



THE LUCK OF THE IRISH – PETER DEMPSEY'S 'HAIL MARY' PASS IN THE CLOSING LAPS PRODUCES A SURPRISE WIN IN STAR MAZDA CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 2 AT VIR



VIR (April 26, 2009) – Surviving a race liberally sprinkled with punts, shunts, debris and yellow flags, Irish racer Peter Dempsey pulled off the 'hail Mary' pass of the weekend to win Round 2 of the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear at VIR. Nicknamed 'the Irish Steamroller' for his four wins, including three in a row, during the 2008 Star Mazda season, Dempsey, who started on the outside of the front row, drove his #3 AIM

Autosport / Motorsport Ireland / Queyside.ie Mazda to a 0.038-sec. margin of victory over Louisiana native Alex Ardoin who started from 5th on the grid in the #51 JDC Motorsports / Oral & Facial Surgery Center Mazda.

Rounding out the top-3 was Joel Miller who qualified 7th in the #2 JDC Motorsports Mazda and led the largest number of laps during the race, most of them under the yellow flag. It was the battle between Miller, Ardoin and pole-sitter Adam Christodoulou -- all teammates on the JDC Motorsports team -- that allowed Dempsey to slip through with two laps to go into first on the re-start after the final full-course yellow.

"I was swallowed by JDC cars, but I knew they weren't going to take each other out, so I was able to use that and squeeze my way through right at the end," said Dempsey. "I drafted Alex and Joel stayed tight, but I knew the pit lane exit was right there and I figured if I ended up in the grass then so be it. I more or less had to make the pass because I barely made it to this race and wouldn't be at the next one if I didn't win, so I'm really happy to have crossed the finish line first. I really need to thank Motorsports Ireland and the Irish Sport Council, as well as a bunch of other friends and supporters, for helping me get here. This one is for them."

Finishing first (and 15th overall) in the Expert Series for drivers 30-44 years old was another Irishman, Patrick O'Neill, driving the #64 Mundill / O'Neill Construction Mazda. This was O'Neill's first start of the 2009 season and provided an interesting lesson in the fruits of generosity; Dane Cameron, the 2007 Star Mazda champion, won his title driving a car borrowed from O'Neill. Finishing first (14th overall) in the Master Series for drivers 45 and older was Californian Michael Guasch, driving the #91 JDC Motorsports / Molecule Mazda. He also won the Master Series class at the Sebring season-opener.

"The race was pretty chaotic on the re-starts, so it was important to get a good draft on the inside, minimize the risks and get the car home," said O'Neill. "I'm really proud of Peter today and really happy to be one of two Irish winners on the same podium."

The 'heartbreak award' of the race goes to Englishman Adam Christodoulou, the Sebring winner and pole-sitter at VIR. After topping the time sheets in every practice session -- and winning the pole -- he was hot on Dempsey's tail going into the final lap but went off-course in a daring pass attempt and was lucky to keep his #11 JDC Motorsports Mazda off the guardrail and salvage a 7th-place finish.

"It was definitely a very entertaining race, if not quite the result I hoped for," said Christodoulou. "I lead the race at the start but got my rules mixed up and slowed down to not pass the pace car as it went into the pits and everyone went around me. I was able to work my way back up and went to make a move on Peter going into turn 14 on the last lap. We got within inches of each other and I ran out of road into the grass, then there was a turn worker post right in front of me that I had to avoid, so all things considered, I feel fortunate to finish where I did after taking the scenic route."

Other drives of note include rookie Jorge Goncalvez, who qualified his #72 AIM Autosport / Mazda 12th on the grid and moved up to finish 4th. Conor Daly, son of racing legend Derek Daly and the 2009 MAZDASPEED Motorsports Driver Development Ladder driver, started 6th on the grid and finished 5th in his #22 Andersen Racing / College Network / Indeck / Cytomax Mazda. Scandinavian racer Anders Krohn, who started 15th in the #27 Mundill / Tralfa / Colosseum Mazda, put in a fine drive to finish 6th.

The next event on the 2009 Star Mazda Championship schedule is the Larry H. Miller Dealerships Utah Grand Prix presented by the Grand and Little America Hotels at Miller Motorsports Park with the American Le Mans Series on May 16.

Race Results - Sunday, April 26, 2009

Pos	No.	Name	Laps	Diff	Gap	Avg. Speed	Best Tm
1	3	Peter Dempsey	17			72.383	1:47.398
2	51	Alex Ardoin	17	0.038	0.038	72.382	1:47.646
3	2	Joel Miller	17	0.295	0.257	72.376	1:47.486
4	72	Jorge Goncalvez	17	2.429	2.134	72.320	1:48.266
5	22	Conor Daly	17	2.752	0.323	72.311	1:48.177
6	27	Anders Krohn	17	4.003	1.251	72.279	1:48.375
7	11	Adam Christodoulou	17	4.897	0.894	72.255	1:46.998
8	17	Mikael Grenier	17	4.927	0.030	72.255	1:48.653
9	71	David Ostella	17	5.283	0.356	72.245	1:48.387
10	19	Caio Lara	17	5.430	0.147	72.241	1:48.672
11	82	Billy Goshen	17	6.614	1.184	72.211	1:48.334
12	83	Ryan Booth	17	8.413	1.799	72.164	1:49.334
13	48	Kristy Kester	17	9.662	1.249	72.131	1:49.638
14	91	Michael Guasch	17	11.952	2.290	72.072	1:50.287
15	64	Patrick O'Niell	17	12.221	0.269	72.065	1:50.100
16	55	Gerry Kraut	17	12.866	0.645	72.048	1:50.339
17	80	Toshi Deki	17	16.497	3.631	71.954	1:51.313
18	31	Carlos Conde	17	25.484	8.987	71.722	1:54.389
19	21	Denis Navarro	17	37.288	11.804	71.420	1:50.325

20	23	Walt Bowlin	16	1 Lap	1 Lap	67.270	1:55.627
21	15	Taylor Hacquard	11	6 Laps	5 Laps	64.167	1:53.911
22	16	Chris Cumming	11	6 Laps	0.114	64.164	1:59.050
23	61	Sean Burstyn	7	10 Laps	4 Laps	63.890	2:03.061
24	24	J.C. Kester	6	11 Laps	1 Lap	54.742	2:05.103
25	30	Rick Rosin	2	15 Laps	4 Laps	37.906	1:55.828
26	13	Michael Furfari		17 Laps	2 Laps	-	
27	66	Rusty Mitchell		17 Laps	0.217	-	
28	77	Kevin Toledo		17 Laps	1.844	-	

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 information, interviews and photos, contact Star Mazda Communications Director Peter Frey at (818) 398-5733 or 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

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