



For Immediate Release:

Disappointing Final Race of 2012 for Double Title Winners Team Pelfrey



BRASELTON, GA. (October 19, 2012) – The 2012 Star Mazda Championship Presented by Goodyear certainly didn't finish the way Team Pelfrey had wished. After wrapping up the Drivers and Team Championships with one weekend remaining, the Clearwater, Fla.-based team had to settle for sixth, seventh and 14th in the 50-minute finale this afternoon at Road Atlanta.

Finland's Petri Suvanto qualified a strong fourth and moved up to third at the start, but then made a couple of mistakes on the opening lap which dropped last year's USF2000 Champion as low as eighth. Suvanto became embroiled in a titanic battle with teammate Gustavo Menezes and several other contenders before fighting back to sixth at the checkered flag.

Menezes, too, bounced up and down the charts during an entertaining scrap for position. The Californian teenager finally crossed the line in seventh.

Jack Hawksworth stepped out of his #82 car for the season finale, having wrapped up the title last month, but he stayed on to help young rookie Ryan Tveter learn the ropes in his debut with the team. Tveter qualified a promising 12th, just one second shy of Suvanto's best on the undulating and challenging 2.54-mile road course, but then spun on Lap 3 and was playing catch-up thereafter. He finished a lap down in 14th.

WHAT THE DRIVERS SAID:

Petri Suvanto (#81 Team Pelfrey/Mazda Road to Indy) – qualified fourth, finished sixth: “The start was definitely a positive for me because we've been struggling with getting off the line this year a lot but we really nailed it in this last race of the season. That was a positive. I got up to third from fourth on the grid and had a good lap going until Turn Seven, which is the corner leading onto the back straight. I made a little mistake and Zach Veach was able to go by, and then, fighting into Turn 10, we both locked up the front tires and ran wide so I lost momentum and a lot of cars got by. After that it was a bit of a struggle. I managed to make up a few positions but to finish sixth is definitely a disappointment. Looking back on the year, I really want to thank everyone at Team Pelfrey. It was a typical rookie season, I would say – good at times and bad at times – but it's not the easiest step from USF2000 to Star Mazda. There were lots of ups and downs but now I've gone through them and I've learned a lot and I know I'm a better driver. I know I'm ready to come back next year and hopefully fight for the title.”

Gustavo Menezes (#83 Team Pelfrey/SafetyPark/Oakley) – qualified eighth, finished seventh: “I think for the pace we had today, we got the most out of the car. We started eighth and got a great start. I passed two cars off the line and took another car coming off turn 10 so that put me up to fifth. I had a long battle with several other cars. Unfortunately, I fell back to eighth again but I got back to seventh and started the catching the other guys ahead of me. Overall, I think we did what we could. I wish we could have been a little farther up the grid but I learned a lot with the guys this year and I would really like to thank Team Pelfrey for everything they did.”

Ryan Tveter (#82 Team Pelfrey/CIMIER Swiss Watches/Motorola Mobility LLC) – qualified 12th, finished 14th: “It was a difficult race, very long. I made a mistake on Lap 3 and spun in Turn One. Luckily, I didn't get hit by anyone and managed to recover and fight my way back to 14th. It certainly wasn't the result I wanted. It's been difficult but I've learned so much these four days working with these guys. First of all, having fast teammates, so I can see what's possible, and comparing the data and the video, that's really, really helped. Jack Hawksworth was incredibly helpful, too. It was amazing working with him. He's such a nice guy and very supportive and really gave me a lot of helpful advice. I've closed the gap a lot and made progress every single session, so I think it's been a very successful weekend in that regard.”

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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