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Additional photos available upon request

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## **MENEZES STRONG IN OVAL DEBUT WITH STAR MAZDA CHAMPIONSHIP**

### **American captured a top-10 at famed Night Before the 500 event in Indiana**

INDIANAPOLIS, IND. (May 31, 2011) – Gustavo Menezes' development as a rising junior formula car racer took another step forward on Memorial Day weekend (May 28), with the highly-rated driver making his oval racing debut in Round Three of the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear. As part of the famed Night Before the 500 event at Lucas Oil Raceway, the American enjoyed a solid inaugural circle track outing, earning a seventh place finish.

Menezes entered his first oval racing event having only just returned from Europe, where he is contesting a partial Formula Renault 2.0 campaign. Building his success overseas – earning a top-10 result in his most recent race in Italy – the American spent the traditional opening day promoter's test session at Lucas Oil Raceway working with his talented Juncos Racing crew to perfect his racing line around the high-speed oval, as well as fine-tune his No. 7 TrueCar/K1 Racing/camas10/Oakley/SafetyPark/Juncos Racing.com entry. The teenager in the end impressed several onlookers by posting the eighth best time when the checkered flag waved to conclude the three-hour run.

Returning to the cockpit just before the lunch hour on race day, the action in Indianapolis commenced with Menezes taking part in two 25-minute practice runs. The former karting standout, continually gaining valuable oval track experience each time he got behind the wheel, again showed good speed and skill, ultimately ending the final session sixth on the timecharts.

After a brief break, it was time for single-car qualifying on the oval, yet another new experience for the talented young racer. Menezes, one of only a few drivers to post a faster opening lap in the two-lap run, captured a row four starting spot with the eighth best time.

Initially slated to get underway under the lights at approximately 8 p.m. local time, it was not until close to 10 pm that the action actually got underway due to a lengthy rain delay.

Menezes, showcasing the calm and concentrated approach of a much more experienced racer, was ready to race when the green flag finally waved. Part of a multi-car fight for position virtually the entire 85-lap affair, Menezes was able to show good speed and skill in and out of traffic. The teenager in the end came home in a strong seventh place in his oval racing debut, only falling off the lead lap in the closing stages after a duel with the eventual race winner.

"It was an awesome race," stated Menezes. "There was a lot of action, and the car was amazing the whole race. I was playing with the sway bar throughout the race, and the car just kept getting better and better. It took me a while to match the pace of the leaders, but I became more and more comfortable as the race went on. I'm really happy with my result for my first oval race."

Menezes continues the oval portion of the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear season on June 19<sup>th</sup>, when he returns to the cockpit at the historic Milwaukee Mile in Wisconsin. Entering Round Four, the American up-and-comer is tied for seventh in the highly-competitive title chase, having captured three top-10 results to start his Star Mazda career.

Additional information on Gustavo Menezes can be obtained from his personal website - [www.gustavomenezes.com](http://www.gustavomenezes.com) - or by following him on Twitter at [twitter.com/gustavom28](https://twitter.com/gustavom28) For direct contact, please contact Rod Campbell at [rod@canam44.com](mailto:rod@canam44.com)

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**About Gustavo Menezes:**

At just 16 years-of-age, Santa Monica, California's Gustavo Menezes is considered one of the most promising young race drivers in America. Menezes began racing in karts at the age of six, earning multiple championships, both at the regional and national level. In 2009 and 2010, Menezes contested an international schedule that included the WSK International Series and various major events in Europe and the United States, running for Italian karting manufacturer Tony Kart in the KF3 and KF2 categories. For 2011, Menezes will move up the motorsports ladder and campaign his rookie season in the Star Mazda Championship with defending series champion Juncos Racing. The talented teenager will additionally run a limited Formula Renault 2.0 campaign with the championship-winning Interwetten.com Junior Team. Menezes' ultimate goal is to one day become a driver in the IndyCar Series and win the Indianapolis 500.

For more information on the Star Mazda Championship: [www.starmazda.com](http://www.starmazda.com)

For more information on Juncos Racing: [www.juncosracing.com](http://www.juncosracing.com)

For more information on TrueCar: [www.truecar.com](http://www.truecar.com)

For more information on K1 Race Gear: <http://www.k1racegear.com/>

For more information on Oakley: [www.oakley.com](http://www.oakley.com)

For more information on SafetyPark: <http://www.safetyparkvalet.com/>

**Attachments:**

**Photo:** 300 x 225 pixels web-ready JPEG

**Possible Caption:** Gustavo Menezes captured a top-10 result in his oval racing debut in Indiana. (Photo: Star Mazda Championship – Eric McCombs)