

For Immediate Release: June 6, 2008

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Photos available upon request

FUTRELLE TOPS IN SPEED CONNECTION FORMULA MAZDA CHALLENGE

Championship leader scores his fifth win of the season at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course

LEXINGTON, OHIO (June 1, 2008) – The inaugural season of the Speed Connection Formula Mazda Challenge continued on June 1 as the six round took place at the famed Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course over the past weekend. Overcoming an early-race incident, Georgia's Franklin Futrelle extended his series win streak to three, edging Jason Vinkemulder and Guy Piptone to the checkered flag.

A month and a half after the previous doubleheader at Virginia International Raceway, the Speed Connection competitors returned to their cockpits on Friday (May 30) with practice sessions as part of an SCCA Great Lakes Division National. In ideal early summer conditions, virtually all of the drivers worked on finding the right set-up ahead of the two qualifying sessions that would take place on the technical road course.

This proved vital, as come Saturday morning, heavy rain forced the majority of the competitors to forego the first qualifying session. Thankfully, the second session run later in the day featured good track conditions. As the championship leader entering the event, Futrelle was the driver to beat in qualifying, capturing the pole position for the Sunday race with a fast lap that was a full second quicker than Steve Jenks.

Returning to the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course one day later, the start to Round Six of the Speed Connection Formula Mazda Challenge proved chaotic, as Futrelle and Jenks contacted one another on the opening lap. Avoiding the spinning Jenks and Futrelle, who was sliding off-course, third place starter Vinkemulder took over the lead, just ahead of Pipitone and Juan Marchand. Rejoining in sixth place, Futrelle commenced what would be stellar drive back to the front. Turning the fastest laps of the race, the four-time series race winner steadily gained on the leaders, advancing up the charts on virtually every lap. Upon catching Vinkemulder, Futrelle wasted little time finding a way past and then rapidly established a gap on the field. Jenks was on the move as well having fallen back to seventh with his spin, and following in Futrelle's wake, he progressed through the field as the race progressed. When the checkered flag waved at Mid-Ohio, Futrelle had captured his fifth win of the season ahead of Vinkenmulder and Pipitone. Jenks and Marchand completed the top-five.

The eight-race Speed Connection Formula Mazda Challenge enters the home stretch on June 21-22 with the seventh round running in conjunction with the prestigious SCCA Chicago Region June Sprints at Road America. Entering the event, Futrelle holds a commanding lead over Round Two race winner Bruce Lawrence.

Additional information on the Speed Connection Formula Mazda Challenge can be obtained via the series website @ www.thespeedconnection.com. For direct contact, please contact Bruce Lawrence @ 919-795-4790.

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About Speed Connection Formula Mazda Challenge:

Operated by Speed Connection LLC, a North Carolina-based race prep shop, the Speed Connection Formula Mazda Challenge was formed in the fall of 2007. A new championship series for drivers of the "standard" Formula Mazda, the series is patterned after the former Star Mazda Championship for the class, utilizing a similar point structure and purse payout, thanks to sponsors like Goodyear, Trackside Tim and Safequip. Running in conjunction with SCCA Club Racing events, the inaugural season features an eight-race schedule, with stops at some of the premier race facilities in North America, including Sebring International Raceway, Road Atlanta, VIRginia International Raceway, Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course, Road America and Watkins Glen International.

Attached Files:

Photo: 300 x 200 web-ready JPEG

Potential Caption: Franklin Futrelle bagged another win in the Speed Connection Formula Mazda Challenge, scoring the victory at Mid-Ohio

Logo(s): Speed Connection Formula Mazda Challenge