



FIRST TIME STAR MAZDA RACER RICHARD KENT WINS RACE, AMERICAN JOHN EDWARDS WINS CHAMPIONSHIP IN 2008 STAR MAZDA CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES FINALE

Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca / Oct. 18 – It was a thing of both myth and legend, a race that saw the mysterious stranger come out of nowhere and win from the pole in his first ever time



in the car or on the track... but the deserving, hard-working, charming young American who put together a spectacular season goes on to win the championship and the huge, coveted prize that goes with it.

Richard Kent, an English karting champion with a background in the European Formula Palmer Audi series and a few Formula Renault U.K. races earlier this season, put the #77 Andersen Racing / Traka / Allied Building Supplies Mazda on pole during a gloomy, cold morning

qualifying session. In the warmth of the afternoon, he started in the lead, held it throughout and crossed the finish line 2.171 seconds ahead of John Edwards in the #7 AIM Autosport/Mobil1 Mazda. Edwards, however, with four wins under his belt already, started the race having only to score a podium finish to win the championship, and for the personable young racer, it was 'mission accomplished' in winning the 2008 Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear.

Of the other two contenders who still had a shot at the championship when the race started, Irishman Peter Dempsey put together a brilliant season with four wins in the #21 Andersen Racing/LotusWorks/ Center Jewellers.ie/Quayside.ie/ Allied Building Products Mazda. He finished 3rd in the race and third in the championship. Joel Miller, the 2007 Skip Barber Pro Series champion who won his ride in the #20 JDC Motorsports/K&N Air Filters Mazda via the MAZDASPEED Motorsports ladder scholarship, finished 4th in the race and second in the championship. His season included a win from the pole in the season-opener at Sebring

Also on the podium were Expert Series (drivers 30 to 44) winner Phil Fogg, Jr., driving the #29 Northwest Autosport / Consonus Health Services Mazda and Master Series (drivers 45 and older) winner -- and 2008 Master Series Champion -- Chuck Hulse who has compiled a record of eight class wins in the #12 JDC Motorsports/Silicon Salvage Mazda.

"I came into this season with idea of winning the championship and with it the MAZDASPEED Motorsports Driver Development Ladder scholarship that would let me go back up to racing in the Atlantic Championship in 2009, and obviously we accomplished that," said Edwards, who missed the first race of the season and won from the pole in his Star Mazda debut in Round 2 at

Miller Motorsports Park. "I was the youngest driver ever in Atlantic last year and didn't achieve the results I wanted, but I learned a lot in the Star Mazda Championship that will make me a stronger Atlantic competitor next year. It's been a tough, competitive season full of wheel-banging and off-course excursions and races won by both skill and luck. I'm delighted to win the Star Mazda championship and the MAZDASPEED scholarship at Mazda Raceway; it seems right, somehow."



Kent's plans for the 2008 season had nothing to do with Star Mazda, or even racing in America, for that matter. He was set to run Formula Renault in the U.K., but when the deal fell apart after the first race, he and his management started looking around for opportunities in U.S. series. Kent tested with the Andersen Racing team and was supposed to make his race debut at Mosport but was sidelined by mechanical troubles that kept him from qualifying or making the race.

"So this weekend was kind of a make-up race for Mosport, and it certainly worked out well for me," said Kent. "I wasn't feeling very positive after Mosport, but the Andersen Racing team has done a fantastic job for me this weekend. The car was brilliant in every session, everything went like clockwork and we won the race fairly easily. I have to say that the impression that young European drivers have that they're side-tracking their careers if they go race in America is completely wrong. This whole series, this weekend is a tremendous, highly-professional show and the competition among the top-6 Star Mazda drivers was very high caliber. I'm very happy with my time here and will be considering some new and different options for 2009."

Rounding out the top-5 finishers in the race were Louisiana racer Alex Ardoin (who won this race last year), driving the #51 Mundill Racing / Oral & Facial Surgery Center / Twister Trailer Mazda and Brazilian Caio Lara, who finished off his season with a pair of 5th-place finishes in the #19 Mundill Racing Mazda. Edwards finished with 422 points, Miller with 406, Dempsey with 398, Ardoin with 365 and Charles Hall, who did not compete this weekend was 5th with 342 points. 5th-place finisher in the race, Caio Lara, finished 8th in the championship with 286 points.

Pos No.	Name	Laps	Total Tm	Diff	Gap	Points Make
1	77 Richard Kent	26	41:35.034			0
2	7 John Edwards	26	41:37.205	2.171	2.171	44
3	21 Peter Dempsey	26	41:37.590	2.556	0.385	41
4	20 Joel Miller	26	41:40.360	5.326	2.770	37
5	51 Alex Ardoin	26	41:43.216	8.182	2.856	34
6	19 Caio Lara	26	41:49.604	14.570	6.388	32

7	82 Billy Goshen	26	41:56.899	21.865	7.295	30
8	30 Rick Rosin	26	41:58.532	23.498	1.633	29
9	22 Rusty Mitchell	26	42:06.563	31.529	8.031	28
10	48 Kristy Kester	26	42:07.227	32.193	0.664	27
11	12 Chuck Hulse	26	42:09.215	34.181	1.988	26 M
12	57 Ron White	26	42:09.522	34.488	0.307	0
13	29 Phil Fogg Jr.	26	42:17.099	42.065	7.577	25 X
14	65 J.W. Roberts	26	42:18.320	43.286	1.221	24 X
15	64 Patrick ONeil	26	42:20.869	45.835	2.549	0
16	91 Michael Guasch	26	42:28.074	53.040	7.205	23
17	14 Frank McCormick	26	42:40.445	1:05.411	12.371	0
18	4 Chris Hundley	26	42:46.939	1:11.905	6.494	22 M
19	24 J.C. Kester	25	42:15.836	1 Lap	1 Lap	21
20	15 Taylor Hacquard	24	39:19.315	2 Laps	1 Lap	20
21	16 Chris Cumming	21	41:59.440	5 Laps	3 Laps	19 X
22	17 Scott Rettich	15	25:44.651	11 Laps	6 Laps	18
23	5 Jonny Baker	11	17:47.065	15 Laps	4 Laps	0
24	55 Gerry Kraut	10	16:28.429	16 Laps	1 Lap	17 M
25	86 Dave House					0

What they were all racing for, and the prize which Edwards won, is the MAZDASPEED Motorsports Driver Development Ladder scholarship to race in the 2009 Atlantic Championship Powered by Mazda. This remarkable program, the first-ever established by an auto manufacturer, provides scholarships to young champions on their way up the ladder. The karting champion gets sponsorship to race in the first step up the open-wheel ladder, the Skip Barber series. The Skip Barber Champion moves up to race in the Star Mazda Championship, while the Star Mazda champion wins a ride in the series at top run of the open-wheel development ladder, the Atlantic Championship. Edwards will collect his symbolic prize, a MAZDASPEED driver's suit and helmet, at the series season-end banquet this evening, and will begin testing with various Atlantic Championship teams within a matter of weeks to make his selection of the team he will race for in the 2009 Atlantic Championship.

The prize fund for the 2008 Star Mazda Championship is \$1.5 million, and even with Edward's scholarship taking up a good portion – in addition to \$100,000 for in cash for winning the championship and \$10,000 for being 'Rookie of the Year,' the top-15 drivers in the series championship will divide approximately \$650,000 between them during the awards ceremony.

The 2009 Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear will begin in March with its traditional opening date at the 12 Hours of Sebring. It will be a unique season with 11 weekends, 13 races and an educational and exciting mix of street circuits, road courses and ovals. Star Mazda will run on ALMS, Grand-Am, ARCA and NASCAR weekends, with all races on international television and a prize fund of \$1.5 million. The season will end, as it did this year, with the traditional November date at the ALMS season-closer, the Monterey Sports Car Championships, as Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca.

For more information on the Star Mazda Championship and its drivers, as well as the Mazda Motorsports ladder system, please visit 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.atlanticchampionship.com www.starmazda.com

www.skipbarber.com www.mx-5cup.com

Dean Case / Communications Officer / MAZDASPEED Motorsports

Office - (310) 755-7403 / Cell - (310) 318-4582 / E-mail: dean@RWB-LLC.com

