



## **Mazda Road to Indy Confirms Star Mazda Replacement Series *Andersen Promotions to Spearhead Pro Mazda Championship***

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. (December 7) – INDYCAR, sanctioning body of the Mazda Road to Indy development series, today announced the creation of the Pro Mazda Championship. The series will be owned and operated by Andersen Promotions – administrator of the Cooper Tires USF2000 Championship Powered by Mazda – and will fill the opening vacated by the Star Mazda Championship.

A key level on the Mazda Road to Indy bridging the gap between USF2000 and Firestone Indy Lights, Star Mazda operated under the leadership of founder Gary Rodrigues, who recently announced that the series would conclude following a 22-year run. Graduates of Star Mazda include IZOD IndyCar Series drivers Marco Andretti, James Hinchcliffe, Raphael Matos and Graham Rahal, and rising stars Conor Daly and Tristan Vautier amongst many others.

“Everyone at INDYCAR is excited about Dan Andersen and his team taking over as the Pro Mazda Championship,” said Jason Penix, Director of Grassroots Initiatives for INDYCAR. “Andersen Promotions has a proven track record of success in junior formula racing, whether it be as a team or as a series owner. All you need to do is look at the success of the USF2000 Championship to know that the former Star Mazda series will be in very capable hands. INDYCAR would also like to thank Gary Rodrigues and his family for all their efforts over the last 22 years. We look forward to watching Dan build upon the success that Gary was able to have and we are confident that this puts the Mazda Road to Indy program in a great position to continue its unparalleled growth in the years to come.”

The Pro Mazda Championship will utilize the same equipment as the former Star Mazda Series including the 260-horsepower Mazda “Renesis” rotary engine. The full 2013 schedule will be unveiled next week. The tradition of awarding a scholarship from Mazda for the series’ champion to advance to Firestone Indy Lights competition the following year will remain in place, and a full prize money and award summary will be available in the coming days. Bill Van De Sandt, INDYCAR’s Director of Operations, will remain as race director for the series.

“Everyone with the Mazda Motorsports team is thrilled that Andersen Promotions is taking over with the Pro Mazda Championship,” said John Doonan, Director Mazda Motorsports, Mazda North American Operations. “Dan [Andersen] and his family-run organization are former Star Mazda team owners and have done an amazing job in developing the USF2000 Championship. They are the ideal team to further advance the two decades of hard work and success of Gary Rodrigues and his family. We expect a seamless transition in 2013.”

Andersen Promotions is led by Dan Andersen, Owner and Chief Executive Officer, who founded and led the original USF2000 Championship from 1991 to 2001, turning it into one of the top open-wheel development series in the world. After an eight-year absence, Andersen revived the series in 2010 as part of the Mazda Road to Indy. He has also been a successful team owner in USF2000, Star Mazda and Firestone Indy Lights and currently owns and operates an extensive karting venture and test track in Palmetto, Fla.

“I would like to say thank you to Gary and the entire Rodrigues family for all of the effort they put into this series over the years,” said Andersen. “As a former multi-car team owner in the series, I am well-acquainted with the program and the value that it has for racers climbing the ladder. I am delighted to have the opportunity to add this development level to the Andersen Promotions’ family. We will do our best to continue to help the careers of young drivers as they climb the Mazda Road to Indy ladder. I would also like to thank Mazda and INDYCAR for working this out quickly and allowing the series to continue at the high level it has been operating.”

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