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STAR MAZDA CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS LEADER TRISTAN VAUTIER QUICKEST IN SERIES OVAL TEST AT THE MIWAUKEE MILE

The Milwaukee Mile (May 21, 2011) – With the top-5 drivers on the time sheet surpassing the existing lap record, it was French racer and current points leader in the 2011 Star Mazda Championship presented by

Goodyear, Tristan Vautier, who turned the quickest time of the series' official oval track test this weekend at the Milwaukee Mile.



Driving the #5 JDC Motorsports / Cecibon / Circuit du Laquais Mazda, his 44th lap of the famed oval, a mile of concrete with virtually no banking, was 27.489 sec. (103.961 mph) – almost half a second faster than Richard Kent's pole time of 27.971 (128.705 mph) from the last Star Mazda

race held at this track in 2009.

Vautier finished on the podium in Round 1 of the 2011 season, and won from the pole in Round 2 at Barber Motorsports Park. His first race on an oval last year, which must have come as a considerable shock after his extensive European open-wheel experience, saw him qualify 11th and finish 6th at Lucas Oil Raceway, followed by an 8th-place qualifying effort and an 8th-place finish at Iowa Speedway.

Second-quick was Florida driver Nick Andries with a lap of 27.637 sec. (130.260 mph) in the Team Pelfrey / Lithionics Battery / GS610 Brake Fluid / Trademark Garage Floors Mazda. Andries' Star Mazda oval-track experience consists of the 2010 Iowa Speedway event, where he started 12th and finished 6th. This season, he is currently 5th in the championship battle, starting from the pole in Round 1 and scoring a podium finish in Round 2.

Third-fastest -- not surprisingly considering his USF2000 podium at Lucas Oil Raceway and win from the pole last year at Iowa Speedway – was 2010 USF2000 champion Sage Karam. Driving for Andretti Autosport with scholarship funding from the Mazda Road to Indy program, the young wrestler/racer who hails from the Andretti family hometown of Nazareth, PA, turned a lap of 27.709 sec. (129.922 mph) in the #88 Andretti Autosport / MAZDASPEED / Comfort Revolution Mazda.



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Demonstrating clearly that her significantly improved 2011 form is no fluke, and that she is now a serious contender for the top spot on the podium on any given weekend, the 4th-fast time of 27.758 sec. (129.6932 mph) was set by Colombian driver Tatiana Calderon, the lone female driver in the Star Mazda Championship. A South American karting champion who ran with Juncos Racing before they moved to the U.S., 2010 was her rookie Star Mazda season and she ran a credible campaign to score six top-10 finishes and finish 10th in the championship. At the Night Before the 500 she started 13th and finished 11th and at Iowa started 13th and finished 12th. But in the off-season she embarked on a determined program of physical training with the Pit Fit Training organization in Indianapolis and her 2011 on-track results have shown a marked improvement, including her first-ever podium finish in Round 2 at Barber Motorsports Park driving the #10 Juncos Racing / JAC Motors Mazda .



Rounding out the top-5 was Californian Connor De Phillippi with a lap of 27.923 sec. (128.926 mph) in the #11 Team Pelfrey / Justice Brothers Products / Trademark Garage Floors Mazda. De Phillippi was the 2009 Skip Barber Pro Series champion and raced the 2010 Star Mazda season with scholarship funding from the Mazda Road to Indy program. This year, he drives for Team Pelfrey, formerly an IndyCar team from 1998-2001 noted for giving young drivers their 'big break.' He won the final race of the 2010 season and the first race of the 2011 season and is currently 2nd in the championship. His oval record from 2010 includes qualifying 4th and finishing 7th at the Night Before the 500 and doing exactly the opposite at Iowa Speedway, qualifying 7th and finishing 4th.

"The weather prevented us from getting in all the scheduled running time, but everyone agreed it was a productive test and that the next three races, all ovals, will be extremely competitive," said Gary Rodrigues, founder and President of the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear. "We had a few minor incidents, but nothing serious, and we got to test the new in-car yellow-light warning system that will be in all the cars for the Night Before the 500. We'll have another three-hour test session on Friday night at Lucas Oil Raceway, which should tighten up the field even more. With the top-6 cars already within half a second of each other, and the top-10 within one second, fans of Star Mazda Championship and the Mazda Road to Indy are going to see a lot of exciting, wheel-to-wheel racing in the next three races."



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The Milwaukee Mile test helped drivers, teams and engineers prepare for the first of three oval races in a row – the Night Before the 500 at Lucas Oil Raceway at Indianapolis on May 28, the Milwaukee Mile on June 19 and Iowa Speedway on June 25; the latter two races are both on IndyCar weekends.



The Star Mazda teams and drivers will now pack up and move over to Lucas Oil Raceway and begin an extensive program of Mazda Road to Indy activities at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, beginning with an autograph session in Gasoline Alley on Wednesday, May 25 from 11 am - Noon.

Night Before the 500 activities begin with several practice sessions at Lucas Oil Raceway on Friday, May 27. Additional practice, qualifying and the race will take place on Saturday, May 28. Qualifying is scheduled for 4:30 - 5:30 pm and the 100-

lap/45-minute Round 3 of the 2011 Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear will take the green flag at 8:10 pm.

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, please contact Star Mazda Communications Director Peter Frey at (818) 398-5733 or StarMazdaPR@aol.com.

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