



STAR MAZDA CHAMPIONSHIP DRIVERS CONTINUE THEIR BATTLE FOR THE VISITFLORIDA CUP WITH A DOUBLE-HEADER LIVE ON HDnet AT THE HARRAH'S AUTOBAHN GRAND PRIX PRESENTED BY MAZDA

Autobahn Country Club / Joliet, IL (July 27, 1010) -- The battle for the 2010 Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear roars into the second half of the 13-race season with Rounds 8 & 9 at this weekend's **HARRAH'S** Autobahn Grand Prix presented by **MAZDA**. Fans can watch the action live on HDnet as drivers battle for the inaugural **VISITFLORIDA** Cup a 7-race championship-within-a-championship sponsored by Florida's official tourism corporation. The broadcasts, airing both Saturday, July 31 and Sunday August 1 from 1-4 pm Eastern (12 -3 pm Central), begin with a half-hour "Mazda Prerace Show presented by Visit Florida.com" from 12:30 – 1:00 pm Eastern, followed by three hours of live racing (1-4 pm Eastern), including the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear, the USF2000 National Championship Powered by Mazda and the Playboy MX-5 Cup. The two 45-minute Star Mazda Championship races are both scheduled to start at 3:00 pm Eastern.

There are a variety of intriguing story lines among the ranks of Star Mazda Championship drivers. Three different drivers have won the last three races, including Frenchman Tristan Vautier (#38 Andersen Racing / Moulin TP / Cecibon / Circuit du Laquais Mazda) in Race 7 / Round 2 at New Jersey Motorsports park on June 27, Brazilian Caio Lara (#19 JDC Motorsports / MLD / ATW Mazda) in Race 6 / Round 1 at NJMP and Conor Daly (#22 Juncos Racing / INDECK / The College Network / Merchant Services Ltd. Mazda) in Round 5 at 7/8ths mile Iowa Speedway on June 19.

Of course, Daly also won the three races prior to that (including the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca and O'Reilly Raceway Park), becoming one of only four drivers in the 20 year history of the Star Mazda Championship to have won four races in a row (Joey Hand in 1999, Michael McDowell in 2004 and Raphael Matos in 2005). As a result, he currently leads the championship battle with 289 points, 41 points ahead of his nearest competitor.... and he did finish 3rd and 5th in this event last year.

Given, however, that Star Mazda awards 44 points to the winner of a race, and six races remain in the season, Daly's string of wins is a substantial accomplishment, but his lead in the championship points battle is scarcely commanding.

Currently second in the championship is Norwegian racer Anders 'The Viking' Krohn (Anders 'The Viking' Krohn (#47 Andersen Racing / Norse Cutting & Abandonment / Trallfa / Colosseum Mazda) with 248 points. Krohn has yet to win a race this season, but he started from the pole in the season-opener at Sebring and has put together a record of three podium finishes and seven top-5s. Driving for a different team in 2009, Krohn finished 10th and 12th at Autobahn.





Also well-placed in the points battle, though this is his rookie year and he, too, has yet to win a race, is Brazilian racer Joao Victor Horto (#18 Team Apex / Wabash Capital Investments Mazda). With four podiums and six finishes in the top-7, Horto has 234 points and is making the most of the excellent equipment given him by Team Apex, also in its first season of Star Mazda competition. Frenchman Tristan Vautier, the only driver other than Daly to have won more than one race this season, is 4th in the championship with 226 points. He won the season-opener at Sebring, and the most recent Race 2 / Round 7 at New Jersey, but suffered a mechanical problem while leading Round 3 at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca that relegated him to 13th, and his other finishes include a pair of 6ths, an 8th and a 9th. That said, he is always fast in practice and the race, and must be considered a serious contender at Autobahn. Fifth in the championship with his breakthrough win in Race 1 / Round 6 at New Jersey is the likeable young Brazilian racer Caio Lara, a third-year driver in the Star Mazda Championship.

Also keep an eye on a hungry young driver named Connor De Phillippi, driving the #11 JDC Motorsports / MAZDASPEED Motorsports / Skip Barber Mazda. He won the 2009 Skip Barber Pro Series and is driving in the 2010 Star Mazda championship with backing from the MAZDASPEED Motorsports Driver Development Ladder, the unique and prestigious automaker-backed program that helps champions at each level of open-wheel racing move up the ladder. He has four top-5s and has finished in the top-8 at every race so far this year; he is currently 6th in the championship with 220 points.

Three reigning champions from open-wheel 'ladder series' will be part of the 23+ car Star Mazda Championship field at the Autobahn Grand Prix. Included are 2009 Skip Barber Pro Series winner Connor De Phillippi, 2009 F2000 champion Chris Miller(#85 JDC Motorsports / Miller Milling / Red Line Oil) and 2009 Venezuelan FF1600 champion Carlos Linares (#20 Linares Racing / Instituto Nacional De Deportes).

The Star Mazda Championship also features a race-within-a-race for Expert (ages 30 -44) and Master (45 and older) Series drivers; company presidents and entrepreneurs in high-speed, wheel-to-wheel battles with top young drivers from around the world. Top Expert Series drivers include Texan J.W. Roberts (#65 Team GDT / General Data Tech Mazda) who leads the points battle with four in-class wins. Top Master Series racers include points leader Gerry Kraut (#55 JDC Motorsports / Dougherty & Co. / Dougherty Funding LLC Mazda, as well as Walt Bowlin (#23 AIM Autosport / Tampa Bay Jaw Surgery Mazda). Leading the Master Series is Gerry Kraut (#55) from North Oaks, Minnesota; other competitors include Puerto Rican racer Carlos Conde (#31 Team GDT / Pronto-GMT / Olympus Securities Mazda), Dom Bastien (#37 Andersen Racing Mazda) of West Palm Beach, Florida and, from Tarpon Springs, Florida, Walt Bowlin (#23 AIM Autosport / Tampa Bay Jaw Surgery Mazda).

Unique local racers competing this weekend span the spectrum from a 19 year-old female champion to a 50 year-old former competition acrobatic pilot and soybean meal trader from the Chicago Board of Trade. Ashley Freiberg of Homer Glen, Illinois, is a 19 year-old rising star who has already made history as the first female driver to win both a regional Skip Barber Championship and a Skip Barber Championship national





race. She has also driven midgets and stock cars and was an instructor at the AMG Driving Academy teaching female Olympic Silver Medalists and X-Games World Champions how to drive.

Jeff Garibotti, 50, is a Chicago native, soybean meal trader at the Chicago Board of Trade and former competitive acrobatic pilot who will be making his professional racing debut in the Star Mazda Championship race at Autobahn. A member at Autobahn since it opened in 2004, Garibotti will be competing in the 'Master Series,' a race-within-a-race for drivers aged 45 and older who battle wheel-to-wheel battle at 160 mph with top young racers from around the world. Drivers aged 30 – 44 compete in the Expert Series.

Bob Kaminsky of Homer Glen, IL (#28 Team Apex / Air Tigers, Inc.) is competing in the Master Series category with the hot new Team Apex. He is a highly-experienced racer with over 42 national championship race victories to his credit and holds professional racing licenses with SCCA (Sports Car Club of America), IMSA (International Motor Sports Association), Champ Car, and the Indy Racing League. In 1997, after racing eight or nine years, he won a Formula Mazda championship, which got him an Indy car test where he earned his Indy car license. Kaminsky is the owner of Air tigers, Inc. a heating and air conditioning company that features a fleet of service vehicles painted in tiger stripes.

This weekend's venue is just like a country club, but with a racetrack instead of a golf course. Located in Joliet, IL, the Autobahn country Club is a membership facility that offers enthusiasts the opportunity to drive their high-performance cars at high speeds an environment that is safe, scenic and challenging. Also offered are driving instruction and corporate events, as well as race weekends like the **HARRAH'S** Autobahn Grand Prix presented by **MAZDA**. Five different racing series will be on the program for the HARRAH'S Autobahn Grand Prix presented by MAZDA, including the Playboy Mazda MX-5 Cup and the USF2000 National Championship presented buy Mazda. There will be two 45-minute Star Mazda Championship races, one on Saturday and one on Sunday. Both will get the green light for the Series' traditional Formula 1-style 'standing start' at 3:05 pm. Drivers and teams will start arriving in the Chicago/Joliet area on Wednesday, July 28. There is a 'test day' on Thursday, July 29, with official practice beginning on Friday, July 30.

Star Mazda Championship drivers benefit from two separate but complimentary development programs. The **MAZDASPEED** Motorsports Driver Development Ladder will provide financial backing for the Star Mazda champion to move up to a funded drive in a Mazda-powered race car in 2011. And the IndyCar's 'Road to Indy' program is designed to provide a clearly-defined path for drivers whose goal is to race in IndyCars and the Indy 500. The 2011 prize package includes an Indy Lights test for the series champion with a top team in the series.

Star Mazda drivers are competing for \$1.5 million in prizes, including a MAZDA-backed drive for the 2011 season in the next step up the motorsports ladder, \$100,000 in cash, a test with a top team in the Indy





Lights series and the VISIT FLORIDA Cups, a 5-weekend, 7-race championship-within-a-championship in which the driver scoring the most points wins a personalized Florida dream vacation.

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. 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. Additional information, including search links and affiliates, can be found at the 'TV Information' link on the Series web site.

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.usf2000.com

www.skipbarber.com

www.mx-5cup.com

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