



GOODYEAR



-- THE MAZDA ROAD TO INDY BECOMES A RACEWAY --

Drivers are accelerating from one series to the next, teams are competing in multiple series and the Mazda Motorsports Hour TV show – broadcast in the U.S. on Velocity and globally on ESPN International -- will be taping features at the new driver auditions upcoming Oct. 10-11 on the Indianapolis F1 circuit

The Mazda Road to Indy, the official driver development program of IndyCar, was designed to provide a clear route for hot young drivers on their way up, and has evolved far more quickly than anyone could predict into a raceway full of top young talent from around the world.



Rookies are winning championships with scholarship funding worth hundreds of thousands of dollars to move up and race at the next level. Teams are expanding to compete in multiple Mazda Road to Indy series, as well as prototypes and sports cars. And a scholarship 'audition' for open-wheel ladder series champions from Canada, England and South America – as well as other drivers from around the world -- will be held Oct. 10-11 on the F1 course at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. A crew from the Mazda Motorsports Hour TV show, broadcast in the

U.S. on Velocity TV (77 million households) and around the world on ESPN International (100 million + households) will be on hand taping features for future broadcasts.

Consider what's happened in just the last two weeks. On Saturday, September 8, in Race 1 of the 2012 Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear at Mazda Raceway, Englishman Jack Hawksworth completed his domination of the season with his 8th win in the #82 Team Pelfrey / TORGOEN Swiss Watches / EXA Networks Mazda, and clinched the championship in his rookie season. His prize, valued well in excess of \$600,000, includes scholarship funding from the Mazda Road to Indy guaranteeing him a full season of Indy Lights competition in 2013.

The process accelerated on the following weekend, during the IndyCar / Indy Lights season finale at the Auto Club Speedway in Fontana, California. Tristan Vautier, the 23 year-old French racer who won the 2011 Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear – and with it the Mazda Road to Indy scholarship that allowed him to compete in the 2012 Indy Lights series – clinched the Indy Lights championship with a 4th-place finish in the # 77 Mazda Road to Indy/Sam Schmidt Motorsports with Curb-Agajanian Dallara.



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His 2012 record of four wins, including both road courses and ovals, will serve him well as he makes the next move, up to IndyCar in 2013, with Mazda Road to Indy scholarship funding valued at \$1 million.

While the team he will race with next season has yet to be announced (though it should be noted that SSM is a multi-level team with an IndyCar program), Vautier will be joining fellow Star Mazda Championship graduates Marco Andretti (the pole-sitter in Fontana) and James Hinchcliff (the 2011 IndyCar Rookie of the Year), as well as Graham Rahal, son of Indy 500 winner Bobby Rahal, on the IndyCar grid in 2013.



It's also interesting to note the 'draft effect' of competing in the Mazda Road to Indy; such if the power of the program that not just the champions move up... the Indy Lights field at Fontana included no fewer than five Star Mazda Graduates (Vautier, David Ostella, Peter Dempsey and Jorge Goncalvez, as well as Bruno Palli, a current Star Mazda competitor already making his Indy Lights debut – and finishing 7th – even though the Star Mazda season finale at the Petit Le Mans at Road Atlanta remains to be run.)

“I came over to the USA because of the Mazda Road to Indy. I was struggling getting up the ladder in Europe, and I knew that if I was coming over here and was able to win the Star Mazda Championship, I would be able to get into the bigger cars,” says Vautier, who won two races and finished 4th in his first season of Star Mazda racing. "That was the goal. I won the championship last year, my second year in the Star Mazda series and was able to move up. I cannot be thankful enough to the Mazda Road to Indy for what they do for young drivers. Obviously, you have to earn it. You have to win championships. But it really rewards the winners, and you know they don't pick you because they like you; they pick you because you earned it. You have to win to get into this scholarship system, so I'm really thankful for that. I wouldn't be here without them.”



At the same time as the events at Fontana, but at the other end of the spectrum, Matthew Brabham -- the the son of four time IMSA GTP champion [Geoff Brabham](#) and the grandson of three time [Formula One](#) World Champion [Sir Jack Brabham](#). won both the championship and Rookie of the Year in the 2012 USF2000 National Championship Powered by Mazda, scoring four victories,





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six poles and three track records in the #83 DTE Group / Cape Motorsports with Wayne Taylor Racing Van Diemen Elan. As with Vautier and Hawksworth, Brabham's championship prize – scholarship funding from the Mazda Road to Indy valued at \$375,000 -- means that the Star Mazda Championship will have yet another member of racing's royalty on the grid in 2013.

And two weeks from now, at the Donnington Park track in England, yet another champion will be crowned, then head to the U.S. to sample the Mazda Road to Indy... and perhaps come to a career-making decision. Finnish racer Antti Buri needs only to finish one race of the [MSA Formula Ford Championship of Great Britain](#) season-finale double-header to clinch the championship and claim his prize of a Mazda Road to Indy-funded test – one day in a USF2000 car and another in a Star Mazda Championship racer. If in fact he does win the championship, he will be following in the tire tracks of fellow Finn Petri Suvanto, the 2011 USF2000 champion who won Mazda Road to Indy scholarship funding to compete in this year's Star Mazda Championship and is currently 5th in the points battle.



"Formula Ford GB 2009 vice-champion Josef Newgarden went on to win last year's Indy Lights title, earning himself a seat with Sarah Fisher Hartman Racing for the 2012 IZOD IndyCar Series, and this Mazda Road to Indy test for our 2012 champion will be a huge profile boost for the career of Formula Ford's first champion of the EcoBoost era," said Sam Roach of championship promoter RacingLine. "We are all very excited about the opportunity to be part of such a well-regarded driver development program."

Joining Buri at the test will be the top-3 drivers from the [Latam Challenge Series](#), a VW-based formula car series in Mexico, including series leader Francisco Cerullo (also the 2008 Venezuelan F2000 champion), Costa Rican racer Andre Solano (the 2009 Latam champion), and one of two Mexican drivers, Rodolfo Camarillo or Jose Carlos Sandoval (winner of the last two Latam races). Each of the three drivers will receive, via scholarship funding from the Mazda Road to Indy, a one-day test in a Star Mazda racer. In addition, the champions from two Canadian series, the Quebec-based Formula Tour 1600 series and the Ontario-based Toyo Tires F1600 Championship, will each receive a one day test in a USF200 car.

The test at which all these rising stars – and many others – will make their Mazda Road to Indy debut is an 'audition' for 2013 season with teams looking at new drivers, and vice-versa. The two-day test will be held October 10-11 on the Formula 1 circuit at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.



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"I've been in the racing, either as a driver, team owner or series owner, for most of my life, and I've never seen a program develop this quickly," says Gary Rodrigues, founder and President of the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear. "The European driver development system produces great racers, ultimately, but it's so fragmented and confusing and expensive that a lot of young talent gets lost in the process. The Mazda Road to Indy brought order, stability and affordability to that process, and the growth

we've seen in the past couple of years is the best possible indicator that we're on the right track. It would never have happened without Mazda, and IndyCar, and a lot of other people working together, and the future of open-wheel racing in North America is looking bright... and fast. I encourage serious young drivers who are interested in the Mazda Road to Indy, or their parents, managers or sponsors, to contact me directly at gary@starmazda.com."

Teams participating include Andretti Autosport, which competes at all four levels of the Mazda Road to Indy (USF2000, Star Mazda, Indy Lights and IndyCar) and JDC Motorsports, winners of the Star Mazda Championship in 2007 with American Dane Cameron, 2009 with English racer Adam Christodoulou and 2011 with Frenchman Tristan Vautier. JDC fields cars in Star Mazda, USF2000, American Le Mans Prototype Lites and plans a 2-car Indy Lights team for 2013.

Other Mazda Road to Indy teams with multi-level programs include this year's champions, Team Pelfrey, who compete in both USF2000 and Star Mazda. Juncos Racing, the team that won the championship with Conor Daly in 2010, fields efforts in both Star Mazda and Indy Lights, while AIM Autosport, the team that won the Star Mazda championship in 2008 with John Edwards, also fields a USF2000 effort and just won the 2012 Grand Am Rolex GT Sports Car Series championship. Belardi Auto Racing runs in USF2000 and Indy Lights and is exploring expansion into the Star Mazda Championship. All Star Mazda teams, and contact information, can be found on the series web site at www.StarMazda.com under Series>Teams, or by clicking [here](#).

About Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear

The Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear is a major part of the [Mazda Road to Indy](#), the official driver development program of IndyCar. The 2012 schedule featured 17 races on 10 weekends, most with IndyCar. Rising stars from around the world competed on road courses, street circuits and ovals in front of more than a million fans as they battled for prizes valued at \$1.2 million, including a scholarship to move up and race in the 2013 Firestone Indy Lights series. 2011 Star Mazda Champion





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Tristan Vautier won the 2012 Indy Lights championship and will be moving up to IndyCar in 2013 where he will join fellow Star Mazda graduates Marco Andretti, Graham Rahal and James Hinchcliffe. The Star Mazda Championship features standing starts, wheel-to-wheel racing at 160 mph and budgets a fraction of European open-wheel ladder series. Drivers 16 and older are welcome to compete. For more information on the Star Mazda Championship please visit 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 and www.mazdausa.com. For information, interviews and photos, please contact Star Mazda Communications Director Peter Frey at (818) 398-5733 or StarMazdaPR@aol.com.

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