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AIM Autosport Sees Good Potential for Star Mazda Season Drivers Eager to Accept Guidance from Team and Coach

Woodbridge, Ont. (March 31, 2011) — AIM Autosport's Star Mazda team opened its season last weekend in St. Petersburg where, despite achieving race results that fell short of expectations, the outfit was happy to see good potential for the season ahead. Eighteen-year-old Zack Meyer (#66) finished twelfth, while Expert Class (for drivers over 30) competitors Larry Pegram (#72 Foremost Insurance Group/Tampa Bay Jaw Surgery) and Walt Bowlin (#23 Tampa Bay Jaw Surgery) finished second and third in class, respectively.



Zack Meyer

AIM's Star Mazda Driver Coach, John Edward, was busy with all three drivers, working to help them toward their goals. Being a street track, the St. Petersburg circuit presented some unique challenges, especially for Zack and Larry who were making their street course debuts. The walls around a street track are not only intimidating, they block the view. John helped Zack to visualize unsighted areas so that he was able to drive closer to his optimal racing line. He also helped the former karter with his footwork. Meanwhile, John worked with Walt to increase mid-corner speed and helped Super Bike racer, Larry, with his transition from two wheels to four.

In the qualifying session, Zack simply struggled to find speed and placed 15th. Larry, who lost a lot of practice time to a problem with the fuel pump, was further thwarted by flags during the qualifying session, was second fastest in the Expert Class (16th overall), ahead of Walt who was third in the Expert Class (17th overall).

Zack made a good start for the 45-minute timed race and then drove well to run as high as tenth, but when a caution slowed the field, his lack of experience with rolling restarts cost him a place. He then lost another spot while trying to battle back when a flash of over exuberance led to a little mistake. He went on to finish twelfth.

Larry ran much of the race on the heels of the Championship Class and looked quite strong as he continued to learn about racing on four wheels. Like Zack, Larry didn't fare well on the restart.



Knocked into a spin, he was forced to pit under green for a tire change. The delay caused him to fall a lap behind and he finished second in the Expert Class (13th) overall.

Having set himself a goal of staying on the tail of the Championship Class pack, Walt began to overdrive a little when he saw his quarry begin to edge away. On the ninth lap, he simply pushed too hard, his car crashed into the wall and his race was finished.

Nonetheless all three drivers had learned and improved, and the team is happy with its prospects for the season ahead.

“We had a positive outing even though we didn’t get the results we hoped for,” said AIM Autosport’s Star Mazda Team Manager, Keith Willis. “We have goals for each of our drivers this season and St. Petersburg was a positive step for all three of them. We’re looking forward to good qualifying efforts at the next event as passing is difficult at Barber Motorsports Park.”

The next event in the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear is at Barber Motorsports Park near Birmingham, Ala., April 7–10.

AIM Autosport

AIM Autosport is a professional motorsports team active in highly-competitive sports car and open-wheel racing series in North America. AIM has achieved success at every level through its operating efficiency, engineering skill, experience, dedication and stability of workforce. AIM’s top-tier program is a Daytona Prototype entry in the Grand Am Rolex Sports Car Series.

Since its launch in 1995, AIM has built a winning heritage by fielding competitive cars for talented young drivers in junior development categories. That continues with multi-car teams in the Road to Indy® professional driver development ladder where AIM is a perennial pacesetter in the Star Mazda series. For more information, visit aimautosport.com or [facebook.com/AIMautosport](https://www.facebook.com/AIMautosport).

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