



Tom Gladdis Becomes Second – And Youngest – Star Mazda Graduate to Join FIA F2 Series



Tom Gladdis

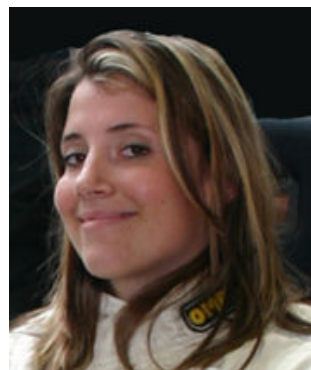
Tom Gladdis has secured the penultimate place in the 2009 FIA Formula Two Championship and becomes the series' youngest driver. He is the second graduate of the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear to join the new series; Swiss racer Natacha Gachnang, who drove in the 2007 Star Mazda Championship season, became the first female racer in the series earlier this year.

British driver Gladdis is due to celebrate his 18th birthday next week, and he joins Formula Two after finishing sixth in the Star Mazda Championship in North America. Gladdis took one victory, two pole positions and three podiums in just 10 races, having skipped two rounds of the championship through being too young to compete.

Gladdis, who was born on the Isle of Wight but now resides in Gibraltar, only began his racing career in 2007 when he was awarded a Formula BMW UK scholarship following a track test evaluation. This gave Gladdis the chance to compete in the Formula BMW World Final in Valencia – a race that was eventually won by fellow F2 driver Philipp Eng.

Tom Gladdis said: "F2 is just so appealing – it's cost effective, high profile and a high level of commitment has been shown by both the FIA and MotorSport Vision. The level of driver talent is huge and it is going to be a challenging campaign, but you can learn so much by racing against tough opposition. This may well be a two year program for me but the thought of winning a Formula One test will only make me push harder! I'm particularly looking forward to competing at Spa-Francorchamps for the first time as it is a circuit at which I have always dreamt of racing."

Jonathan Palmer, Chief Executive of championship organizer MotorSport Vision, said: "Tom has had a rapid rise through the ranks following his discovery by BMW in late 2006, and despite his lack of experience he was a genuine contender for the Star Mazda Championship in only his second season of racing. Whilst F2 is a considerable step up for Tom, there's no doubting that he is a very talented young driver, and there's every chance he could be one of the surprise packages of the 2009 season."



Natacha Gachnang