



## ACCELERATING UP THE LADDER -- RISING STAR MAZDA DRIVERS CONOR DALY AND GUSTAVO MENEZES RACING IN BOTH THE U.S. AND EUROPE IN 2011

This has been a remarkable year for the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear with the creation of the Mazda Road to Indy, six drivers graduating from Star Mazda to Indy Lights, the USF2000 champion moving up to Star Mazda and now two drivers – one graduate and one current – racing up the open-wheel ladder with simultaneous programs in the U.S. and Europe.



2010 Star Mazda champion Conor Daly (right) is competing in both Indy Lights (where he won at Long Beach and is the current points leader) and with Carlin in the GP3 series that is a support series for Formula One.



In addition, California racer Gustavo Menezes (left), who graduated directly from a top-level international karting career to the Star Mazda Championship, is also competing in the Eurocup Formula Renault 2.0 series and just made his debut at Spa.

### **NOTHING EASY ABOUT GP3 IN TURKEY**

Daly's first two GP3 races were never going to be smooth because of the amount of “new” information and experiences he would be rushed through on a race weekend. There are only two 30 minute practice sessions before qualifying and then the two races.

Getting the Pirelli tires into their “high grip” window has proved to be very difficult so far. It has almost become an engineering exercise to understand what to do – and the “what to do” changes circuit to circuit. Formula One is the same and this is meant to be a good training ground for how to gain and understand such knowledge. The turbo requires a “two feet” pedal application at times to keep the turbo pressurized and up on boost for fast corner exits. On top of that, there are new race tracks to be learned almost every weekend.

The first session on Friday was wet – good news for Conor as he was fastest in the wet in Silverstone testing in March. He ran between 4th to 6th most of the session until a pit stop. He fell to 11th before yellow .ags halted any runs at the end of the session. Still, P11 – not a bad start.

The second practice session (Friday afternoon) was the .rst opportunity to learn the dry line and brake points. In a 30 minute session with one pit stop, he got approximately 10 laps. Then straight to qualifying; not a good session – qualifying P29 – the full grid was covered by 1.3seconds – this is serious stuff.





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Race one was a mixture of a good start with action all around, including a car rolling upside-down right in front of him, and after 15 laps, a 21st place finish (this would be his starting position for race two).



Race two was another good start – more positions made up in first six corners – then in the fast turn 11 he was pushed off, resulting in breaking the floor which handicapped the car for the rest of the race (most of the car's downforce is generated from the under-floor). That move basically sealed the result of the race because with the damaged floor; all he could do was finish the laps and gain the experience.

Almost in a blur, it was over. From a fog of engineering debriefs, tire discussions, set up

changes, driving styles, turbo lag, tire grip and degradation... on top of getting lost on the way to the hotel every night – buying gas using only sign language and an amazing and quirky Turkish country.

It's now on to Spain in two weeks where it will all happen at the same breakneck speed. It was a weekend of struggle but it was a great weekend of learning... but there is no other way for Daly to gain this information and be able to use it to his benefit except plowing through it the hard way.

### **MENEZES SOLID IN EURO CUP FORMULA RENAULT 2.0 DEBUT AT SPA**

American up-and-comer Gustavo Menezes took another step in his quest to reach the pinnacle of open-wheel motorsports this weekend (April 30-May 1), making his Eurocup Formula Renault 2.0 Series debut at the famed Circuit Spa-Francorchamps. Going against 46+ very talented drivers from across Europe, the highly-rated Californian impressed many with his skills behind the wheel, exiting the home of the Belgian Formula One Grand Prix with 32nd and 19th place results.

Given Menezes had never previously raced in the highly-competitive Eurocup Formula Renault 2.0 Series – having only just sampled the car for the first time last week – or visited the famed Spa-Francorchamps road course, the opening collective test day featured the multiple karting champion getting acclimated to his new European race surroundings. Driving the No. 11 TrueCar/K1 Racing/camas10/Oakley/SafetyPark/Interwetten.com Junior Team entry, the 16 year-old immediately impressed onlookers by posting the 18th quickest time, fastest among the multi-car Interwetten.com Junior Team squad, in the morning test run. While the Santa Monica, Calif.-based racer ultimately fell to 25th on the timecharts in the afternoon session, he continued to get quicker, dropping his best time around the fast and undulating road course by several seconds.



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PERFORMANCE  
FRICTION  
BRAKES



BBS





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MAZDA SPEED  
MOTORSPORTS DEVELOPMENT



With over 46 cars taking part in the doubleheader event, qualifying for race one at Spa was broken into two groups. As part of the second group, the goal for Menezes upon getting back behind the wheel was to gain valuable seat time experience and continue building speed during the session. Menezes – who is running a full Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear program in North America in addition to a six-race European Formula Renault 2.0 campaign – promptly did just that. While unable to get the perfect flying lap he desired due to traffic and a late session stoppage for a car off-course, Menezes continued to go quicker in qualifying, ending the run with the 11th best time in the group.

After a brief break to go over strategy with his Interwetten.com Junior Team crew, Menezes returned to the cockpit for first-ever Eurocup Formula Renault 2.0 Series start. Lining up P20, the American racer was immediately involved in a spirited battle for position when the lights went out for the opening race of the weekend. Despite having considerably less experience than his rivals, Menezes not only held his own, but started to work his way forward. Unfortunately just as it appeared he was headed towards a strong finish in his series debut, another competitor spun, collecting the innocent Menezes. While the damage was not significant (front-wing primarily), it was enough to warrant a trip to the pitlane. Menezes, after some quick work by his crew, returned to action, running some fast times prior to taking the checkered flag in 32nd.



Menezes returned to the famed road course in the Ardennes mountains one day later excited to pilot his Interwetten.com Junior Team entry. Qualifying for race two of the Belgian doubleheader proved to be similar to the opening qualifying run, with the talented racer again encountering a good deal of traffic, and a red flag situation limiting his overall speed. While the end result had him 14th fastest in his group he was pushed back to 28th on the grid for Round Four, the result of a pitlane blend line violation during qualifying.

The California teenager, having put the disappointment of qualifying out of his mind, showed why many are keeping an eye on him when Round Four got underway at the end of the day. Menezes displayed superb racecraft right from the get go, making the most of every opportunity to move forward. Executing some bold overtaking maneuvers, the 16 year-old advanced all the way to 19th at the checkered flag, despite what was later to be determined less than ideal downforce settings for the high-speed road course.



GOODYEAR



PERFORMANCE  
FRICTION  
BRAKES



BBS

QUARTER  
MASTER



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**MAZDASPEED**  
MOTORSPORTS DEVELOPMENT



“It was awesome to make my Formula Renault debut at Spa,” stated Menezes. “The Interwetten.com Junior Team crew was fantastic, and I have learned so much this weekend. I am already looking forward to next event at Imola. I know the more I’m on track, the better I will get.”

Menezes returns to the driver’s seat of an Interwetten.com Junior Team prepared car this coming weekend (May 7-8), with Rounds Three and Four of the Formula Renault 2.0 ALPS at the Autodromo Enzo e Dino Ferrari in Imola, Italy. The Californian’s Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear season resumes on May 28th, with Round Three at Lucas Oil Raceway in Indiana.



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PERFORMANCE  
FRICTION  
BRAKES



**BBS**

