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STAR MAZDA GRADUATES ANOTHER DRIVER TO THE MAJOR LEAGUES - 2009 MASTER SERIES CHAMPION MIKE GUASCH MOVES UP TO ALMS PROTOTYPE WITH MUSCLE MILK PICKETT RACING

While the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear is noted for its graduates now competing in IndyCar and Indy Lights, the series, now entering its 22nd season, has a long history of graduating drivers into a wide variety of top-level motorsports, from Formula One and NASCAR to prototype endurance racing.



Star Mazda's most recent success story comes in the form of 2009 Expert Series champion Mike Guasch (center), who has announced he will co-drive with IndyCar/prototype driver Memo Gidley (right) in the LMPC class of the 2012 American Le Mans Series. The duo -- are based locally, near the team's Benicia headquarters -- will compete for the Muscle Milk Pickett Racing team in the Challenge class, which features the Michelin-clad ORECA-Courage FLM09 prototype.

The team's expansion is the next step in its plans of growing and building a successful racing business. For the first time in its history, it will enter two cars in the series, after fielding a single entry in what were two successful full seasons in the ALMS the last couple of years.

"We're extremely excited about the upcoming season and our two-car ALMS program," expressed team owner Greg Pickett (left). "We've been slowly expanding our racing efforts and this was a logical choice for us to have both a Challenge car and a P1 car on track this season. Memo has been part of the Muscle Milk family for a very long time now and we're thrilled to have him back with us racing in the ALMS. I'd also like to welcome Mike Guasch to our racing family. We're looking forward to working with him and Memo and to having a good season together."

Gidley will be taking part in LMPC class competition for the first time while Guasch will be making a return to the series after taking part in a couple of LMPC events in 2011 with Genoa Racing and claiming a class win at the prestigious 12 Hours of Sebring. The team is currently searching for a third driver to complete the lineup at the three endurance races on the schedule at Sebring, Laguna Seca and Petit Le Mans.

Guasch comes to the ALMS for his first full season of competition in the sports car series after spending the last few years moving up the racing ladder. The American placed first overall in the Masters Class of the Star Mazda Championship in 2009, a follow-up to his third place overall in what was a partial 2008 season of competition in that series. The Master Series featured drivers 45 and older; the Master and Expert Series (for drivers 30 and older) have since been combined into a single class.

The last couple of years, Guasch tested his skills in the FIA GT3 European Championship (2010) as well as the British GT Championship (2011) in addition to his limited schedule in the ALMS.



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"I'm very excited to be joining Muscle Milk Pickett Racing with the LMPC car. I've had a chance in 2011 to race the Challenge car in a couple of races and do some testing and this is what I wanted to do for 2012. I've been racing GT in Europe for the last two years and I really wanted to run the ALMS this season, doing this deal with Muscle Milk is fantastic.

"Secondly, and more importantly is getting to run with Memo. We've been friends for a number of years and we're very excited to run together. I think as a team we will have a very good package between the two of us and that's a good piece of the puzzle.

"Additionally, with both of us being local, we'll be able to train together and be with the car on a regular basis. I'm also very excited to represent a health-minded brand, very much so because we are athletes, we train very hard and we live and breath eating well and training. It's something that becomes that much more important when it comes to endurance racing."

Gidley a former CART/Champ Car driver who more recently has been competing in the Grand-Am Series will be making a return of sorts with the Muscle Milk team. The American first drove for and with team owner Greg Pickett at the 2007 Petit Le Mans race, claiming a third place finish in the P1 class. Gidley also completed the Muscle Milk team's second place finishing driver lineup at Laguna Seca in 2010.



Over the years in both the open-wheel and prototype formulas Gidley has amassed wins, podiums and numerous top ten finishes and has become a fan favorite because of his hard work ethic, never give up attitude and likeable down to earth personality. In addition to his car racing, Gidley is a multiple time US shifter kart champion and still one of the most recognized names in US go-kart racing. Also a passionate stand up Jet Ski racer, Gidley won the DJSA Outlaw Jet Ski Series Super 800 class in 2009 and finished second in the 850cc Expert class in 2010.

"For me to be a part of Pickett Racing and racing for Muscle Milk is really a dream come true. I've been a Muscle Milk athlete for close to 10 years now and they, not only the organization but the people like Greg and Penny Pickett and their son and daughters, have turned into family and have been great supporters of mine. Also, the team synergies are great. Mike, the Picketts and I, all come from a similar background, which is essentially from very little and then with good old-fashioned hard work, we got to where we are today. And lastly, I'm stoked to be racing with my friend Mike. I have huge respect for him as a driver, a person and a friend and I know we are going to have a fantastic time with great success. I'm really thrilled to be racing for the Muscle Milk brand in the ALMS aboard the LMPC car and appreciate everybody's work to make this happen."

Aside from some private testing sessions in the next couple of months, the pair of American drivers will make their official debut at the American Le Mans Series Winter Test February 8 - 9, 2012. The upcoming season of the American Le Mans Series kicks off with the 12 Hours of Sebring March 17th, 2012.



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For more information on Mike Guasch you can visit his website at www.mikeguasch.com and for Memo Gidley please go to www.memogidley.com

About CytoSport

CytoSport, the maker of Muscle Milk®, is among the largest sport nutrition protein beverage companies in the U.S. and offers a complete line of protein-enhanced powders, shakes and bars. Muscle Milk® was recently named the 2008 Ready-to-Drink Beverage of the Year by bodybuilding.com, Best Functional Beverage and Beverage of the Year by BevNet and 2009 Company of the Year by Beverage Forum presented by Beverage Marketing Corporation and Beverage World. For more information on Muscle Milk or additional CytoSport products, visit: www.cytosport.com.

About Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear

For 2012, the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear will be again be a major part of the [Mazda Road to Indy](http://www.mazdausa.com). The 2012 schedule includes 18 races on 10 weekends, most with IndyCar. Rising stars from around the world will compete on road courses, street circuits and ovals in front of 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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