



ONE SMALL STEP TOWARD TRADITION – CONOR DALY TOPS THE TIME SHEETS IN FIRST OFFICIAL PRACTICE FOR STAR MAZDA 2009 SEASON-OPENER AT SEBRING

Sebring (March 18, 2009) – Conor Daly, son of racing legend and two-time 12 Hours of Sebring winner Derek Daly took one small step toward tradition today, posting the fastest time in the first official practice session for Round One of the 2009 Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear.



Under partly cloudy skies and with temperatures in the low 80s, the rookie from Noblesville, Indiana posted a time of 1:59.743 (111.238 mph) in the #22 Andersen Racing / College Network / Indeck / Cytomax Mazda. In second, after holding the fastest lap for most of the session, was 2008 Sebring winner Joel Miller with a lap of 1:59.891 (111.101 mph) in the #22 JDC

Motorsports Mazda. Rounding out the top-3 was Miller's JDC teammate, Brazilian Ciao Lara, with a time of 2:00.039 (110.964 mph) in the #19 JDC Motorsports Mazda.

"At the beginning of the session, we went out on older tires and the car had a good balance, then we put on new tires and made a bit of an adjustment and it was what I needed," said Daly. "We still have a few areas to improve, there's a bit of understeer in 17, but we've made huge improvements every session. For me as a driver, I still have room to improve because the car is still new to me. It would be great to win here like my dad did, but we still have to keep making improvements and come race time we'll see how well I put together everything I've learned. Hopefully it's a good result."

Turning the 4th-fast time was rookie Ryan Booth with a lap of 2:00.348 (110.679 mph) in the #83 Goshen Motorsports Mazda. Rounding out the top-5 (after posting an unofficial lap record of 1:58.989 in testing on Tuesday) was Englishman Richard Kent. Driving the #33 Andersen Racing / Traka / Allied Interior Products Mazda, he turned a lap of 2:00.595 (110.452 mph).

Turning the fastest time among the Expert Series (ages 30 – 44) drivers was 2008 Expert Series champion Chris Cumming, who changed teams in between seasons. Driving the #16 Kester Racing Team 3G / Texas World Speedway / Motul Oil Mazda, Cumming turned a 15th-fast time of 2:02.193 (109.008 mph). The quickest Master Series (45 and older) driver was Gerry Kraut, the co-owner of JDC Motorsports who finished second in

the 2008 Master Series championship. He turned an 18th-fast lap of 2:03.003 (108.290 mph) in the #55 JDC Motorsports / Dougherty & Co. / Dougherty Funding LLC Mazda.

Twenty-five of the twenty-eight cars entered for the weekend turned timed laps in the session, with less than a second separating the top-6. Products Mazda.

There will be one final practice session Thursday morning with qualifying to set the starting grid taking place from 1:45 pm to 2:30 pm Thursday afternoon. The 45-minute Round One of the 2009 Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear season is set to take the green flag at 3:55 pm, Friday, March 20.

