

## **JWR's Kate Gundlach Honored as Star Mazda Crew Member of the Year Zartarian Scores Top Five at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca**

**TRAFFORD, PA (October 29, 2007)** – The 2007 Star Mazda Series closer at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca was a successful effort for the John Walko Racing team both on and off the track with a top five finish, two top tens and a highly coveted year end award for crew member Kate Gundlach.

Gundlach, JWR's data acquisition engineer for all three entries, was awarded the Performance Friction Crew Member of the Year Award at the season ending awards banquet, a consensus award for the most valuable member of a particular team whose efforts have also benefited other teams and the series. For team owner John Walko, it was a much deserved award for an integral member of the team.

"We had a very good race weekend but the high point had to be Kate winning the Star Mazda Crew Member of the Year Award. It was a total surprise to everyone so it was very exciting for the team as well as Kate. This award is particular significant I think as it is voted on by peers and then the final decision is made by Star Mazda management. To even be considered for the award, let alone win it, requires impressing a lot of people along the way."

The award was also particularly important in that Kate is truly a homegrown talent. Like Walko, she is a Pittsburgh native with family ties to the local racing community. Her first professional work though was as an intern with JWR while working toward her mechanical engineering degree at the University of Pittsburgh. Along the way she has parlayed the opportunity in to a full time career that also involves the roles of team parts manager, test engineer and soon race engineer of the team's third car.

"I am proud of what Kate has accomplished. She came to the team with the raw tools and has developed in to an integral part of our organization. Kate is the second member of the team to have earned the Star Mazda Crew Member of the year award along with Caleb Stream. Developing talent outside of the car as well as inside is very important to our team and something we take considerable pride in."

Kate echoed the sentiments of her team owner regarding the team's approach.

"Winning this award was a big surprise to me! I have to thank John and the whole crew; they are responsible for developing me to where I am today and deserve the credit for this award. >From John to engineers Steve (Dreizler) and Eric (Langbein) to mechanics Caleb and Scott (Gates) each has invested time in helping me develop as part of this team. Their commitment to the overall team is what makes this group successful. I also have to thank John Walko Sr. and drivers Charles (Anti) and Russell (Walker) as well as their families. It has been a very rewarding experience working with everyone associated with John Walko Racing."

Of course the trip to Monterey, California involved more than the awards banquet as the team returned to a three car effort with Californian John Zartarian behind the wheel of the third car for the first time since the second round in Houston. Zartarian lead the way with a fifth place finish followed by Russell Walker in tenth.

According to Walko, the return to a three car effort always seems to provide an extra spark for the team.

"As usual the team works better with three cars, things were automatic, the atmosphere was more upbeat, everybody was doing their normal jobs and everything worked great. In all it was a pretty good

weekend.”

“Johnny did a great job, for only driving the car twice this year and to finish top five in this field is an accomplishment. He was actually second in one of the early sessions and that always helps to get all the cars moving forward. Russell had a good race as well, picking off some spots in the race and running a smart, clean race”

Both drivers found speed early, netting second fastest laps in different practice sessions. JWR’s other full time entry Charles Anti had an uphill battle at times but was very fast on race day.

“Russell followed John’s lead, setting the second fastest lap in the following session, and stayed in the top ten almost all weekend. Charles had a slow start on the weekend but moved up some spots early in the race and was running very quick laps. He was just all by himself after going off in turn five so his results didn’t actually reflect how competitive he was in the race.

The team now moves in to the off season but does not plan on resting for long. Testing has already begun at BeaveRun Motorsports Complex with more dates being added to the schedule soon. There are also ongoing discussions about racing in the Star Mazda Winter Series that begins in November at Buttonwillow in California followed by dates at Firebird Raceway and Phoenix International Raceway in December and January respectively.

Drivers interested in testing or discussing racing plans for the Winter Series or the 2008 season should contact John Walko Racing as soon as possible.

### **Team Quotes**

#### **John Zartarian:**

"It was a great weekend overall, I was really happy with a fifth particularly after our qualifying run. We picked up a few spots and hit my goal of a top five finish. All in all I was really happy with the way the race went but honestly thought I could have podiumed if it had stayed green. I have to thank John and the crew for a great weekend again."

#### **Russell Walker:**

"It was good to have a solid run at Laguna Seca to close out the season. We were quick early in practice and stayed close to the top ten all weekend. We missed a little in qualifying but I was able to drive back to tenth in the race. I was as fast as the cars directly in front of me but with the yellows near the end of the race, I never had a chance to move up any farther. I'd like to thank the team for this season; it was great to work with this crew for an entire year."

#### **Charles Anti:**

"Unfortunately we didn't end the season on a high note, finishing outside the top twenty, but we had a very fast race car that was able to run times as fast as the leaders as the laps wore down. At that point I was a lap down though after an off in to the gravel trap and was too far back to make up the ground to challenge for position. I learned a lot this year and had some great runs. I want to thank John and the team for a good season."

#### **John Walko, Engineer for John Zartarian:**

"Johnny did a great job all weekend. He was second quickest in practice in just his second time behind the wheel of our car all year. To be able to hold his own, let alone compete with this field is an

accomplishment in itself. With a few more laps of green flag racing he could have been looking at a podium finish. Hopefully we are able to work with John more in the future as he has the talent to compete and win in this series.”

**Eric Langbein, Engineer for Russell Walker:**

“We started the season with a goal of top ten in points and Russell did exactly what he needed to do to make sure we met those goals at Laguna Seca. He picked up five spots in the race and looked to have the speed to pick up more. Rather than taking unnecessary chances in the closing laps of the race though he showed the maturity to stay focused on the goal and finished with a tenth in the race and the Championship.”

**Steve Dreizler, Engineer for Charles Anti:**

“We didn’t get up to speed as quickly as we needed to be which put Charles in the slow group in qualifying. Unfortunately that played a big role as the first qualifying group had a wet track to deal with and ended up drying the track for the fast group. Charles was considerably faster than anyone else in the first group but still a second and a half behind the slowest car in the second group. In the race we were as fast as the leaders but a lap down so the end result didn’t reflect how good of a car we had.”

Drivers interested in joining JWR for upcoming tests are encouraged to contact the team soon. Also, drivers interested in discussing their Winter and 2008 racing programs should contact John Walko Racing at [info@johnwalkoracing.com](mailto:info@johnwalkoracing.com) . Additional team information can be found at [www.johnwalkoracing.com](http://www.johnwalkoracing.com).

**Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca Results:**

- 1 Alex Ardoin
- 2 Dane Cameron
- 3 James Davison
- 5 John Zartarian
- 10 Russell Walker
- 26 Charles Anti

**2007 Star Mazda Championship:**

- 1 Dane Cameron
- 2 James Davison
- 3 Ron White
- 10 Russell Walker
- 13 Charles Anti