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Michael Guasch Wins Master Class and Visits Podium at Mazda Grand Prix of Portland

July 30, 2008. Portland, Oregon. Visiting the Portland International Raceway circuit as a sponsor of the Pacific Coast Motorsports Champ Car effort in 2007, Michael Guasch watched the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear as a support race for the weekend. Guasch would return to Portland in 2008, this time as the driver of the #91 MOLECULE Pro Formula Mazda, and capture a podium spot for himself as the Master Class winner in the opening round of the Mazda Grand Prix of Portland.

Returning to racing with his Phenom Racing Group organization after a year-long absence to promote his MOLECULE brand of Nomex fabric care products for racing applications, Guasch entered the Portland weekend second in points in the Star Mazda West Coast Championship and decided to enter the national championship prior to Saturday morning's qualifying session.

"We had some good practice sessions on Thursday and Friday and I've been itching to get onto the podium for the pro series so I decided to pay the entry fee for this weekend and see if we could make the dream a reality," the resident of Walnut Creek, California, explained.

He would line up twentieth on the grid of thirty cars, just ahead of fellow Master Class competitor Chuck Hulse and several rows behind Gerry Kraut, but dropped back behind Hulse on the opening lap when several of the top drivers tangled during the standing start employed by the series.

"The start was definitely chaotic up ahead," Guasch described. "One of the young-guns had clutch issues on the starting line and cars were going this way and that to avoid him. Then as we came into the Festival Chicane a couple of other drivers had contact. I protected the corners of my car but did lose the position to Hulse."

Guasch would set out after Hulse, Kraut and his podium dream, pulling closer lap after lap. He would slip past Hulse on lap fifteen to move into second in class, and fifteenth overall, and several laps later would work his way past Kraut and into the class lead, holding the position through the end of the race and finishing eleventh overall.

"It was an awesome feeling when that checkered flag came out and I knew that I would get to visit the podium at the end of the cool down lap,"

Guasch revealed. "I had dreamed of this for a while and making the trip to the podium didn't disappoint! I need to thank my crew at Phenom Racing Group for giving me a great car and to my fellow Master Class competitors for the exciting racing."

Guasch would in fact have two podium visits for the day as his drive earned him the second podium position for the West Coast Championship podium ceremony behind West Coast leader Patrick O'Neill.

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“Patrick has been driving some incredible races but we were right there ready to pounce if he had slipped up,” Guasch said. “At the end of the weekend it has been a thrill to taste the champagne on the podium and to build on my West Coast Championship standings as well.”

Guasch now heads back to California to prepare for the upcoming rounds of the MOLECULE Formula Mazda Challenge at Infineon Raceway and will anxiously await the return of the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear to Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca in October when he can once again try to climb the podium.

About MOLECULE:

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