



THE IRISH STEAMROLLER – Peter Dempsey wins Round 10 of the Star Mazda Championship at New Jersey Motorsports Park

Sunday, September 14, 2008 / New Jersey Motorsports Park – Peter Dempsey, quickly earning



the nickname 'the Irish Steamroller,' rolled to his fourth victory in the last five races with a lucky but dominant win in Race 2 / Round 10 of the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear at New Jersey Motorsports Park. The driver of the #21 Andersen Racing / LotusWorks /Quayside.ie / Allied Building Products Mazda previously won three races back-to-back at Road America, Trois Rivieres and Mosport.

Finishing second after battling through a weekend informed almost exclusively by bad luck was Lafayette, Louisiana racer Alex Ardoin, driving the #51 Mundill Racing / Oral & Facial Surgery Center / Twister Trailer Mazda. Coming home third, despite fighting a bad cold that saw him collapse on the podium, was the winner of Saturday's Round 1 / Race 9, American John Edwards in the #7 AIM Autosport / Mobil1 Mazda.

Another driver overcoming adversity to win this weekend was Expert Series (driver 30 to 44) victor Chris Cumming, who retired the #16 World Speed Motorsports / Inviro Medical Mazda just four laps into Saturday's race, but brought it home first in class today. The winner in the Master Series (drivers 45 and older) was Chuck Hulse, who repeated his victory of yesterday in the #12 JDC Motorsports / Silicon Salvage Mazda.

"I didn't have quite the pace to win the race, but I could run with the leaders," said Dempsey, who started from third on the grid and cruised to 14.659-second margin of victory. "I had a bit of luck when Joel Miller spun and dropped back a couple of places, and another bit when a car spun in front of Edwards and he had to swerve off track to avoid contact. That put me through into first and from there on it was just taking care of the tires and not making any mistakes. The Andersen team gave me a great car, and I'd like to thank my sponsors, including LotusWorks and Allied Building Supplies for helping me continue in the series."

Rounding out the top-5 were Joel Miller in the #20 JDC Motorsports / Mazda / K&N Air Filters Mazda and Charles Hall, driving the #77 Andersen Racing / Blimpie / AccentBanking.com / Allied Building Products Mazda. Miller finished second in Saturday's race and Hall moved up from a 6th-place finish yesterday.

It was the second Star Mazda Championship race in two days run without a single full-course yellow, eloquent testimony to the design of the Thunderbolt track at New Jersey Motorsports Park. But that doesn't mean the race was entirely without excitement; Tom Gladdis provided the first burst of adrenaline with an agricultural excursion in the opening laps in his #5 Andersen Racing / Law firm of Marrache & Co. / Allied Building Products Mazda. As with all the relatively few off-course excursions during the weekend, he was able to re-join the race, albeit toward the dull end of the field. He declined to surrender, however, and eventually made his way back up to finish 13th. On Lap 14, Joel Miller, who was running in second behind Edwards, spun and continued in the #20 JDC Motorsports / Mazda / K&N Air Filters Mazda, but gave up his track position to Alex Ardoin.

"The weekend has difficult, but the team and I kept our heads down and kept working and it finally paid off," said Ardoin. "We had problems in practice and qualifying, and we only ran a couple of laps in the race yesterday, so we had almost no data to work on the setup and just had to take a chance. I ran off course in the race and the grass clogged the radiators, and then the rear end started getting loose, so finishing second is a testimony to luck, hard work and sponsors who have faith in you."

By Lap 20, the field was fairly well spread out with the sole exception of Dempsey, who was obviously stalking Edwards. And a fruitful stalk it proved to be, as on Lap 23 a lapped car spun in front of Edwards, who had to take evasive action into the grass to avoid contact. This allowed Dempsey to slip into the lead, and Edwards, his aerodynamics compromised by what looked like a grass shack affixed to the front of his car, could do little but keep his eye on the championship prize and soldier on to the finish.

Other notable efforts included Billy Goshen, who finished 6th in the #82 Goshen Motorsports / Merv Griffin Entertainment / Global Tracking Communications Mazda after finishing 12th on Saturday and qualifying 9th for today's race. And the brother/sister team at Kester Racing both finished in the top-12 today, with J.C. Kester coming home 9th in the #24 Kester Racing / Texas World Speedway / Unifirst Mazda while his sister, Kristy Kester, driving the #48 Kester Racing / Texas World Speedway / Unifirst Mazda qualified 16th and moved up four spots to finish 12th.

After all the dust cleared from the weekend, Peter Dempsey, with four wins in the last five races, moves into the championship points lead with 354. Joel Miller, who came into the weekend with one pole and one win, scored another pole, finished second on Saturday and fourth on Sunday, dropping to dropping to second with 349 points. John Edwards, with three wins, four poles and three podium finishes, is third with 334 points. Alex Ardoin, with one pole, four podiums and a pair of top-5s is in fourth with 327 points. Englishman Charles Hall, who led the championship for several races early in the season, is fifth with one win, three podiums, four top-5s and 325 points.

The Star Mazda Championship awards 44 points for a race win, and pays points down to 15th place in a slowly descending structure that rewards consistency. With two races remaining on the schedule, there are seven drivers still mathematically capable of winning the championship. And with the points as close as they are at the front of the field, a repeat of Dane Cameron's 2007 championship clinch in Round 11 at Road Atlanta is not possible; this battle will go down to the final race.

Round 11 of the 2008 Star Mazda Championship will take place at the ALMS Petit LeMans at Road Atlanta on October 3. The season finale is at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca on October 18. Race 1 / Round 9 from New Jersey Motorsports Park 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.

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:

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