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## **Makela Joins Andersen Racing's Star Mazda Team For Testing and Three Races Later This Season**

PALMETTO, Fla., May 3 — Andersen Racing's international driver roster for the Star Mazda series presented by Goodyear is expanding to include a young star from Finland.

Team co-owner Dan Andersen announced today that he has signed 22-year-old Valle Makela, a native of Laitila, Finland, for five days of testing and at least three races this year in one of the Palmetto, Fla.-based team's Star Mazda cars.

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The team's full-season drivers in that series are Charles Hall of Sheffield, England; Peter Dempsey of Ashbourne, County Meath, Ireland; Tom Gladdis of Gibraltar and Juliana Gonzalez of Mexico City, Mexico. All are rookies. Hall, Dempsey and Gladdis are all in the top five in the current point standings, with Hall second and Dempsey third.

Andersen Racing also currently leads the point standings in the other two series in which it competes. RLR/Andersen Racing's J.R. Hildebrand currently tops the point standings in the Firestone Indy Lights Series, the official development series of IndyCar. Andersen Racing's Anders Krohn and Jonny Baker are first and second in the U.S. F2000 Championship Series point standings.

Makela, the 2004 U.K. Formula Ford champion, will begin his Star Mazda testing program next week at Miller Motorsports Park in Tooele, Utah, the site of the second Star Mazda race of the year on Saturday, May 17.

He hopes to compete in the doubleheader at New Jersey Motorsports Park in Millville, N.J. Sept. 13-14 and the race at Road Atlanta in Braselton, Ga. on Oct. 3.

"We're trying to get money together to do more, but that's it for now," Makela said, adding that the weakness of the dollar makes American racing very appealing to European drivers.

Makela earned the 2004 U.K. Formula Ford championship by winning 10 of 20 races. He competed in the World Touring Car Championship in 2005 before returning to formula cars in 2006 for the British Formula Renault series. Last year he drove for NEXA Racing in the British Formula BMW Series, finishing fifth in the championship with a victory at Brands Hatch.

Prior to winning the 2004 British Formula Ford championship Makela finished third in that series in 2003. He was runner-up in the Formula Ford Zetec Nordic championship in 2002, and he was the Finnish Formula Ford Zetec champion in 2002. He had a distinguished karting career before advancing to cars.

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"Everything we have heard about Valle indicates that he is a very talented and intense young man, and is a driver we are very pleased to be able to add to our Star Mazda team," said Andersen. "I expect him to be competitive right out of the box, and with the testing we will do prior to his debut at New Jersey, I wouldn't be surprised at all to see him running at the front alongside his teammates."

Makela said he discovered the Star Mazda series on the Internet, and he learned about Andersen Racing from Gladdis and Gladdis's father. In addition to Gladdis, Makela said he is also acquainted with Charles Hall through his races in Great Britain.

Makela's first visit to America began earlier this week. One of his first tasks was to get fitted for a seat for his test next week.

"Everything is new; I haven't driven a Star Mazda car before, or even seen a Star Mazda race," he said. "I've been looking at some of the races on tapes; it's kind of like F3 in Europe."

Star Mazda races are televised on SPEED.

So far he likes what he sees of America. "It's nice," he said. "Andersen Racing's shop is very good. It's totally different than the U.K. Everything is a little bit bigger here."

Andersen Racing has a 1-mile road course test track at its headquarters at Andersen RacePark in Palmetto, Fla. The team is sponsored by Allied Building Products Corp. For more information see [andersenracingteam.com](http://andersenracingteam.com) and [andersenracepark.com](http://andersenracepark.com). The series' Web site is at [starmazda.com](http://starmazda.com).

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### *About Allied Building Products Corp.:*

Allied Building Products Corp., headquartered in East Rutherford, N.J., is one of the largest roofing and siding distributors in the United States. Founded in 1950 with five employees and two trucks, today it is a \$1.8 billion building material distribution company with over 3,500 employees, more than 200 branches in 30 states, well over one million square feet of office and warehouse space, and an inventory of approximately 85,000 products, from residential roofing and siding to doors, windows, waterproofing, manufactured stone, interior products and commercial roofing systems. For more information see [alliedbuilding.com](http://alliedbuilding.com).

### *About Andersen Racing:*

Andersen Racing strives to provide the best and most comprehensive training possible for future open-wheel superstars while giving its marketing partners media exposure and hospitality opportunities at some of the most prestigious events in North America. It provides a unique, three-step program utilizing multiple entries in three different series: the F2000 Championship (webcast), Star Mazda (televised on SPEED) and Firestone Indy Lights (televised on ESPN2). In 2008 it will field multiple entries in 42 races in 19 states and provinces at some of the best facilities on the continent, including the famed Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

Andersen Racing's principals, brother Dan and John Andersen, have extensive experience in series administration as well as team management. They've worked with many of today's top open-wheel stars, including several Indy 500 winners.

Andersen Racing is sponsored by Allied Building Products Corp. It is the official development team of Rahal Letterman Racing, which competes in the IndyCar Series. In addition, Andersen Racing's F2000 team is the official factory team of Van Diemen. The team is headquartered at Andersen RacePark, an 18-acre facility in Palmetto, Fla. that includes a 1-mile test track. For more information see [andersenracingteam.com](http://andersenracingteam.com) and [andersenracepark.com](http://andersenracepark.com).