



For Immediate Release:

Team Pelfrey Seeks to Extend Star Mazda Series Lead in Indianapolis

INDIANAPOLIS, IND. (May 24, 2012) – The Star Mazda Championship Presented by Goodyear concludes an eight-week hiatus on Saturday night with the famed “Night Before the 500” at Lucas Oil Raceway in Indianapolis, where Team Pelfrey will seek to solidify its position at the head of both the Drivers’ and Teams’ Championship tables.

English rookie Jack Hawksworth has won two of the four races run so far this season and currently holds a commanding 29-point lead over his nearest challenger, former Team Pelfrey driver Connor De Phillippi – who won the race at Lucas Oil Raceway last year. Team Pelfrey also leads the Teams Championship by a margin of 119-108 over Juncos Racing.



Hawksworth, 21, from Bradford, England, will be taking part in his very first oval race but displayed good speed during a recent test on the tricky 0.686-mile, high-banked track where he worked well in conjunction with his two teammates, second-year Star Mazda challenger Gustavo Menezes, 17, from Marina Del Ray, Calif., and 19-year-old Finn Petri Suvanto (*above, during a recent test where he posted the fastest time - Photo: Eric McCombs*), who won at LOR last year en route to winning the Cooper Tires USF2000 Championship Powered by Mazda.

“After such a long layoff, it’s good to get back to racing,” said Team Pelfrey Team Manager Geoff Fickling. “We love this event and have been quite happy with all three of our drivers’ pace in oval testing so we hope to continue our form when it counts. It’s a long season and our boys understand the big picture, but of all the races on our schedule, to win this one probably means the most. It’s our Indy and we take it very seriously.”

The on-track action will commence with three hours of testing on Friday evening and continue with a pair of practice sessions on Saturday afternoon. Single-car qualifying will take place at 4:55 pm, with the 100-lap race scheduled to start at 8:25 pm. Live timing and scoring for every on-track session will be available at www.starmazda.com.

In addition, all three Team Pelfrey drivers have been involved in a variety of Mazda Road to Indy activities this week, including a well-attended autograph session, during the lead up to the 96th Indianapolis 500 at the nearby Indianapolis Motor Speedway on Sunday. Also, as the respective current series point leaders in Star Mazda and USF2000, Hawksworth and fellow Team Pelfrey driver Spencer Pigot will lead the formation laps for tomorrow’s Indy Lights Freedom 100.

WHAT THE DRIVERS HAVE TO SAY:

Petri Suvanto (#81 Team Pelfrey/MAZDASPEED Motorsports Development/RKM Building Construction) – “The way I see it, the season is divided into three different parts. We have had a long break since the race on the streets of my new ‘hometown’ St. Petersburg (Fla.) and I’ve had some time to get used to living here in the U.S. as well as living on my own for the first time. Now, it’s time to kick off the second part -- the oval season which consists of races at Lucas Oil Raceway and next month at Iowa Speedway. Everyone starts on the same basis and that makes it very interesting. We had a successful series test here earlier this month and I expect that to give us good momentum for this weekend. The goal is to go out there with a full attack mode and use the experience from last year in order to be up there to fight for the win like we did 12 months ago in USF2000.”

Jack Hawksworth (#82 Team Pelfrey/RKM Building Construction/TORGOEN Swiss Watches/EXA Networks) – “I am really looking forward to going racing again and looking forward to the challenge of the oval part of the season. The test sessions at this track that we have been able to complete showed that we should be competitive and hopefully be able to come out of this weekend with a good result. It will be a great honor to lead the Indy Lights cars round for the Freedom 100 and also a big testament to the brilliant job Team Pelfrey has done so far this season. Being the points leader is great but the season is still young. My only focus at the moment is to get the most out of myself and my equipment this weekend and secure the best result we can. Saturday can't come soon enough!"

Gustavo Menezes (#83 Team Pelfrey/SafetyPark) – “It’s been a pretty big break but the last oval test went really well and we’re excited for the race. We got to test a lot of things and I think it’s going to be good to continue where we left off. We have quite a bit of track time, with three hours on Friday and another hour on Saturday, so we’re really going to take advantage of it and dial in a good car for the race. I think having raced here before (finished seventh in 2011) is going to help a lot. I definitely noticed the difference when I got on track for the test. We were fastest for at least the first 45 minutes and stayed up front the whole time so I’m much more comfortable with the track this year and we were able to get to fine-tuning a lot quicker. It’s definitely special (being in Indianapolis). I really like this place and it’s great that we get to see a lot of things and be part of the big event (the Indy 500), so it’s something cool to look forward to in the next few years.”

About Team Pelfrey:

Dale Pelfrey’s race team, based in the St. Petersburg, Fla., area, is built upon the same principles he used 35 years ago when establishing his business career – hire the best, acquire the best and demand the best in order to achieve the most. After fielding cars in the IZOD IndyCar Series from 1998 until 2000, Team Pelfrey was reformed in 2011, winning on its Star Mazda debut and going on to earn the Team Championship as well as second and third in the drivers’ title-chase with Connor De Phillippi and Nick Andries. Team Pelfrey is fielding three cars in the 2012 Star Mazda series in addition to expanding its driver development program within the Mazda Road to Indy ladder system by supporting Spencer Pigot in the USF2000 Championship.

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