



EDWARDS COMES OUT ON TOP IN A HEATED BATTLE FOR THE STAR MAZDA CHAMPIONSHIP POLE AT ROAD AMERICA



American racer John Edwards, the only repeat winner so far in the 2008 Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear, won the pole this afternoon for the start of tomorrow's Round 6 at Road America. His lap of 2:05.313 (116.291) #7 AIM Autosport Mazda was just 0.227 faster than the man who will start on the outside of the front row, Irishman Peter Dempsey. Dempsey, who did not run in this morning's practice session, led the early stages of qualifying

and ultimately posted a 2nd-fast lap of 2:05.540 (116.081 mph) in the #21 Andersen Racing / LotusWorks/ Allied Building Products Mazda, his best qualifying effort so far this season. Rounding out the top-3 was the winner of Race 1/Round 4 at the Mazda Grand Prix of Portland, Tom Gladdis, the 17 year-old driver from the British territory of Gibraltar. He turned a lap of 2:05.540 (115.815 mph) in the #5 Andersen Racing / Law firm of Marrache & Co. / Allied Building Products Mazda.

"We knew the car was good on old tires so we went out in the first part of the session on tires that had eighty or a hundred miles on them and were within half a second of the front-runners," said Edwards, whose two victories have come at his debut Star Mazda race at Miller Motorsports Park (where he won from the pole) and Race2/Round 5 at Portland. "I radioed the guys in the pits and said 'If we put on some stickers, we'll be P1 for sure.' But the new set had a huge vibration that turned out to just be a balance problem, so I went back out and put the hammer down and went fast enough for the pole. I expect this will be a really close, competitive race with lots of passing at the front of the field, and I can't wait for the start."

Rounding out the to-5 were MAZDASPEED Motorsports Driver Development Ladder scholarship winner Joel Miller (who also won the season opener at Sebring and is the current championship points leader). He was 4th with a 2:05.903 (115.746 mph) in the #20 JDC Motorsports / Mazda / K&N Air Filters Mazda. Starting 5th will be Charles Hall, who won round 3 at Watkins Glen and is currently 2nd in the championship battle. He turned a lap of 2:06.250 (115.428 mph) in the #77 Andersen Racing / Blimpie / AccentBanking.com/ Allied Building Products Mazda.

The top-qualifying Expert was Vancouver native Chris Cumming, who is currently leading the Expert championship battle with four class wins, including both races in Portland. His lap of 2:07.480 (114.314 mph) in the #16 World Speed Motorsports / Inviro Medical Mazda was 12th-fast overall. "I'm both happy and disappointed because I had a lap going that was half a second quicker, which would have put me in the top-6 but the red flag came out just as I was heading for start/finish and timing was stopped," said Cumming.

The quickest Master Series driver was Gerry Kraut, with a 17th-quick overall lap of 2:08.263 (113.617 mph) in the #55 JDC Motorsports / Dougherty & Co. / Dougherty Funding LLC Mazda. Kraut has scored one class win and four class podium finishes so far this season.

The 45-minute Round 6 of the 2008 Star Mazda championship is scheduled to take the green flag at 2:25 pm Saturday, August 8. The race will be broadcast on SPEED TV on August 23 at 12:00 pm (ET).

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.

On any given weekend, there are more Mazdas on the road-race tracks of America than any other brand of vehicle. At the track, you'll see MX-5 Miata, RX-8, MAZDA3, MAZDA6, RX-7 and other vintage Mazda models competing, because every Mazda has the Soul of a Sports Car.

For more information on the various Mazda spec series, visit:

www.champcaratlantic.com

www.starmazda.com

www.skipbarber.com

www.mx-5cup.com

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