



**-- FAST THINGS COME IN PAIRS --**

***BACK-TO-BACK STAR MAZDA RACES AT MAZDA RACEWAY ROAD CIRCUIT AND 'NIGHT BEFORE THE 500' AT O'REILLY RACEWAY PARK SHORT OVAL SHOWCASE RISING STARS***

Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca, CA / O'Reilly Raceway Park, IN -- To the international cast of rising open-wheel racing stars that comprise the grid of the 2010 Star Mazda Championship



presented by Goodyear, high-speed, wheel-to-wheel racing on a legendary 2.238-mile road course one weekend, followed by the 'tempest in a teapot' action of 100 laps on a 5/8ths mile oval the next weekend, is all part of their education.

And it should provide quite a show for the fans at American Le Mans Series presented by Patron at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca

in Northern California Sunday, May 23... and the Indy 500 devotees who gather at O'Reilly Raceway Park in Indianapolis for the famed 'Night Before the 500' on Saturday, May 29.

Those are the next two events up on the 11-weekend, 13-race 2010 schedule for the Star Mazda Championship. And they promise to build on both the drama, and opportunity, that was evident at the first two races of the season. Round 1, the traditional season-opener at the 12 Hours of Sebring, was won by French rookie Tristan Vautier driving the #38 Andersen Racing / Moulin TP / Cecibon / Circuit du Laquais Mazda. Vautier is an experienced European racer with credentials that include Formula Two, Palmer-Audi and Formula Renault.

Round 2, which took place the following weekend through the streets of St. Petersburg on the same weekend as the IndyCars, was won by American racer Conor Daly, winner of the 2008 Skip Barber Championship and the prestigious Walter Hayes Trophy in England. Daly, the son of racing legend Derek Daly, is in his second season of Star Mazda Championship competition and raced in 2009 with backing from the MAZDASPEED Motorsports Driver Development Ladder. In 2010 he races the #22 Juncos Racing / INDECK / College Network / Merchant Services Ltd. / Tom Lange Co. Mazda.

Daly comes to Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca, Round 3 of the 2010 season as the championship points leader and has some experience working his way through the pack there, having qualified 15th and finished 4th in 2009. This event, held on its traditional date of October 10,

was the season-closer for many years, but the race date has been shifted to the spring beginning in 2010.

Daly's principal competition will come from Scandinavian racer Anders 'The Viking' Krohn, another second-year Star Mazda racer who finished 3rd in this event last year. Krohn, the 2008 USF2000 series champion, qualified on the pole for the 2010 season-opener at Sebring and is currently 4th in the championship with a pair of top-5 finishes. He switched teams in between seasons and now drives the #47 Andersen Racing / Norse Cutting & Abandonment / Trallfa / Colosseum Mazda.

Other contenders with Star Mazda experience at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca include Jorge Goncalvez who started 10th, finished 5th; he changed teams in the off-season and scored his best Star Mazda finish ever, 2nd, at the Sebring season-opener driving the #9 Team Apex / Wabash Capital Investments Mazda. Other drivers in the 2010 starting field who also raced this event last year include Canadian Joey Furfari (#13), Brazilian Caio Lara (#19), Americans Rusty Mitchell (#66) and Chris Miller (#85) as well as Canadian David Ostella (#16).

The Mazda Raceway event is also a favorite of the Expert (ages 30-44) and Master (45 and older) drivers competing in the Star Mazda Championship. Leading the charge to 'run with the youngsters' will be Expert Series racer Patrick O'Neill, from San Rafael, California. Driving the #64 JDC Motorsports / O'Neill Construction Mazda, he won his class and finished 8th overall in 2009. A top competitor in the Master Series will be O'Neill's JDC Motorsports teammate, Gerry Kraut of North Oaks, Minnesota. Kraut (right), Chairman and CEO of an investment banking company and the co-owner of JDC Motorsports, started the 2009 race in 22nd and finished 13th overall in the #55 JDC Motorsports / Dougherty & Co. / Dougherty Funding LLC Mazda.



While it is possible to compile a list of likely contenders for the Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca event where the Star Mazda Championship has a long history, the following weekend sees the Series running at a track for the first time ever; and not merely any track on any race weekend, but rather at O'Reilly Raceway Park, a .686-mile oval that hosts the "Night Before the 500," long regarded as the semi-official kick-off race to the Indy 500, held the following day.

Conor Daly set the fast time in two days of testing, a 20.187 sec. (122.336 mph) – just a tenth of a second shy of the outright open-wheel lap record set by the 800-horsepower USAC sprint Cars. That said, every driver in the test was within a second of that time, and luck plays as big a role as skill in a 100-lap oval track race, so it's even money among the top-10. The Star Mazda Championship cars will be sharing the track with both the USAC Midgets and the Cooper Tires

Presents USF2000 Championship Powered by Mazda. Both Star Mazda and USF2000 are part of the newly-announced IRL 'Road to Indy' program, a driver development progression that includes the Firestone Indy Lights series.



The Road to Indy is the Indy Racing League's developmental ladder system for drivers who wish to reach the IZOD IndyCar Series and the Indianapolis 500. Made up of Firestone Indy Lights, the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear and the Cooper Tires Presents the USF2000 National Championship powered by Mazda, the system is designed to create a

defined career path for young, career-minded race and to teach them the skills needed to advance to the highest level of open-wheel racing on and off the track.

And for the drivers in the Star Mazda Championship and USF2000 participating in the "Night Before the 500," at least as important as the race is what else is going on in the days leading up to it. The Road to Indy program will host its first Road to Indy Summit at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, an invitation-only event that includes track tours of the Indy Motor Speedway with four-time Indianapolis 500 winner Rick Mears and two-time Indianapolis 500 winner Al Unser Jr.

Also on the schedule are a Road to Indy drivers meeting with Indy Racing League President of Competition and Racing Operations Brian Barnhart and a breakfast seminar presented by Mazda, focusing on the business of motorsports which is designed to help improve the "off track" performance of the drivers. Also on the schedule is a seminar to teach drivers and spotters how to work together, pace car rides around the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, 'meet and greet' opportunities with Firestone Indy Lights and IZOD IndyCar Series drivers who have competed in either Star Mazda or USF2000, a tour of the Indianapolis Hall of Fame Museum with racing historian Donald Davidson and a Road to Indy reception at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

On-track action at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca begins with morning and afternoon practice sessions on Friday, May 21. Qualifying takes place from 9:20 am to 10:05 am Saturday, May 22 with the 45 minute Round 3 of the 2010 Star Mazda Championship scheduled to take the green light for the Series' traditional standing start at 9:15 am Sunday, May 23.

Activities surrounding the O'Reilly Raceway Park / 'Night Before the 500' event begin with a Road to Indy autograph session during Community Day at the Speedway on Wednesday, May 26. Thursday, May 27 will be taken up with various Road to Indy activities at the

Speedway. On-track action begins with a 3:00 pm practice session on Friday, May 28. Sessions alternate between Star Mazda and USF2000 until 10:00 pm in the evening. The 1-hour qualifying session for Round 4 of the 2010 Star Mazda Championship begins at 2:30 pm, Saturday, May 29, with the green flag scheduled to wave for the start of the 100-lap / 45-minute race at 8:10 pm. Unlike Mazda Raceway and other road course facilities, the Star Mazda Championship cars will use a rolling start at O'Reilly Raceway Park (and also at the other oval on the schedule, Iowa Speedway on the IRL weekend, June 19).

### **About Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear**

For 2010, the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear will feature an 11-weekend, 13-race schedule, most on major race weekends with American Le Mans and the Indy Racing League. Rising stars from around the world will compete for prizes valued at \$1.5 million and benefit from two driver development programs, including the MAZDASPEED Motorsports Driver Development Ladder and the Indy Racing League's 'Road to Indy' program. Series alumni include Indy Car stars Marco Andretti, Graham Rahal and Raphael Matos, rising NASCAR drivers Michael McDowell, Scott Speed and Colin Braun and prototype racers Dane Cameron and Guy Cosmo. Drivers 16 and older are welcome to compete and the Star Mazda Championship also features Expert (30 to 44) and Master (45 and older) classes for more mature racers. The Star Mazda Championship features standing starts, wheel-to-wheel racing at 150 mph and budgets a fraction of other top open-wheel ladder series. For more information on the Star Mazda Championship please visit [www.starmazda.com](http://www.starmazda.com). Selected Star Mazda Championship races are broadcast on HDnet and syndicated through a variety of international, national and regional networks. Information on the TV schedule can be found at [www.MazdaRacing.tv](http://www.MazdaRacing.tv). Additional information, including search links and affiliates, can be found at the 'TV Information' link on the Series web site.

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For more information on the Star Mazda Championship and its drivers, as well as the Mazda Motorsports ladder system, please visit [www.starmazda.com](http://www.starmazda.com) and [www.mazdausa.com](http://www.mazdausa.com). For information, interviews and photos, contact Star Mazda Communications Director Peter Frey at (818) 398-5733 or [StarMazdaPR@aol.com](mailto:StarMazdaPR@aol.com).

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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.usf2000.com](http://www.usf2000.com)

[www.skipbarber.com](http://www.skipbarber.com)

[www.mx-5cup.com](http://www.mx-5cup.com)

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