

Steve Welk Joins the Walko Stable for Road America Testing and More Keeps Team Busy During Star Mazda Break

TRAFFORD, PA (July 30, 2007) – John Walko Racing will add a third car for their assault on Road America when the Star Mazda Series returns to the storied venue on August 11th. Steve Welk will join Charles Anti and Russell Walker for his first Star Mazda race.

Team owner John Walko has a long history with Welk however and is confident his newest driver will be able to deliver on short notice.

"I've know Steve since we raced in the Zetec Series and I was impressed with him back then. He has a solid background from Karting Championships to Formula Ford. That is his home track, he lives there actually, and he has a lot of local support. We'd love to have it grow in to a bigger program for Steve but I'm excited to have him for Road America at least."

Walko has good reason to be excited about Welk's prospects at Road America. The Wisconsin native competed at Road America in the Formula Ford Cooper Tires Championship Series in 2006 and scored second and third place finishes in the two races. Impressive results for any weekend but more impressive in light of the fact that it was the only open wheel races Welk ran in 2006.

Welk will also enter the race with the benefit of a day of testing in a variety of conditions as Walko noted.

"Steve tested very well at BeaveRun. We were able to get him a significant amount of seat time in wet, dry and drying conditions and he ran competitive times throughout the day."

The test not only served to acquaint Welk to the Star Mazda machine but also enabled him to get comfortable with the JWR crew.

"I thought the team and everything worked tremendously well. I've wanted to work with John for a few years now after running with him in Zetec so it was really cool to be able to do the test. I felt I had a good balance with the car and I think a good base of information with the car going in to Road America.

Welk brings more than just talent to the table when it comes to Road America however as he has countless laps on the 4.048 mile, 14 turn course.

"Going to Road America I think I have a lot of good information on the track since I spent so much time there. I know John will put a good car underneath me so I'm pretty excited. I'm looking for a top five and we're perfectly capable of doing that despite the tough field in Star Mazda right now. John's team is a lot of fun to work with and I'm really excited about running with them there, I can't wait!"

While the Star Mazda Championship Series has not raced since the July 7th round at Toronto, the JWR team has not had any problems finding ways to stay busy.

Testing has continued with JWR's duo of regular drivers. Russell Walker visits Road Atlanta in preparation for the upcoming race there on October 5th while Charles Anti has been in the car several times at BeaveRun Motorsports Complex.

Anti's tests have also given the team the chance to further develop Kate Gundlach's engineering talents. Gundlach, the team's data acquisition specialist, is being groomed as the team's third engineer according to Walko.

"We have been using these tests to get Kate more experience turning the knobs on the car as well, doing some more engineering. She'll be our third engineer; that has always been the plan for her. It's been interesting as Kate has been learning how the car works from the data end first while the rest of started life as mechanics. She is coming at it from a different perspective which should be a benefit to the whole team in the long run."

Gundlach continues to take advantage of all of her opportunities including recently participating in the fifth annual Women in the Winner's Circle program hosted by Lyn St. James. The event honoring women in motorsports took place at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway during the Brickyard 400 festivities.

The team has also taken part in several corporate events and driving programs at BeaveRun Motorsports Complex. Participants are able to see exactly how the team operates by interacting with the mechanics and the drivers as well as having the chance to see and analyze data and video with the engineers. Many have also been fortunate enough to leave with the once in a lifetime opportunity to climb behind the wheel of one of the Star Mazda machines.

While these types of programs may not yield on track performance gains they are instrumental in demonstrating the team's ability to excel in other areas besides the racetrack, a critical element to operating a successful race team in the current motorsports marketplace.

Drivers interested in joining JWR for upcoming tests are encouraged to contact the team soon. Also, drivers interested in discussing the remaining 2007 races or a 2008 racing program should contact John Walko Racing at info@johnwalkoracing.com . Additional team information can be found at www.johnwalkoracing.com.