



Contact: Peter Frey / (818) 906-6997  
StarMazdaPR@aol.com

### **SMALL SURPRISES – THE USUAL SUSPECTS, THOUGH IN A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT ORDER, TOP THE TIME SHEETS IN STAR MAZDA TEST DAY AT THE GLEN**

Watkins Glen, NY (June 4, 2008) -- The Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear is making its debut at Watkins Glen International this weekend as a support race for the Sahlen's Six Hours of The Glen Rolex Series event. Today's Star Mazda-only testing session at the legendary racetrack saw the usual suspects, though in a slightly different order, emerge at the top of the time sheets.

On an overcast day with intermittent sprinkles that dampened the track and caused a number of red flags in the afternoon, 22 of the 24-car field began finding the fast way around The Glen's 3.4-mile, 11-turn road course. In the 3-hour morning session, Englishman Charles Hall, who was on his way to Formula One before a devastating street car crash de-railed his career, demonstrated that he's back on track by topping the time sheet with a lap of 1:45.651 (118.238 mph) in his Andersen Racing/Blimpie/AccentBanking.com/Pardoes Solicitors/Allied Mazda. Hall finished second in both Round 1 of the 2008 Star Mazda Championship at Sebring and Round 2 at Miller Motorsports Park and sits second in the championship points battle.

"I had a bit of an advantage in that I raced at Watkins Glen, in the rain, in the Fran-Am series in 2003 and that knowledge of the track helped a bit," said Hall. "But the Andersen team rolled a great car off the trailer for me and just kept making it better throughout the day. There are still a few more adjustments to make, but hopefully we keep improving and take one more step up the podium on Saturday morning."

The second-fastest car, just half a second back, belonged to the winner of Round Two at Miller Motorsports Park, John Edwards. Driving the #7 AIM Autosport Mazda, Edwards, who raced in the Atlantic Championship Powered by Mazda last season, turned a time of 1:46.161 (117.670 mph). Third-fast was Joel Miller, winner of the season-opener in Sebring, who set a time of 1:46.347 (117.465 mph) in the #20 JDC Motorsports/Mazda/K&N Air Filters Mazda. Miller completed 35 laps before a small off-course excursion curtailed his session. Despite the fact that the car was easily repaired, the team decided to sit out the afternoon session and focus on the two Star Mazda sessions during tomorrow's Promoter Test Day.

Rounding out the top-5 were Irishman Peter Dempsey in the #21 Andersen Racing/Center Jewellers.ie/Quayside.ie/Allied Mazda. Dempsey, who finished 3<sup>rd</sup> at Sebring and 4<sup>th</sup> at Miller Motorsports Park and is currently 3<sup>rd</sup> in the championship points, turned a fast lap of 1:46.622 (117.167 mph). Eric Freiberg, driver of the #14 World Speed Motorsports/Collision Damage Experts Mazda, was 5<sup>th</sup>-fast with a lap of 1:47.273 (116.451 mph).

In the afternoon session, which began with light sprinkles that were not enough to cause teams to switch to rain tires but which surely contributed to the several red flags that punctuated the session, Dempsey moved to the top of the time sheets with a 1:46.163

(117.668 mph), followed by Charles Hall with a 1:46.176 (117.654 mph) and John Edwards with a lap of 1:46.695 (117.081 mph).

Two new names made an appearance in the afternoon top-5, including Brazilian Ernesto Otero whose lap of 1:46.956 (116.796 mph) in the #18 JDC Motorsports/Brazilian Green Beef Mazda was good for 4<sup>th</sup>. And in 5<sup>th</sup> was second-year driver and Louisiana native Alex Ardoin, who won the 2007 season-ending race at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca and finished 6<sup>th</sup> in the championship. Driving the #51 Mundill Racing/Oral&Facial Surgery Center/Twister Trailer Mazda, Ardoin posted a lap of 1:47.088 (116.652 mph).

Merging the times shows Hall turning the fastest lap overall, followed by Edwards, Dempsey, Miller and Otero. Kristy Kester was the fastest of three female drivers in the field, 10<sup>th</sup>-fast overall with a lap of 1:48.233 (115.418 mph) in the #48 Kester Racing/Texas World Speedway/Unifirst Mazda. The fastest Expert Series (drivers aged 30 to 44) racer in the field was Chris Cumming, who won his class at Sebring and finished 2<sup>nd</sup> at Miller Motorsports park and is currently leading the Expert Series championship. He turned a lap of 1:48.818 (114.797 mph), good for 16<sup>th</sup>-fast overall for the day. The top Expert Series driver (drivers age 45 and older) was Chuck Hulse, also the Expert Series championship leader. He won his class at Sebring, finished 2<sup>nd</sup> at Miller and his lap of 1:49.360 (114.228 mph) was good for 17<sup>th</sup>-fast on the day.

Star Mazda Championship on-track activity continues with two additional 30-minute test sessions tomorrow, Thursday, June 5. Qualifying takes place from 4:10 pm to 4:55 pm, Friday, June 6, with the 45-minute Round Three of the 2008 Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear scheduled to take the green flag at 9:05 am Saturday, June 7. The race will be broadcast on SPEED Saturday, June 21 at 11:00 am Eastern.

For more information on the Star Mazda Championship and its drivers, as well as the Mazda Motorsports ladder system, please visit [www.starmazda.com](http://www.starmazda.com) and [www.mazdausa.com](http://www.mazdausa.com).

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Dean Case / Communications Officer / MAZDASPEED Motorsports  
Office - (310) 755-7403 / Cell - (310) 318-4582 / E-mail: [dean@RWB-LLC.com](mailto:dean@RWB-LLC.com)

