



GOODYEAR



## REIGNING STAR MAZDA CHAMPION TRISTAN VAUTIER WINS IN INDY LIGHTS DEBUT AT G.P. OF ST. PETE

March 25, 2012 / Grand Prix of St. Petersburg -- 2011 Star Mazda champion Tristan Vautier, racing in Indy



Lights with scholarship finding from the Mazda Road to Indy, won his debut race in the Indy Lights Series Saturday at St. Petersburg. The Star Mazda champion has advanced on the strength of the Mazda ladder scholarship into a seat at defending champion team Sam Schmidt Motorsports.

"It was just an awesome day," Vautier said. "You are as good as the last race. Next weekend it starts over again. I have a lot to learn."

His margin of victory was just over a second over teammate Esteban Guerrieri, although it would have been far greater had it not been for a couple of stints behind the safety car that bunched up the field.

The Schmidt squad was looking good for a 1-2-3 until series returnee Sebastian Saavedra passed rookie Oliver Webb just after the final restart to claim third. The fourth member of the Schmidt quartet, Victor Carbone, rounded out the top five.

Further back, the battle for the minor points places ended badly for Carlos Munoz, who was pitched into the wall on lap 29 while trying to defend fifth from Juan Pablo Garcia.

Belardi Auto Racing also had a tough day with both of its entries outside the top 10, Alon Day falling from a strong position after a flat tire late in the race.

### **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](http://www.mazdaroadtoindy.com). 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).



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