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Northwest Autosport places two in top ten at Virginia International Raceway

Mandarino and Freiberg return to the front of the field in Round Three

April 28, 2007. Alton, Virginia. After a difficult race weekend one week earlier at the Reliant Park street circuit, Northwest Autosport drivers Lorenzo Mandarino and Eric Freiberg battled back at Virginia International Raceway this afternoon, with both drivers scoring top ten finishes in Round Three of the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear, finishing fifth and seventh respectively in the ultra-competitive development series.

Driving the # 23 Newway Forming Northwest Autosport Pro Formula Mazda, Mandarino recorded his second top five finish of the season, despite a slight engine problem that robbed him of several horsepower.

"My goal this season has been to get in the points every race and strive for the championship so Houston was disappointing, but the team did an excellent job this weekend getting me through a few problems and we came out with a top five finish," Mandarino, from Vancouver, British Columbia explained. "The track got pretty greasy from the Daytona Prototypes this afternoon and while the car was good, the time lost early in the weekend and the engine woes cost us just enough to keep me from challenging Davison for fourth place as he was able to pull me a bit down the straights."

Freiberg, a native of Home Glen, Illinois, pulled off a charge through the field in his #3 Northwest Autosport Pro Formula Mazda, moving up from sixteenth on the grid to finish seventh overall.

"It's good to have a finish like this after Houston and the start of this weekend left me feeling like the wind was out of my sails," Freiberg commented. "We put the crew to work and built up a pile of damaged parts but the team put in some late nights and everything came together for the race. Right from the start I was able to gain four positions in turn one and then started picking cars off one by one until the checkered flag fell. It was another roller coaster weekend for sure but with the momentum moving forward I'm excited for the next round at Miller Motorsports Park."

Today's strong results also propelled both drivers up the points standings, sending Mandarino from sixteenth to ninth overall and Freiberg from nineteenth to eleventh place.

Round Three of the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear, won by rookie Dane Cameron, will be broadcast by Speed Channel on Saturday, May 5, at 12:00 PM Eastern Daylight Time. Round Four of the championship will be held alongside the American Le Mans Series at the state of the art Miller Motorsports Park in Tooele, Utah, on May 18-19.

Based in Milwaukie, Oregon, Northwest Autosport is one of the top teams participating in the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear, which will feature twelve races across the United States and Canada supporting the American Le Mans Series, ChampCar and the GrandAm series. The team is dedicated to developing young driving talent and will award the highest finishing driver on their team a test in an Indy Pro Series car prepared by Sam Schmidt Motorsports, which is currently running a car for Northwest Autosport alumni Ryan Justice. For more information please visit www.northwestautosport.com.