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## MAZDA ROAD TO INDY QUICKLY GROWING INTO GLOBAL OPEN-WHEEL DRIVER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM WITH ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW PARTNERSHIPS IN U.S. AND OVERSEAS

Mazda Road to Indy officials announced several new partnerships for the official driver development ladder of INDYCAR at the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg.



The Skip Barber Racing School will now be the official racing school of the Mazda Road to Indy and INDYCAR, and create the [Skip Barber INDYCAR Academy](#), a year-long program that will culminate in a driver winning a scholarship to race in the Skip Barber Racing Series.

The upcoming [British Formula Ford champion](#) will receive a full test day in a USF2000 Championship car and one full day in a Star Mazda Championship car as part of the Mazda Road to Indy test at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway in October 2012.

The top three drivers from the [LaTam Challenge Series](#), a VW-based formula car series in Mexico, will each receive a one-day test in a Star Mazda car as part of the Mazda Road to Indy test at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway in October 2012.

Both the Quebec-based [Formula Tour 1600 series](#) and the Ontario-based [Toyo Tires F1600 Championship](#) series champions in 2012 will each receive a one day test in a USF200 car at the Mazda Road to Indy test at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway in October 2012.

“There’s a clearly defined path from karting all the way to the IZOD IndyCar Series,” said Jason Penix, Director of Grassroots Initiatives for INDYCAR. “Skip Barber already has ties to the Mazda Road to Indy by awarding a scholarship for a driver to race in USF2000, and today’s announcement solidifies the ladder. In addition, adding these partnerships give us tie-ins with series in Canada, Mexico and Europe.”

### **Juncos Racing and Chilean Formula 3 Championship**

In addition to the new partnerships announced by IndyCar, Juncos Racing team principal Ricardo Juncos has signed a ground-breaking agreement with the Formula 3 Association and the Chilean Federation of Motor Racing (FADECH) that will allow each year’s [Chilean Formula 3](#) champion the opportunity to race in the U.S.A. within Juncos Racing’s Mazda Road to Indy program. The newly formed alliance will provide financial backing for the champions in exchange for a seat with Juncos Racing, making IndyCar’s “Mazda Road to Indy” program the next natural step in these drivers’ careers.

The announcement is not only substantial news for the future of Juncos Racing but for the Mazda Road to Indy ladder, too, a program that the South American team is highly enthusiastic about.

Ricardo Juncos, Team Owner: "I am so happy and honored that I could make this trip to Chile, my first visit, and make such a huge agreement among Juncos Racing, the Chilean Federation of Motor Racing, and the



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Chilean Formula 3 Association. With this partnership, the country of Chile is planning on expanding its support into its whole motorsports program in the near future. The country is revising its karting program to have all the proper classes, sponsoring two tourism classes, and of course, the famous Chilean Formula 3 series. Each year's Formula 3 champion will then have full support to join our Mazda Road to Indy program." For further information, click [here](#).

### **Juncos Racing and 'Team Viso Venezuela'**

Juncos Racing has signed Venezuelan racing pair Bruno Palli, 20, and Diego Ferreira, 18, to compete in the 2012 Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear. Both accomplished racers in their home country and Europe, Palli and Ferreira will migrate their careers to the U.S.A. this season as representatives of "[Team Viso Venezuela](#)", an initiative founded by the duo's Venezuelan manager and IZOD IndyCar Series driver E.J. Viso. "Team Viso Venezuela" is a program that promotes bringing young talents from the South American country to compete in the Mazda Road to Indy ladder with the help of Venezuelan supporters. The hope is that these racers can then climb through the ranks until they reach the peak of American open-wheel racing, the IZOD IndyCar Series (Juncos Racing currently runs teams in the top two steps of the ladder, the Star Mazda Championship and the Firestone Indy Lights Series). For further information, click [here](#).

### **Star Mazda Championship and the Mazda Road to Indy**



Utilizing the ladder formed by the Cooper Tires Presents the USF2000 National Championship powered by Mazda, the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear and Indy Lights, the Mazda Road to Indy provides a clearly-defined path for career-minded young drivers to progress up through the ranks to compete in the IZOD IndyCar Series and the Indianapolis 500... with scholarship funding for the champion at each level to move up and compete in the next higher series.

- The 2012 champion in the [Cooper Tires Presents the USF2000 National Championship Powered by Mazda](#) wins a scholarship to move up to 2013 The Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear. [Petri Suvanto](#) won the 2011 championship with [Cape Motorsports](#) and will move up to race in Star Mazda with [Team Pelfrey](#).
- The 2012 champion in the [Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear](#) wins a scholarship to move up to the 2013 Indy Lights series. [Tristan Vautier](#) won the 2011 championship with [JDC Motorsports](#) and will move up to race in Indy Lights with [Sam Schmidt Motorsports](#).
- The 2012 [Indy Lights](#) champion wins a scholarship to move up to the 2013 [IZOD IndyCar series](#) – including the [Indy 500](#). Josef Newgarden won the 2011 championship with Sam Schmidt Motorsports and will move up to race in IndyCar with [Sara Fisher Hartman Racing](#).



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In addition to the scholarship prizes, drivers competing in the Star Mazda Championship and the Mazda Road to Indy series will benefit from the program in both immediate and longer-term ways. In addition to racing on IndyCar weekends, teams and drivers from all three series also participate in joint advertising, marketing and promotional programs with INDYCAR and the Indy 500, including the [Indy Summit](#), a comprehensive off-track program that trains drivers in the business side of sponsorships, how to use social media to advance their careers and offers the opportunity to meet and interact with top IndyCar officials, drivers and team owners.

### **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](#). The 2012 schedule currently includes 17 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](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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