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GLADDIS SCORES FIRST-EVER STAR MAZDA POLE FOR RACE 1 OF MAZDA GRAND PRIX OF PORTLAND

Tom Gladdis, the 17 year-old racer from the English territory of Gibraltar, scored his-first-ever Star Mazda Championship pole for this afternoon's Round 4 of the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear. This is the first of two Star Mazda events being held at the Mazda Grand Prix of Portland, and his lap of 1:08.936 (103.244 mph) in the #5 Andersen Racing / Law firm of Marrache & Co. / Allied Building Products will see him starting on the inside of the front row. Starting next to him will be Round 2 winner John Edwards, followed by Irishman Peter Dempsey, Californian Billy Goshen and Louisiana racer Alex Ardoin who won the final round of the 2007 Star Mazda Championship.

"I'm very excited for myself, my sponsors and the Andersen team to be starting on the pole," said Gladdis. "The team told me when I went out not to push too hard and just let the quick laps come to me, and they did. We've been analyzing the data and chipping away at gaining a tenth here and a tenth there, and it all adds up to a really good car for the race."

Gladdis scored a pair of 5th-place finishes in Rounds 1 and 2 at Sebring and Miller Motorsports Park, but was unable to race in Round 3 at Watkins Glen because of his age; he is currently 13th in the championship battle with 65 points. John Edwards, driving the #7 AIM Autosport Mazda turned a lap of 1:09.304 (102.695 mph) for the outside spot on the front row. Edwards raced for the Red Bull/Forsythe team in the Atlantic Championship last year and was a surprise last-minute entry in Round 2 of the Star Mazda Championship at Miller Motorsports Park where he scored a dominant victory from the pole. He finished 6th in Round 2 at Watkins Glen and is currently 8th in the championship with 75 points.

Irishman Peter Dempsey is another Andersen Racing driver and is debuting a new major sponsor this weekend, LotusWorks, a global provider of technical, construction and management services. His lap of 1:09.361 (102.611 mph) in the #21 LotusWorks/Center Jewellers.ie/Quayside.ie / Allied Building Products Mazda earned him third spot on the starting grid. He finished 3rd in the season opener, 4th in Rounds 2 and 3 and is third in the championship with 105 points.

Billy Goshen, driving the #82 Goshen Motorsports / Merv Griffin Entertainment / Global Tracking Communications Mazda to his best qualifying effort ever with a lap of 1:09.669 (102.157 mph) will start fourth on the grid for this afternoon's race. He started out the season with a pair of top-10s, finished 5th at Round 3 in Watkins Glen and is currently 5th in the championship with 86 points. Rounding out the top-5 is Alex Ardoin, who won the 2007 season-ender Star Mazda race at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca. He turned a lap of 1:09.714 (102.091 mph) in the #51 Mundill Racing / Oral & Facial Surgery Center / Twister Trailer Mazda. Ardoin finished 4th in Round 1, 10th in Round 2 and started from the pole in Round 3 at Watkins Glen, finishing 3rd. He is currently 4th in the championship with 98 points.

Chris Cumming, who currently leads the Expert Series (age 30 to 44) with two wins and one 2nd-place finish, was the top-qualifying Expert with a lap of 1:10.009 (101.661 mph) in the #16 World Speed Motorsports / Inviro Medical. He will start from 8th on the grid for this afternoon's race. The fastest qualifier in the Master Series (45 and older) was Gerry Kraut, co-owner of the 2007 Star Mazda Championship-winning JDC Motorsports team. His lap of 1:10.845 (100.462 mph) will see him starting from the 18th grid position in the 30-car field for the start of this afternoon's race.

The Mazda Grand Prix of Portland at Portland International Raceway, July 25 – 27, is 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 and www.mazdausa.com. For interviews, photos, etc., contact Star Mazda Championship Communications Director Peter Frey at (818) 906-6997 / StarMazdaPR@aol.com.

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