

## World Speed Motorsports Closes out 2008 Star Season at Mazda Raceway Team Wins Expert Championship and places in the Top Ten with rookie Taylor Hacquard

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The 2008 Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear wrapped up the season at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca and World Speed Motorsports drivers Chris Cumming and Taylor Hacquard took their final laps of a campaign that earned Cumming the Expert Series championship and Hacquard a top-ten finish overall as he made the switch from karts to cars.



“This has been one of the most competitive fields in the history of the Star Mazda Championship and both Taylor and Chris worked really hard and I think everyone on the team is proud of their efforts this season,” commented Team Owner Telo Stewart. “A top-ten finish in this championship is quite an accomplishment and to do that in his first full season in a car speaks highly of Taylor and Chris stepped in and dominated the Expert championship and threatened to break into the top-ten overall as well.”

Saturday’s season finale was action packed with Hacquard lining up eighth overall after an impressive qualifying session, while Cumming was sidelined early in the qualifying session with a damaged suspension after going over the curbs in turn six of the eleven turn circuit. Star Mazda West Coast competitors Dave House and Frank McCormick would qualify 17<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> overall ahead of the afternoon race.

The race drama unfolded during the formation lap as House’s #86 machine came around on him as he was warming the tires and made contact with the barriers around the circuit. The race would start under the yellow flag as a result but once the green came out both Hacquard and Cumming would fight to move up, with Hacquard quickly gaining one spot on the green flag while Cumming worked his way through the field.

Cumming, who secured the Expert Series championship in Round Ten at New Jersey Motorsports Park, had his drive through the field thwarted as he battled with fellow Expert Class competitor Phil Fogg Jr for position. Looking to make the inside pass in turn two Cumming had his front wing damaged when Fogg defended the position.

“I came to the inside for the first apex of turn two and thought that I was going to get the position when he came across towards the second apex and I ran out of road,” Cumming would explain. “The wing got bent and the handling was off after that. I want to thank my mechanic Virgil, my engineer John Olsen and everyone else at World Speed for all their hard work this season.

I also want to thank my Standing Start driver coach Mikel Miller for all his advice and observation this season and getting me up to speed.”

As Cumming was fighting his car, Hacquard, who had a second consecutive top-ten finish in his sights, started experiencing fuel pick-up problems in his #15 Wolf Auto Group Mazda. With only two laps to go the fuel pump would pack it in and Hacquard was forced to retire from the event in twentieth position.

“I’d have liked to have finished the season deeper in the top-ten but it’s been a great rookie year for me,” stated Hacquard post-race. “I have to be happy with my performance at Mazda Raceway as I proved to be consistent throughout practice and qualifying. I was running well in the race but it wasn’t to be. That’s the way racing goes sometimes!”

“I’ve had some ups and downs this year but I’ve learned so much and both met and exceeded some of the goals I had at the start of the season so overall it’s been a pretty successful campaign. I have to thank the whole World Speed team for their efforts and everyone else who’s helped me along the way this year. I’m already looking ahead to the 2009 season and building on all that I’ve learned.”



McCormick would take the checkered flag in seventeenth place overall and be the highest placing World Speed Motorsports driver of the event after battling fellow West Coast competitors Patrick O’Neill and Michael Guasch in the closing laps of the 26-lap event. Hacquard completes the season in tenth place overall with 281 points while Cumming completed the season in twelfth place with 259 points. World Speed Motorsports finished fourth overall in the Star Mazda Team Championship with 180 points.

The World Speed Motorsports team is headed to Thunderhill this week to win the SCCA Formula Atlantic Championship. Both contenders for the title Kevin Woods, and Sean Prewett are World Speed Motorsports team drivers. From there winter testing begins just prior to Halloween at Buttonwillow Raceway Park, and then it is on to the first race weekend of the Star Mazda Winter Series which takes place at Infineon Raceway November 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>.

#### **More information available at:**

World Speed Motorsports: <http://www.worldspeed.com>

Taylor Hacquard: <http://www.TaylorHacquard.com>

Standing Start: <http://www.StandingStart.com>