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STAR MAZDA CHAMPIONSHIP ANNOUNCES 2012 SEASON FINALE TO BE HELD AT 15th ANNUAL PETIT LEMANS POWERED BY MAZDA AT ROAD ATLANTA OCTOBER 17-20

Pacoima, CA / December 16, 2011 – The Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear today announced that the 2012 season finale will be held at Road Atlanta during the 15th Annual Petit Le Mans powered by Mazda, October 17 – 20. Although Road Atlanta was not on the 2011 schedule, the Star Mazda Championship has a more than decade-long history of competition at the famed 12- turn, 2.54-mile road course located just north of Braselton, GA.



Unlike the double-header races that will take place on the other road course and street circuits that make up most of the 2012 Star Mazda schedule, the Road Atlanta event will be a single-race weekend; with one TBA event still to be announced, this brings the count to 10 weekends and 17 races.

"We were very pleased to be invited to compete during the biggest and most prestigious event on the American Le Mans Series calendar, particularly with Mazda as a title sponsor of the event and a number of our graduates in the field for the main event," says Gary Rodrigues, founder and President of the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear. "Star Mazda is a top open-wheel driver development program and a major part of the Mazda Road to Indy, but with graduates also having moved on to F1, NASCAR, and sports cars, we are also a gateway series to the top levels of many forms of motorsport. Fans at Petit Le Mans will see wheel-to-wheel competition among top young drivers from around the world, drivers whose names will become familiar in years to come."

Table with 4 columns: Date, Event, Track Type, With. Rows include training, Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, Barber Motorsports Park, Night Before the 500, TBA, Grand Prix of Toronto, Grand Prix of Edmonton, GP3R Trois-Rivières, Grand Prix of Baltimore, Mazda Raceway, and Petit Le Mans Road Atlanta.

\* Two Star Mazda Championship races per weekend



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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 next event is yet to be announced but is scheduled to 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 other 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 will take place during the 15th Annual Petit Le Mans powered by Mazda at Road Atlanta October 17 – 20.

The last time the Star Mazda Championship raced at Road Atlanta was 2010, with Connor De Phillippi (center) winning the event. The Star Mazda lap record of 1:18.328 was set by Peter Dempsey in 2008; Dempsey moved up to race with Andretti Autosport in Indy Lights in 2011.



Rising racing stars from around the world will hone their skills at five street circuits, three road courses, one oval and one event yet to be announced; all street circuit and road course weekends (except the season finale) 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.



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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.

### **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](http://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](http://www.starmazda.com) and [www.mazdausa.com](http://www.mazdausa.com). For information, interviews and photos, please contact Star Mazda Communications Director Peter Frey at (818) 398-5733 or [StarMazdaPR@aol.com](mailto:StarMazdaPR@aol.com).

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