

## **TWICE THE BEST MAN, FINALLY THE GROOM - - BREAKTHROUGH VICTORY FOR CHARLES HALL IN ROUND THREE OF THE STAR MAZDA CHAMPIONSHIP AT THE GLEN**

Watkins Glen, NY (June 7, 2008) – After serving notice in the most emphatic possible way, including 2<sup>nd</sup>-place finishes in the first two races of the season and the fastest times in every practice leading up to Round Three of the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear, Englishman Charles Hall finally broke through for his first victory at Watkins Glen.

Starting from the outside of the front row, Hall followed pole-sitter Alex Ardoin into the first turn and through the esses. Coming on to the back straight, he got a tow from Ardoin and sling-shot his #77 Andersen Racing/Blimpie/ AccentBanking.com/Pardoes Solicitors/Allied Mazda past, leading every lap all the way to the checkered flag.

“The Andersen Racing team gave me such a great car in every session this weekend that I knew if I just kept my head down and focused on the task, that it would come to me, and it did,” said Hall. “I’ve never run here before, but I researched it on Youtube and the internet so I at least had some idea of which way the track went. There is so much history here, and so many great drivers have won at this track, that it’s a real honor for me to score my first win here. Right now this feels like the best day of my life.”

Finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> was Joel Miller, winner of Round One at Sebring, who started 3<sup>rd</sup> in his #20 JDC Motorsports/Mazda/K&N Air Filters Mazda. He suffered some small adversity during the weekend, including a small off-course excursion in his in Thursday morning practice.

“We started the weekend behind the 8-ball a little bit because of the incident on Thursday, but that’s never a real problem with a team the caliber of JDC Motorsports,” said Miller the 2007 Skip Barber Pro Series champion who won his Star Mazda ride courtesy of the *MAZDASPEED* Motorsports Driver Development Ladder. “My car took a little while to come up to speed at the start of the race, especially since we had that full course-yellow for the first couple of laps with the stalled car on the front straight. The re-starts after the yellows worked to my advantage because my right front tire was running a bit hot and I was able to cool them off during the yellow laps. So we hung on and brought the car home for some good championship points. We needed a little luck this weekend, and we got some... just not quite enough.”

The lead duo swapped places in the championship points battle as a result of this weekend’s races. Miller came to Watkins Glen leading by two points and Hall leaves leading by two; currently Hall has 124 to Miller’s 122.

Louisiana driver Alex Ardoin, who won the pole in the #51 Mundill/Oral & Facial Surgery Center/Performance Drink/ Twister Trailer Mazda, started the race well, but lost a position on each of the two yellow-flag re-starts and battled with a loose car in the final laps to finish 3<sup>rd</sup>.

“I got a great start and pulled out a couple of car lengths, but during the standing start my engine temperature got really high and I had had no power up the hill so Charles blew by me,” says Ardoin, who won the 2007 season-closer at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca and finished 6<sup>th</sup> in the championship. “The handling of my car deteriorated toward the end so I was just hanging on trying to stay on the track and bring it home undamaged. Third is a decent finish and gets us some good championship points for later in the season. The Mundill team gave me the car I needed to run at the front and I’m optimistic about the upcoming double-header at Portland.”

Rounding out the top-5 was Irishman Peter Dempsey who qualified 4<sup>th</sup> and finished 4<sup>th</sup> in the #21 Andersen Racing/ Center jewelers.ie/Quayside.ie/Allied Mazda and series rookie Billy

Goshen, scoring both his best qualifying effort (6<sup>th</sup>) and his best finish so far in the #82 Goshen Motorsports/Merv Griffin Entertainment/Global Tracking Comm./Baker Commodities Mazda. John Edwards, who dazzled the field with a runaway win from the pole in his first-ever Star Mazda start in Round Two at Miller Motorsports Park had a more problematic weekend at Watkins Glen, qualifying 6<sup>th</sup> and finishing 5<sup>th</sup> in his #7 AIM Autosport Mazda.

Dempsey is now third in the championship points battle with 105 points, followed by Alex Ardoin with 98. Billy Goshen is 5<sup>th</sup> with 86 points. Andersen Racing now leads the team championship with 96 points, followed by 2007 champions JDC Motorsports with 81 and Mundill with 57.

Winning the Expert Series category for drivers aged 20 to 44 is the current class championship leader Chris Cumming, driver of the #16 World Speed Motorsports / Inviro Medical Mazda. His 11<sup>th</sup>-place overall finish and first in the Expert Series marks his second class victory this year, including Sebring.

“There were lots of spinning cars and the car ahead of me was spewing oil for most of the race, so for me it was mostly a matter of trying to keep my visor clear enough to see, staying out of trouble and bringing the car home,” said Cumming. “I made a couple of good passes going into Turn Seven and had a great race overall. The car felt good and worked well and I’m happy to have won my class at such a tremendous track.”

Finishing first in the Master Series for drivers 45 and older was current Master Series championship leader Chuck Hulse. Driving the #12 JDC Motorsports/Silicon Salvage Mazda, he won his class at the season-opener in Sebring and finished 14<sup>th</sup> overall at Watkins Glen.

“My first lap was one of the most exciting of my career; the car ahead of me on the grid stalled and I was able to duck around him, but then another car spun in the first turn and I had to come to a complete stop to miss it which dropped me all the way to the back,” said Hulse, who qualified 20<sup>th</sup>. “From there on it was just me hanging on and trying to figure out what the car liked and trying to drive that way. Winning the Master Class was great, but we also went through the whole week with no crashes or damage, which really allowed the team to focus on the engineering and we made some real progress that should help us in the upcoming races.”

The top-finishing female driver, of the three in the field, was first-time rookie Natalia Kowalska, a Polish karting champion who has also raced in the European Formula Renault series making her first every Star Mazda start (and her first-ever race in the U.S.). After qualifying 11<sup>th</sup> in the #43 John Walko Racing/Natan Developments Mazda, she fought off the effects of a coming-together with another car in the first turn of the first lap to bring the car home in 12<sup>th</sup>. Finishing immediately behind her was Kristy Kester, the female half of the brother/sister Kester Racing team. Unable to qualify due to a mechanical problem, she started last on the grid and raced her way through the field to finish 12<sup>th</sup> in the #48 Kester Racing/Texas World Speedway/Unifirst Mazda.

The next event on the schedule is the Mazda Grand Prix of Portland at Portland International Raceway, July 26 – 27, where the Star Mazda Championship will be the main event. It will be a ‘double-header’ weekend with two qualifying sessions and two races. On track activities begin with a Promoter test day on July 24, followed by official practice on July 25. Qualifying for the first race (Round Four) will take place 10:00 to 10:45 am Saturday, July 26, with the race scheduled to take the green flag at 2:00 pm (all times are West Coast). Qualifying and race two (Round Five) take place at precisely the same times on Sunday, July 27. The races will be

broadcast on SPEED, on August 9, Round four at 12 noon (ET) and round 5 at 1:00 pm (TV times are Eastern Time).

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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