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England's Baker Joins Andersen Racing For 2007 Star Mazda Campaign

FAIRFIELD, N.J., Feb. 12 — Andersen Racing announced today that British hot shoe Jonny Baker has joined its team to contend for the 2007 Star Mazda Championship presented by Mazda.

Baker, of Farnham Common, Buckinghamshire, England, joins Ricardo Vassmer and one driver who has not yet been named as the Fairfield, N.J.-based team's primary drivers for the 12-race Star Mazda season. Phil Saville and Michael Fitzgerald will also drive in selected Star Mazda events this year with the team, including the season opener Friday, March 16 at Sebring, Fla.

All the events are broadcast on SPEED in one-hour, tape-delayed telecasts.

Baker, 22, has been running with Team JLR in England for the last two years. He had two podium finishes last year in the UK Formula Ford Championship and finished ninth in that series' final point standings for the season. He finished second in the 2005 UK Formula Ford Scholarship Cup with four victories, and fifth in the national class that year. In 2004 he finished second in Class B of the British Race Drivers' Club single-seater championship with four victories.

Baker earned a degree in business administration from the University of the West of England in Bristol last year. He started racing in 2003 at the Silverstone Racing School.

"I'm extremely grateful to Andersen Racing for this opportunity, and I cannot wait to get out there and get down to business," Baker said.

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Baker has never raced in the United States before, but he impressed Dominic and Nicholas Cape last November when he drove at their test track in Florida. The Cape brothers are engineers for Andersen Racing's Indy Pro Series program.

Baker has been doing as much research as possible on the challenges he'll face at Sebring next month. "I have seen an on-board lap on the Internet," he said. "It looks like a bit of a bruiser with the bumps, especially under braking," he noted. "Joe D'Agostino, who was my teammate in 2005, told me some stories about Sebring that were useful too. However, it will all look different from the cockpit, so I will have to get my head down in practice and learn the place. I'm looking forward to the challenge."

Baker plans to test his new Star Mazda car at Road Atlanta in Braselton, Ga., in early March prior to traveling to Florida for the season opener at Sebring.

Baker and his four Star Mazda teammates will be participating in the middle level of a program Andersen Racing has developed to give drivers the best training possible for careers as professional open-wheel race car drivers. The team uses the Hankook Tires Formula Ford 2000 series for drivers at the F2000 level or those coming out of racing schools or karting, and the Indy Pro Series for drivers who are almost ready to make the final step into IndyCar or the Champ Car World Series. The team fields multiple entries in each of the three series.

For more information on the team, see andersenracingteam.com or call team manager Michelle Kish at (973) 287-5600. In addition to her overall team manager duties for all three series in which Andersen Racing competes, Kish is also its Star Mazda team manager.