



For Immediate Release:

Suvanto Takes Fifth and Menezes Sixth, while Hawksworth Maintains His Championship Points Lead for Team Pelfrey



CLERMONT, IND. (May 26, 2012) – Team Pelfrey endured a tough day during the traditional “Night Before the 500” at Lucas Oil Raceway at Indianapolis. All three drivers struggled in qualifying on the tricky 0.686-mile oval, but Petri Suvanto drove a strong race to finish in fifth, narrowly ahead of teammates Gustavo Menezes, who had started 11th, and Star Mazda Championship Presented by Goodyear points leader Jack Hawksworth.

The day began well with Menezes posting the fastest time in the opening practice session and backing it up with fourth in the second half-hour period, despite running on older tires. In qualifying later in the afternoon, however, the 17-year-old could manage only the 11th-fastest time. Suvanto, meanwhile, lined up fifth on the grid, despite being forced to sit out yesterday’s three-hour test session with electrical maladies, with Hawksworth in ninth.

Suvanto, who won the USF2000 race at LOR last year en route to the series championship, dropped a place at the start but quickly regained it and held his position to the finish. Hawksworth, in his very first oval track race, also lost a position in the early stages -- to a charging Menezes. The Englishman soon gained in pace and confidence, however, passing Juan Piedrahita for seventh on Lap 88 and then battling mightily with teammate Menezes. The pair exchanged places a couple of times in the closing stages before completing the 100-lap race in sixth (Menezes) and seventh.

The Star Mazda Championship will continue with another oval race at Iowa Speedway, in Newton, Iowa, on June 23.

- Also this evening at Lucas Oil Raceway, Team Pelfrey Development Driver Spencer Pigot scored a brilliant victory in Round 5 of the Cooper Tires USF2000 Championship Powered by Mazda following a thrilling battle with third-generation driver Matthew Brabham. Pigot, 18, from Orlando, Fla., continues to lead the championship standings.

WHAT THEY SAID:

Petri Suvanto (#81 Team Pelfrey/Mazda Road to Indy), started fifth, finished fifth – “This was probably the most challenging day of my season so far. We were so much behind due to the problems we had yesterday in the practice when we missed the whole three-hour development that everybody else had, so we started from zero but we have to be happy with the points and now we can go on to Iowa and try to develop the car and myself.”

Gustavo Menezes (#83 Team Pelfrey/SafetyPark), started 11th, finished sixth – “It was a pretty good day overall. We were first in the first practice and we didn’t have new tires in the second practice but we were still fourth overall. For some reason we only qualified 11th, which made everything difficult after running in the top five all weekend. So we worked really hard to get up there. I got a great start, got ahead of Jack -- we had about five laps running next to each other, and it’s tough racing against a teammate because the respect level has to be a lot higher because you can’t risk getting them in a bad position either, whereas the other drivers you can pin them down a bit more. Jack and I had a good race in the closing stages and I got the better out of it with a few laps to go so we ended up sixth. It’s not the happiest result but from where we started, I really think that we showed we had the speed. It’s too bad we made a mistake in qualifying, but we learned and I think we’re going to have one of the strongest cars on the oval at Iowa.”

Jack Hawksworth (#82 Team Pelfrey/ TORGOEN Swiss Watches/EXA Networks), started ninth, finished seventh – “Practice was OK, we were always in the mix, but we never quite got on the money this weekend and we struggled with a little bit of oversteer in qualifying which put us on the back foot for the race. I didn’t make the best of starts in

the race. It was my first oval race, and being in the middle of the pack I didn't perhaps make the best decisions on where to go on the race track all the time in the early laps, but I managed to get my head 'round it in the end. I wasn't that comfortable with the car but we managed to bring home a seventh. It wasn't the win we wanted but I'm glad we still came away from here with some points, and the championship lead is still looking pretty healthy."

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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