



FROM: C.R. BENNETT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FUTURE-DRIVEN JOHN WALKO RACING PREPARES FOR 2009 SEASON

TRAFFORD, Pa – Despite the disappointment of missing several races, the John Walko Racing team is preparing for the season's last three weekends, actively developing new drivers and supplementing the workload by getting back their roots consulting club teams and preparing vintage race cars.

But their main focus is on the 2009 Star Mazda Series Championship presented by Goodyear.

Current activities are centered on the rigorous testing, training and development, on and off the track, of the Filipino sister/brother team of Michele and Mark Bumgarner.

Michele Bumgarner, coined the "Asian Queen of Karting," currently fields the #43 Spectrum-OSO Asia, Petron Star Mazda and has won numerous Karting Championships, "Driver of the Year" awards and racing scholarships. At 18, her racing accomplishments earned her the acknowledgement as being one of the 7 most respected women in the Philippines.

"Michele is a real joy to work with, just because she really enjoys driving the racecar, and she gets quicker every time out and her results have shown it," John Walko said.

Her younger brother Mark, a rookie this year and recent podium-finisher in the BFGoodrich/Skip Barber National Championship Series presented by Mazda, plans to test and race with his sister, making a Star Mazda championship run in 2009.

Walko said Mark might race in a Star Mazda event by year's end, noting "he's shown a really good pace in the Skip Barber Series so far, and I think he'll be really easy to work with like Michele is."

Michele and Mark current: The Bumgarners have recently been in Indianapolis developing their racing careers with new manager Charlie Patterson, learning more about their off-track responsibilities by meeting with Indy Racing League teams and Firestone Indy Lights Series teams.

"I'm here with my brother and our new manager Charlie Patterson, just trying to get our names out there," said Michele.





“Charlie has been a really recognized face around Indy for over 40 years and he knows a lot of people,” Michele said. “That’s one thing about racing, who you know, and we’re meeting them from Charlie, and it’s going really well.”

Additionally Michele and Mark are actively pursuing new sponsorship opportunities, “anywhere we can find different people for different things,” said Michele.

“We’re trying to take advantage of me being a female in Motorsports, and we’re getting a lot of positive feedback, especially in the United States.”

A female driver in a traditionally male-dominated sport offers JWR several new opportunities, but to have Michele work with female engineer Kate Gundlach could be the key to the team’s success. “The relationship between her and her engineer has been building and getting stronger,” Walko said.

JWR’s main focus is on the Bumgarners, but the next few weeks will be dedicated to testing and developing other drivers. Currently there is another car being prepared for the New Jersey weekend, keeping the team focused and excited to be in the hunt for a win.

Look for future announcements regarding additions to JWR’s driver roster.

