



26 LAW DRIVE, UNIT C
FAIRFIELD, NJ 07004
PH (973) 287-5600
FAX (973) 227-2202

WEB: www.andersenracingteam.com

For more information:
Linda Mansfield, Restart Communications
Cell: 317-201-0729
E-mail: LindaKMansfield@cs.com

Bellemare to Drive for Andersen Racing In Star Mazda Race at Trois-Rivieres

FAIRFIELD, N.J., July 31 — Anyone looking for a local driver to cheer for in the upcoming Grand Prix of Trois-Rivieres this weekend in Trois-Rivieres, Quebec need look no further than the Andersen Racing team, which competes in the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear.

Team owner Dan Andersen announced today that Francois Bellemare of Trois-Rivieres will be one of three drivers representing the Fairfield, N.J.-based team in that event, which gets the green flag at 1:40 p.m. on Sunday, Aug. 6.

Even before today's announcement the team had a connection with this city and this event. Noted racing engineer Remi Lanteigne, also of Trois-Rivieres, works with the team as the chief engineer for another one of its drivers, Gerardo Bonilla. In addition, Lanteigne helps the Trois-Rivieres event organizers with their contract negotiations with various racing series. He was instrumental in bringing the Star Mazda series to the city for an exhibition race there last year, and engineered both the Star Mazda car that Bellemare drove in that race and the car that won, which was driven by Luis Schiavo.

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Bellemare and his family also have close ties to the event. Their company, Thomas Bellemare Ltd., is a full-service developer that supplies the cranes and other heavy equipment used to erect the safety barriers needed to build the 1.521-mile street course, among other things.

Bellemare will drive a car leased by Andersen Racing from JDC Motorsports. It will carry the number 35. Andersen Racing's Glenn Phillips will be his engineer and Roger Morissette will be his lead mechanic. They usually work on the entry of another Andersen Racing driver, Brad Jaeger of Cincinnati, but Jaeger will miss Trois-Rivieres as he continues to recuperate from injuries sustained in the Star Mazda race at Montreal June 24.

Bellemare's teammates will be two of Andersen Racing's primary drivers: Bonilla, of Orlando, Fla., who will drive his usual Skip Barber Racing School No. 9 engineered by Lanteigne aided by Mike Reggio; and Ramiro Scuncio of Concepcion, Chile in the Sky Airlinc Chile No. 22. Rossella Manfrinato is Scuncio's engineer and Rolf Numsen is his lead mechanic.

Bellemare has won numerous karting championships in Quebec and he's done three years of Formula Ford competition. The 36-year-old driver's first foray into the Star Mazda series was last year's exhibition race at Trois-Rivieres, but that makes him one of the few drivers who actually has laps on this course.

"He's excited about that," noted Lanteigne. "We have all our data from last year, and he's glad that he's driving for Andersen Racing, which has the same engineer and mechanic he worked with last year. That continuity will be helpful, and he's very happy to be part of the team.

"He's a local, well-respected guy, who helps the event as much as he can," Lanteigne continued. "He and his brother also own Pointe-du-Lac Karting in Trois-Rivieres, which has a lot of nice shifter karts, and my son and his son do a lot of karting together there. The Bellemares also

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had the Little Monaco Grand Prix celebrity kart race there last weekend to help lead up to the Trois-Rivieres Grand Prix. I even drove in that!"

Lanteigne has high hopes for a good finish for Bellemare and the other Andersen Racing drivers at Trois-Rivieres.

"We will do a lot of heavy training today and Tuesday with a simulator that is very close to the actual track," he revealed. "With the simulator, Francois' experience here last year and his Formula Ford experience, I'm looking for a top-10 for him in the race," he predicted.

"Gerardo is doing the Skip Barber race at Trois-Rivieres too, so he'll have some extra sessions to learn the track from that," he added. "Hopefully he'll be going for the win."

The Trois-Rivieres race will be shown on SPEED at 1 p.m. Eastern time on Aug. 13. The recent race in Portland will be broadcast on the same network at 1 p.m. Eastern on Aug. 5 while the teams are in Canada.

In other Andersen Racing news, it conducted an excellent private test last Friday at Road America in preparation for the race after Trois-Rivieres, which will be held at the Elkhart Lake, Wis. road course on Aug. 19. That race will be broadcast on SPEED at 3 p.m. Eastern on Aug. 26.

For more information see andersenracingteam.com and starmazda.com.