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STAR MAZDA PRESIDENT TRAVELS TO EUROPE TO SCOUT RISING STARS

Gary Rodrigues, founder and President of the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear, will travel to the Autosport International Racing Car Show to meet with young drivers

In response to the growing international recognition of the Mazda Road to Indy – the official IndyCar driver development program that provides scholarship funding for the champions of each series (USF2000, Star Mazda and Indy Lights) to move up and compete at the next level, Gary Rodrigues, founder and President of the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear-- will attend the Autosport International Racing Car Show in Birmingham, England to meet with top young drivers from around the world.

"There has been huge interest from drivers internationally, and many of them have questions about racing in North America, the Star Mazda Championship, and the Mazda Road to Indy," says Rodrigues, who founded the Star Mazda Championship in 1990. "Star Mazda, Mazda and INDYCAR have all been working to get the word out, and we have a lot of information up on the StarMazda.com web site, but we're asking these young drivers and their sponsors to make a major decision about the direction of their future. We want to do everything we can to help them make the right decision, and give them the information they need to put a good program together, whether it's for Star Mazda or another Mazda Road to Indy series. So I'll be meeting with drivers, as well as representatives of European racing organizations, at the AUTOSPORT International show. Any young driver, manager, sponsor or representative of European driver development programs interested in meeting should call my cell phone at 001-818- 620-2283. If you can't get through that way, send me an e-mail at Gary@StarMazda.com and I'll get back to you."

The AUTOSPORT International Racing Car Show takes place January 12-15 at the NEC in Birmingham, England.

The Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear, now entering its 22nd season of competition, is the longest continuously-operating road racing series in North America. The momentum of the 2011 season, with the deepest and most diverse talent pool in series history, continues to grow with top international drivers – including England's Jack Hawksworth -- planning to compete in 2012. Several new teams have announced they will join the series in the coming season, including Team Stange and John Cumminsky Racing. In addition, Star Mazda team Juncos Racing – which won the series championship in 2010 with Conor Daly – has expanded to include the Indy Lights series. Andretti Autosport is the first organization with teams operating at every level of the Mazda Road to Indy, including the Cooper Tires Presents USF2000 National Championship Powered by Mazda, the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear, Firestone Indy Lights and the IZOD IndyCar series.



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And the reputation of the Star Mazda Championship as a premier open-wheel driver development program continues to shine. Star Mazda drivers have won European racing's prestigious Walter Hayes trophy five years in a row. In North America, six drivers from the 2010 Star Mazda season – including championship scholarship winner Conor Daly -- have moved up to compete in Indy Lights. 2011 Star Mazda champion, French racer Tristan Vautier, has signed with the championship-winning Sam Schmidt Racing team to compete in the 2012 Indy Lights series with scholarship backing from the Mazda Road to Indy.

And, demonstrating the Star Mazda series' credentials as a 'gateway series' to many top forms of motorsport, more than a dozen series graduates are in scheduled to compete in the upcoming Rolex 24 at Daytona -- and the 2010 Expert Series champion, Mike Guasch, has just announced an ALMS prototype program.

Drivers interested in familiarizing themselves with the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear should visit www.StarMazda.com. A bullet-point overview of the series with links to many other resources, including team contact information, videos, etc., can be found [here](#). The 2011 Star Mazda marketing kit is located [here](#). Information about the Mazda Road to Indy can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

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 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 \$1.2 million, including a scholarship to move up and race in the 2013 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.

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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