



Taylor Hacquard Q&A

Vancouver, Canada (June 02, 2008) – Vancouver’s Taylor Hacquard returns to race action this weekend as Round 3 of the 2008 Star Mazda Championship Presented by Goodyear heads to New York and the Watkins Glen International Circuit, Thursday 5th – Saturday 7th June. Currently sitting sixth overall in his rookie open-wheel season, the 18-year-old Senior at Elgin Park Secondary, in South Surrey, B.C. has turned heads with some stellar performances with Hacquard hoping for more of the same behind the #15 Wolfe Auto Group/World Speed Motorsports entry this weekend.

Prior to heading to Watkins Glen, Taylor took time out to reflect on what’s been a promising start to his race car career:

Q: You were karting last weekend on an ‘off-weekend’ from your Star Mazda commitments. Is it important for you to keep sharp karting and more importantly how did you get on?

Taylor Hacquard (TH): “Yes, I was karting at a local club race. I try to get some karting in here and there if my schedule allows. It keeps me in tune with driving so the next time I get in the car it doesn’t feel like I’ve had a large break and it keeps my skills up-to-date! The weekend went pretty well. I had no mechanical troubles although I hadn’t been in my kart for a while, due to my Star Mazda commitments, so my karting game wasn’t quite up to snuff but I placed well and ran competitively!”

Q: You’re sitting sixth overall in the Star Mazda Championship after the first two rounds at Sebring and Miller Motorsports Park. Given this is your rookie open-wheel season, did you expect such a strong start to the year?

TH: “Yes, it’s a bit of a surprise to me how well I’m doing. I didn’t expect to be doing so well this early in the season, maybe the last few races but not this soon. The plan for this year was to gain experience, learn as much as I could from the circuits and racing, then have a crack at the championship in 2009. To be competing for the top-five in my rookie season is unexpected but gratifying and it’ll give me a lot of confidence going into next year.

“I think a large part of me doing so well is the coaching I get from all the members of my team, from big changes to little tips here and there from people like my coach Scott Bradley and engineer Mike Doyle as well as the mechanics and team manager and owner.”

Q: What’s been the biggest challenge for you so far stepping up from karting, where you competed for the renowned Italian Motors team, into open-wheel racing?

TH: “It’s really the little things that can make you faster or slower on track. In karting you can screw up a corner and not be punished but in Star Mazda, or cars in general, the little mistakes can cost you a lot out on track. The small tweaks and changes you can make can also offer a bunch of positives, going through the corner 1-2mph faster doesn’t sound like much but at a track like Miller or Sebring, tracks that have longer straight-aways, it can translate into 7-8mph more at the end of the straight and that translates into big gains on the time charts!”

“Another thing that was a challenge for me was recalling information off-track to relay to the engineer and mechanics. It doesn’t sound like much but trying to remember what the car was doing where, and what you were doing when it was doing that for 10 to 20 corners, takes a little while to get used to!”

Q: What, if anything, has surprised you most about the level of competition in this season’s Star Mazda Championship?

TH: “Not too much has surprised me. I knew it was going to be hard and at a high level coming in, just like in previous years. It’s a bunch of young aspiring racers trying to make careers for themselves doing anything and everything to run up at the front!”

Q: You're racing with World Speed this season. Based on results it looks to be a burgeoning relationship, what or who have been the key elements to your on-track success?

TH: "The whole World Speed team has been a big part of my success; from the mechanics doing a great job keeping the car in tip-top shape to the engineer helping to make the car suit my driving style. My coach helps me to learn how to drive in general and how to drive the different tracks and corners while the rest of the team all chip in here and there making all the pieces come together."

Q: You raced as high as fourth in the previous round at Miller Motorsports Park, how quickly do you expect to reach the podium?

TH: "Well obviously I'd like to reach the podium as soon as possible but with my level of experience it's not something I'm expecting immediately. I'm on a steep learning curve so perhaps if I get a podium it'll likely come at a circuit where I've raced previously or perhaps tested at."

Q: Your results speak for themselves with regards to your on-track performances. What are you doing off-track to further prepare yourself for race weekends and a potential full-time career as a race car driver?

TH: "I work-out extensively so when I'm in the car all I have to focus on is my driving. I don't want to be hindered by being tired or not strong enough! I also eat healthily and study the sport by reading on the internet and books written by racing champions. I also keep sharp by karting, it's the closest thing within reason to racing in Star Mazda so when my schedule allows I'll be out in my kart."

Q: Has it been difficult for you to balance your senior year at high school and your race commitments?

TH: "Yes! Racing and committing a large part of my time to school is definitely hard, especially as this is my graduation year. I've had to make sacrifices with both racing and school but it all comes down to what's most important at the time and what will benefit me most in the future."

Q: You're flying the maple leaf flag proudly for Canada as a front-runner in the series. Are you excited looking ahead to competing on home soil in August at Trois-Rivieres and Mosport?

TH: "I'm very excited to be competing in Canada although it's on the other side of the country from where I live. That said, it's great to be representing Canada as a front-runner on home soil!"

Q: Looking long-term, what's the next career step for Taylor Hacquard and do you see yourself remaining in North American racing, not least now that there looks like stability at the top-level, or would you look to Europe if the opportunity presented itself?

TH: "To be honest I've not looked too far into the future. For now I'm trying to focus on this year and being in a position to win the Star Mazda title next season with a view to then graduating into the Atlantic Championship. If that doesn't pan out I'd definitely look at Europe if the right opportunity presented itself. I'd also be open to touring cars or prototypes but I'll cross those bridges when the time comes. As I said, for now I'm focused on Star Mazda and progressing there."

ENDS – www.taylorhacquard.com / www.starmazda.com

Photo Credit: 'Vancouver's Taylor Hacquard – driver of the #15 Wolfe Auto Group Star Mazda' – Taylor Hacquard Motorsports

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