored five wins and finished on the podium in all 14 of the 2007 BF Goodrich/Skip Barber National Presented by Mazda Series races, has won a fully-sponsored ride in the 2008 Star Mazda Championship. And Connor De Phillippi, who won the Skip Barber Mazda karting shootout, also won a Mazda-sponsored full season in the Skip Barber series.

Also on the list is Michael McDowell, the 2004 Star Mazda champion who has raced Indy Cars, Daytona Prototypes, was Rookie of the Year in the 2007 ARCA RE/MAX stock car series and will be driving for Michael Waltrip Racing in the 2008 Sprint Cup.

For more information on the Star Mazda Championship and its drivers, as well as the *MAZDASPEED* Motorsports Development Ladder, please visit [www.starmazda.com](http://www.starmazda.com) and [www.mazdausa.com](http://www.mazdausa.com).

