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THE STAR MAZDA CHAMPIONSHIP TAKES A MAJOR STEP FORWARD IN 2012 WITH AN 18-RACE SCHEDULE ON 10 WEEKENDS, MOST WITH INDYCAR

PRI Show / December 1, 2011 – The Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear today announced a departure from tradition with a 2012 schedule featuring 18 races on 10 weekends, most with the IZOD IndyCar Series. Details of a new Mazda Road to Indy television package will be announced when available.

On-track action begins with an official Star Mazda Championship series test at Barber Motorsports Park, March 19-20. This will be the first official series test. From the Barber test, teams will head directly for IndyCar's high-profile season-opener, the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, March 24-25, and then return immediately to race at Barber Motorsports Park on the IndyCar weekend, March 31-April 1.

The drivers' oval-track education continues on Memorial Day weekend as the Star Mazda Championship heads for the prestigious "Night Before the 500" held at Lucas Oil Raceway in Indianapolis on Saturday night, May 26, before the 101st running of the Indy 500. The winner of the race will be introduced to the crowd at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway during the opening ceremonies on Sunday morning. Other major activities during this event include an autograph session at the Speedway's famed Gasoline Alley and the annual Indy Summit where Mazda Road to Indy drivers meet with top IndyCar teams, drivers and series officials.

The next event is yet to be announced but will take place June 22-24. Following that is a four-weekend run of street circuits, beginning with three in a row in Canada including IndyCar's Grand Prix of Toronto, July 7-8, followed by the Grand Prix of Edmonton, July 21-22. This will be the series' first visit to the airport circuit in Alberta. The third race in Canada is the 43rd running of the GP3R in Trois-Rivières, Quebec, August 3-5, where Star Mazda and Indy Lights will share top billing

Back in the U.S., the fourth street circuit is the hugely popular Grand Prix of Baltimore, September 1-2. Immediately following Baltimore, teams will head for the West Coast to compete in the only event not associated with IndyCar, the Grand-Am weekend at Mazda Raceway in Northern California, September 8-9. The final Star Mazda Championship race of the 2012 season is another event yet to be announced.

Rising racing stars from around the world will hone their skills at five street circuits, two road courses, one oval and two events yet to be announced; all street circuit and road course weekends will be 'double headers featuring two races, with the fastest lap for each car in Race 1 determining the starting grid for Race 2. Oval track weekends will be single races.

In addition to providing more racing with no increase in budget or travel, the new double-header format is designed to be attractive to the businessmen/racers who compete in the Star Mazda Expert Series for drivers 30 and older. Ten races during the season will count toward the Expert Series Championship, allowing Expert competitors to run a complete season in five weekends.



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Date	Event	Track Type	With
March 19-20	Barber Spring Training	Road Course	Star Mazda
March 24-25	Grand Prix of St. Petersburg *	Street Circuit	IndyCar
March 31-April 1	Barber Motorsports Park *	Road Course	IndyCar
May 25-26	Night Before the 500	Oval	USAC
June 22-24	TBA	TBA	TBA
July 7-8	Grand Prix of Toronto *	Street Circuit	IndyCar
July 21-22	Grand Prix of Edmonton *	Street Circuit	IndyCar
August 3-5	GP3R Trois-Rivières *	Street Circuit	Indy Lights
September 1-2	Grand Prix of Baltimore *	Street Circuit	IndyCar
September 8-9	Mazda Raceway *	Road Course	Grand-Am
October TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA

* Two Star Mazda Championship races per weekend

QUOTES

Tony George Jr. – "2012 will be the third year of the Mazda Road to Indy and the program is really taking hold among our teams, drivers and race promoters. This has allowed us to tailor the schedule to more closely align with the IZOD IndyCar Series and introduce our fans to the next generation of IndyCar drivers. This is what the program was designed to do, and with these rising stars sharing the stage at our biggest races, the future of IndyCar racing looks brighter every year."

John Doonan / Director Mazda Motorsports – "The MAZDASPEED Motorsports Ladder and Mazda Road to Indy are two unique driver development programs that combine to reach all the way from the entry level to the pinnacle of open-wheel racing. The champion in each series is provided with scholarship funding to move up and compete at the next level; from karting shootout to Skip Barber to USF2000 to Star Mazda to Indy Lights to IndyCar. As young drivers have come to understand that there is now a way for them to race their way to the top, buzz about the programs is building not just in North America but among racers from countries around the world."

Gary Rodrigues / Founder, President Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear – "It has been our extremely good fortune to have the two best long-term partners any racing series could have, Mazda and Goodyear. With their help, the Star Mazda Championship has achieved great success and produced many top drivers over the last 22 years and our growing association with INDYCAR and the Mazda Road to Indy is providing the catalyst to take our series to the next level. This is an exciting time for young racers everywhere, and we're proud to be part of it."



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ABOUT MAZDA

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, Mazda2, Mazda3, Mazda6, RX-7 and other vintage Mazda models competing, because every Mazda has the Soul of a Sports Car. In fact, the largest road-racing class in the world is Spec Miata, with more than 2,500 first- and second-generation Miatas tearing up America's racetracks, making it the most-raced production car in the world. Mazda's involvement in motorsports extends to its relationship with Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca, one of the world's premier road-racing circuits, the Skip Barber Schools for driving and racing, and the Mazda Road to Indy.

For information, contact Dean Case / Communications Officer /MAZDASPEED Motorsports (310) 318-4582 / mazdaspeed@mazdausa.com

About Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear

For 2012, the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear will again be a major part of the [Mazda Road to Indy](#). Rising stars from around the world will be watched by more than a million fans as they compete for prizes valued at \$1.5 million, including a scholarship to move up and race in the 2013 Firestone Indy Lights series. Drivers 16 and older are welcome to compete and the Star Mazda Championship also features the Expert Series for drivers 30 and older. The Star Mazda Championship features standing starts, wheel-to-wheel racing at 160 mph and budgets a fraction of other top open-wheel ladder series. For more information on the Star Mazda Championship please visit www.starmazda.com.

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. For information, interviews and photos, please contact Star Mazda Communications Director Peter Frey at (818) 398-5733 or StarMazdaPR@aol.com.

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