



John Edwards Scores His Third Star Mazda Victory in Race 1/Round 9 at New Jersey Motorsports Park



Saturday, September 13, 2008 / New Jersey Motorsports Park – American racer John Edwards snapped the 3-race winning streak of Irishman Peter Dempsey with a win from the outside of the front row in Race 1 / Round 9 of the 2008 Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear at New Jersey Motorsports Park. This is the third win this season for Edwards, who drives the #7 AIM Autosport Mobil 1 Mazda. He won from the pole in his first-ever Star Mazda Championship race at Miller Motorsports Park and followed that up with a win in Race 2 / Round 5 at the Mazda Grand Prix of Portland.

Rounding out the top-3 in today's race were pole-sitter Joel Miller, who finished second in the #20 JDC Motorsports / Mazda / K&N Air Filters Mazda and the aforementioned Peter Dempsey, who drove the #21 Andersen Racing / LotusWorks / Quayside.ie / Allied Building Products Mazda to a third-place finish. Finishing first in the Expert Series for drivers aged 30 to 44 was J.W. Roberts. This was his second class victory in the #65 Team GDT / GDT Mazda. The victor in the Master Series for drivers 45 and older was Chuck Hulse, scoring his sixth class win driving the #12 JDC Motorsports / Silicon Salvage Mazda.

"Luck was on my side this time and I caught the traffic right where it was good for me and bad for Joel," said Edwards. "I had the pace to run with him, but both of us were off in the dirt battling for the lead and I came out in front. After that, traffic again helped me build a lead and I just focused on managing my race and never looked back."

Joel Miller led the first 21 laps of the 32-lap event, building as much as a 3-second gap over Edwards, but it was traffic that was the undoing of his race as well. "The JDC Motorsports team gave me a really good car, it was just a rocket in the early stages of the race and we were able to maintain a front-running pace all the way through. I just got caught in a couple of situations that shuffled me back to third, and then I was able to pass Dempsey back for second as we were going into Turn 1. This was my second pole of the season, and my sixth podium finish and

I'd rather have made it my second victory, but I'm happy to still be leading the points championship."

Provisional points after Race 1 at New Jersey Motorsports Park have Joel Miller leading with 315, followed by Peter Dempsey with 310 and John Edwards with 296. Rounding out the top-5 are Charles Hall with 293 and Alex Ardoin with 287.

One of the race's most interesting stories was provided by Finnish driver named Valle Mäkelä, making his first start in the Star Mazda Championship. Driving the #31 Andersen Racing / Amitec / Allied Building Products, the native of Laitila, Finland, he qualified 5th and finished 4th, and impressive result for a rookie in his first Star Mazda race. Rounding out the top-5 was Tom Gladdis the 17 year-old native of the British territory of Gibraltar. Driving the #5 Andersen Racing / Marrache & Co. / Allied Building Products Mazda, Gladdis qualified 7th and finished 5th. He is one of the other race winners this season, having taken the pole position for both Star Mazda Championship races at the Mazda Grand Prix of Portland, and winning Race 1 / Round 5.

Hard-luck stories in the race include Lafayette, Louisiana racer Alex Ardoin, who qualified 4th in the #51 Mundill Racing / Oral & Facial Surgery Center / Twister Trailer Mazda, but suffered a recurrence of the engine woes that plagued his qualifying session and spent most of the race in the pits trying to find the cause of an engine mis-fire. He finished 23rd and last, but will certainly be a factor in Sunday's Race 2 if his crew is able to get his car working properly. And Chris Cumming, the Vancouver racer who has dominated the Expert Series this season with six class wins, qualified 10th overall but retired the #16 World Speed Motorsports / Inviro Medical Mazda with mechanical problems on Lap 4.

Having a far better race was another Vancouver native, Taylor Hacquard, driver of the ##15 World Speed Motorsports / Wolfe Auto Group Mazda. He qualified 14th but moved up through the field during the race to finish 9th. And the lone female driver in the race Kristy Kester, qualified 20th in the #48 Kester Racing / Texas World Speedway / Unifirst Mazda, but drove a steady race to finish 14th.

Sunday's on-track activities begin with a 45-minute qualifying session taking place from 9:20 am to 10:05 am. The 32-lap/45-minute race is scheduled to start at 2:15 pm Sunday, September 14. Race 1 / Round 9 will air on SPEED TV Sunday, October 5 at 2:00 pm (ET), while Race 2 / Round 10 will be broadcast Sunday, October 12 at 1:00 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.

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