



**MAZDA ROAD TO INDY DRIVERS TAKE THEIR 'NEED FOR SPEED' TO SCHOOL AT THE WORLD'S FASTEST CLASSROOM, THE SECOND ANNUAL INDY SUMMIT AT THE INDIANAPOLIS MOTOR SPEEDWAY**

*Before racing in the Night Before the 500, open-wheel's rising stars participated in three days of autographs, seminars, training sessions and meetings with top IndyCar officials, drivers and teams*

Indianapolis Motor Speedway - With the top-3 finishers in this year's 100th Anniversary Indy 500 having worked their way up through the ranks of the Mazda Road to Indy, this unique driver development program aimed at creating the next generation of open-wheel racing stars is becoming increasingly important to IndyCar. Race winner Dan Wheldon was the 1999 USF2000 Champion and raced in Firestone Indy Lights; runner-up J.R. Hildebrand was the 2006 USF2000 Champion and 2009 Firestone Indy Lights Champion; 3rd-place finisher Graham Rahal raced in both the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear and Firestone Indy Lights.



Tony George Jr. was a key figure in the development of the Mazda Road to Indy Summit project and he invited all of the drivers as well as the major sponsors and media to the event to learn how to project a professional image as they make their way through the ladder system.

“We wanted to bring together the drivers, sponsors, friends and family all together to learn more about what to do off the track,” George Jr. said. “We invited all the media to

come so the drivers can learn how to handle themselves in those situations.”

As befits such a successful and prolific program, this year's Indy Summit, a comprehensive education in all things IndyCar, was split into two parts, the first of which took place at the season-opening Grand Prix of St. Petersburg in March and included media training, a Business of Racing presentation by top executives from the Mazda motorsports department and a face-to-face meeting, at the Target Chip Ganassi hospitality tent, with team manager Mike Hull.





The second portion of the 2011 Indy Summit started with the USF2000 Oval Clinic at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, which offered a priceless educational opportunity to drivers from all levels of the Mazda Road to Indy. A panel of driver experts, including two-time Indianapolis 500 winners Al Unser Jr. and Dan Wheldon, led a curriculum that included such topics as qualifying setup vs. race setup, adjusting for changing track conditions and communication with spotters.



The Indy Summit continued May 25-27 at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and included a Business of Motorsports presentation by Mazda, public relations and media training, a team shop tour with Target Chip Ganassi Racing, social media training from INDYCAR driver James Hinchcliffe and a special Mazda Road to Indy feature pace lap on Carb Day at IMS.

The Mazda Business seminar provided a comprehensive education in the business side of racing, including such topics as how to market yourself as a driver, sponsorship acquisition, building a brand as a driver, public relations and media training by Bob and Annie Goodrich of SportsCast Stars Training as well as the ABC's of interviewing and proper interview techniques, how to present yourself to media and fans, the proper etiquette of social media, how to use it to your advantage and career growth and development (presented by Target Chip Ganassi Racing's team manager Mike Hull), how to set yourself apart from other drivers on and off the track and the importance of networking.

Other Indy Summit activities included an autograph session featuring drivers from the Firestone Indy Lights, Star Mazda and the USF2000 series. Drivers from each series, including Star Mazda championship leader Tristan Vautier, also participated in a fan Q&A session at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.



And, for the first time ever, the Firestone Freedom 100 at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway was paced by more than just the Indy 500 pace car. Participants from the Mazda Road to Indy program paced the Firestone Indy Lights field in front of over 100,000 spectators on Carb Day and a live TV audience on VERSUS. Drivers on track in their race cars as part of the pace lap included championship leaders Petri





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race winner), Connor De Phillippi (Star Mazda race winner), Josef Newgarden (Firestone Freedom 100 winner) and Darren Hagen (USAC race winner).

Suvanto/Cape Motorsports (USF2000), Tristan Vautier/JDC Motorsports (Star Mazda) and Michael Lewis/Tony Stewart Racing (USAC).

Winners from the USF2000, Star Mazda and USAC "Night Before the 500" event at Lucas Oil Raceway, as well as the Firestone Freedom 100 winner, were honored on the morning of the Indianapolis 500. Each winner was introduced on the IMS victory podium and interviewed on the video board before 400,000 spectators at the Greatest Spectacle in Racing. Drivers interviewed included Petri Suvanto (USF2000

"This week in Indianapolis was just awesome!" said Vautier. "What we learned during the Mazda Road to Indy Summit, in complement of the activities at St. Petersburg, has an incredible value for a driver. It just makes you more complete and helps you meeting key people for your career. Mazda, IndyCar and Star Mazda are really pushing for us and we can't be thankful enough. Added to that, I got the luck to drive two laps of the Speedway in front of the Indy Lights field on Carb day, in my JDC Motorsports Star Mazda car! It made me realize how awesome this track really is, and it made me want to climb the next step of the Mazda Road to Indy ladder even more, to be able and race there next year. You can only get these kinds of opportunities in US racing, on the Mazda Road to Indy, and I'm glad I made the move here from Europe in 2010!"

**About Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear**

For 2011, the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear will be a major part of the Mazda Road to Indy and will feature a 10-weekend, 11-race schedule, all on major race weekends and most with IndyCar. Two weekends are with the American Le Mans series, and one is a double-header with Indy Lights. 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 2012 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](http://www.starmazda.com).



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For more information on the Star Mazda Championship and its drivers, as well as the Mazda Road to Indy, please visit [www.starmazda.com](http://www.starmazda.com) and [www.mazdausa.com](http://www.mazdausa.com). For information, interviews and photos, contact Star Mazda Communications Director Peter Frey at (818) 398-5733 or [StarMazdaPR@aol.com](mailto:StarMazdaPR@aol.com).

Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/starmazdaseries>

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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, MAZDA3, MAZDA6, RX-7 and other vintage Mazda models competing, because every Mazda has the Soul of a Sports Car. For more information on the various Mazda spec series, visit:

[www.mx-5cup.com](http://www.mx-5cup.com)   [www.skipbarber.com](http://www.skipbarber.com)   [www.usf2000.com](http://www.usf2000.com)   [www.starmazda.com](http://www.starmazda.com)

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