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STAR MAZDA'S 21st SEASON OF DEVELOPING TOMORROW'S INDYCAR RACING STARS STARTS THIS WEEKEND IN THE STREETS OF ST. PETE

Grand Prix of St. Petersburg (March 22, 2010) -- Evolution has been hard at work in IndyCar racing between the end of last season and the beginning of this one, and the results are... impressive.

The innovative new Road to Indy program that made its debut in 2010 as a series of media, marketing and cross-promotional initiatives, has now become the Mazda Road to Indy, a full-fledged, open-wheel scholarship program backed by a global automaker and offering financial resources to the champions in each of three series to move up and compete at the next level.

And the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear is right in the middle of it all, the college



varsity of IndyCar racing. The winner of the Star Mazda race at St. Pete last year, Conor Daly, went on to win the championship, and will – along with five other 2010 Star Mazda graduates - be in the starting field of the Firestone Indy Lights race Sunday morning before the IndyCar race. Additionally, the winner of the Cooper Tires presents the USF2000 National Championship Powered by

Mazda, Andretti Autosport driver Sage Karam, will be making his first start in the Star Mazda Championship.

This is precisely the sort of progression upward of stellar young talent that will produce a new golden age of IndyCar racing – and the talent pool for the 2011 Star Mazda Championship is both deep and diverse, including male and female racers ranging in age from 16 to 50-something, and representing three continents and eight countries, including the U.S., Canada, France, Ireland, Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela and Puerto Rico.

While it is a well-tested truth that "Anything can happen in car racing," a recent three-day Star Mazda Championship series test, held in conjunction with IndyCar spring training at Barber Motorsports Park in Birmingham, Alabama, did serve to establish a preliminary 'driver to watch' list. Dominating five of the six on-track sessions in the #5 JDC Motorsports / Cecibon / Circuit du Laquais Mazda was French racer Tristan Vautier, a veteran of several European open-wheel 'ladder' series, including Formula Renault and Palmer-Audi. Returning for his second year of advanced education in the Star Mazda Championship, last season he won two races, scored five top-5s and finished 5th in the championship.



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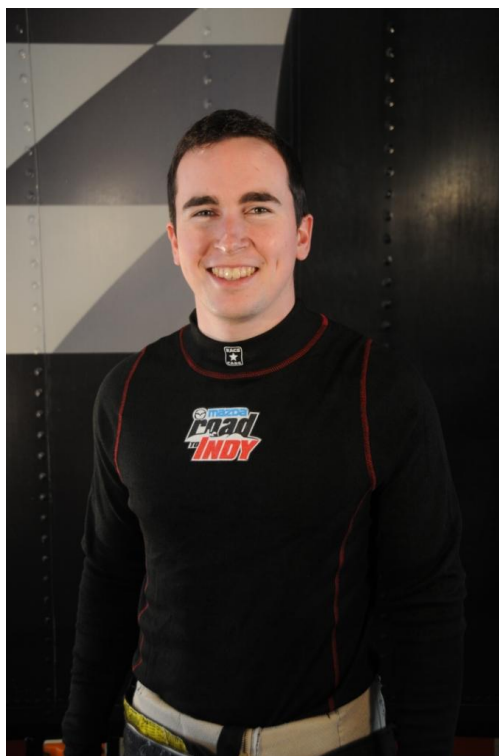
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While it's not surprising that a full-season veteran with two wins would set the fast time of the test, the rookies in the field made themselves known with a show of force from Chilean racer Martin Scuncio, a South American karting champion who has raced open-wheel cars in Europe and is now working his way along the Mazda Road to Indy. A full-time competitor in the USF2000 series in 2010, he ran a single Star Mazda racing last year, the season finale at Road Atlanta -- and got everyone's attention when he very nearly won the pole and the race in his first drive for the 2010 championship-winning Juncos Racing team. He finished 4th on that day, but will be back with the Juncos team driving the #60 Juncos Racing / Fuerza Chile Mazda.

Third overall in the test times was another Star Mazda veteran, Joao Victor Horto, a Brazilian karting champion who has only three years of experience racing open-wheel cars, including Formula BMW and last season in the Star Mazda Championship. In his rookie year, he scored four podium finishes, five top-5 finishes and nine top-10 finishes to finish 7th overall in the championship. He will race the #18 Juncos Racing / Programa Leilões Mazda.

Then its back to another quick rookie... another quick Irishman, to be specific. In 2008 and 2009, a young Irish racer named Peter Dempsey pretty much dominated the series in terms of winning races, but was never able – due to bad luck alone – to put together a championship season. Despite that, his talent has been recognized and he should be on the Indy Lights starting grid this season. Following in his footsteps is Patrick McKenna, who was the runner-up in the 2010 USF2000 Championship and makes his Star Mazda Championship debut this season driving the #48 Team GDT / Motorsport Ireland / Irish Sports Council / General Data Tech Mazda. McKenna, a graduate in manufacturing engineering from the Dublin Institute of Technology, is a champion Formula Ford racer in Ireland, has won the prestigious Martin Donnelly Trophy and twice been voted Dunlop Motorsport Ireland 'Young Racing Driver of the Year.' His 2011 team, GDT, won both the Expert and Master Series championships in 2010 and is looking to McKenna to contend for the overall championship.



Fifth on the time sheets from the Barber test is a driver who figures large this weekend in St. Pete, Nick Andries. A college student at St. Petersburg College, he is driving the Team Pelfrey / Lithionics Battery / GS610 Brake Fluid / Trademark Garage Floors Mazda for Clearwater, FL-based Team Pelfrey. The team was a competitive organization in IndyCar in the 1998-2001 time frame, and noted for



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giving young drivers their 'big break in IndyCar. Andries, running full-time in the 2010 Skip Barber Pro Series, ran a partial Star Mazda schedule as well, scoring four top-10s and finishing 15th in the championship.

Andries' Team Pelfrey teammate is California racer Connor De Phillippi, who won the final race of the 2010 season from the pole, scored three podiums and eight top-5s to finish third in the championship but win



'Rookie of the Year.' De Phillippi was the 2009 Skip Barber champion and came to Star Mazda courtesy of the funding provided by the Mazda ladder program. 2009 saw him add another accomplishment to his resume; the prestigious Walter Hayes Memorial Race, where he was the youngest driver and only the second American to win this race. De Phillippi will race the Team Pelfrey / Justice Brothers Products / Trademark Garage Floors Mazda.

The lone female racer in the field this year (other years there have typically been several) is returning driver Tatiana Calderon, a champion South American kart racer from Bogota, Colombia who graduated to Star Mazda directly from karts. She raced the 2010 season with Juncos Racing, scoring six top-10 finishes and finishing 10th in the championship. She returns with a rigorous new fitness program, a year of experience, fluency in several European languages... and must be considered a serious contender driving the #10 Juncos Racing / JAC Motors Mazda.

Also of note is Sage Karam, who will turn 16 just before St. Pete and is the youngest driver in the field. That said, he won the 2010 USF2000 National Championship in his rookie year driving for Andretti Autosport, and will again have the Andretti magic (and professionalism) behind him as he campaigns the #88 Andretti Autosport / Comfort Revolution Mazda. Write him off as a young rookie at your peril; he is one of the top kart racers in the world and, at age 13, was the youngest driver to win the annual Skip Barber Karting Scholarship Shoot-out. He won the USF2000 race here at St. Pete last year, and during his 2010 championship campaign, won on street circuits, road courses and ovals.

The remainder of the 2011 Star Mazda Championship field includes a variety of intriguing drivers, any of whom could step up and surprise, including extreme adventurer Nick Mancuso, an experienced sports car and sedan racer making his open-wheel debut in the #27 JDC Motorsports / Indeck / Lake Forest Sportscars / F.A.S.T. Race Products Mazda. When not racing, he is a national merit scholar and likes to capture reptiles in the wild.



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Larry Pegram, driver of the #72 AIM Autosport / Tampa Bay Jaw Surgery / Foremost Insurance Mazda is one of the top AMA 'Superbike' racers in the U.S., and Team GDT will again field, in addition to Patrick McKenna, a pair of experienced company CEOs who won the Expert and Master categories last year (consolidated into one class this year)... and are determined to repeat. Texan J.W. Roberts owns the team and drives the #65 Team GDT / General Data Tech Mazda, and Carlos Conde is an investment banker and former world-class polo player who splits his time between his home country of Puerto Rico and his home in New York. He will compete in the #13 Team GDT / Pronto-GMT / Olympus Securities Mazda. And providing a hero for the fans in Quebec to root for, J rimy Daniel, a top Canadian Formula Ford racer, will take on the 'big boys' with his family-run team and the #26 Daniel Racing / FixAuto / Sherwin-Williams Mazda.



Very nearly as interesting as the drivers themselves is what they are competing for; a prize fund valued at \$1.5 million, including scholarship funding to move up and compete in the 2012 Indy Lights series. The Mazda Road to Indy, in addition to providing education, contacts and access to the upper levels of IndyCar racing, also offers a specific and highly desirable set of prizes: The Mazda Road to Indy awards scholarship funding to the champions in each four open-wheel series: The Skip Barber National Presented by Mazda champion gets a scholarship to compete in the USF2000 National Championship Powered by Mazda. The USF2000 champion gets a scholarship to move up to the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear. The Star Mazda champion gets a scholarship to compete in the Firestone Indy Lights Series. And the Indy Lights champion gets a scholarship to compete in the IZOD IndyCar series and the Indy 500.

Demonstrating just how well this system works – even in its first year - we'll be seeing six drivers from the 2010 Star Mazda championship taking the green flag in the Indy Lights race, including Conor Daly, Anders 'the Viking' Krohn, Joel Miller, Peter Dempsey, Jorge Goncalvez and David Ostella.

It should also be noted that the MAZDASPEED Motorsports Driver Development Ladder, the program that originally provided the model for the Mazda Road to Indy, is still active and provides similar help, both career training and financial, helping karting champions to move up to Skip Barber, and Skip Barber champions to move up to USF2000.



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The next stage of evolution of this program should see these two programs consolidated under the Mazda Road to Indy banner, thus creating, for the first time in open-wheel history, an automaker-backed driver development program reaching all the way from karting to the starting grid of the Indy 500.



Rest assured that the drivers in the 2010 Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear are well aware of the opportunity that confronts them, and expect to see wheel-to-wheel, give-no-quarter racing right from the first turn of the first lap of the first race.

All those firsts will take place this weekend at the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, starting with a pair of practice sessions on Friday,

qualifying from 8:05 – 8:50 am Saturday morning, and the green flag for the race at 4:10 pm Saturday afternoon.

Fans can follow the drivers through the course of the weekend via the series' web site at www.StarMazda.com, or on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/starmazdaseries> and Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/starmazdaseries>. Follow the actual race on your computer or smartphone at <http://livetiming.net/starmazda/>.

ABOUT MAZDA

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, Mazda2, Mazda3, Mazda6, RX-7 and other vintage Mazda models competing, because every Mazda has the Soul of a Sports Car. In fact, the largest road-racing class in the world is Spec Miata, with more than 2,500 first- and second-generation Miatas tearing up America's racetracks, making it the most-raced production car in the world. Mazda's involvement in motorsports extends to its relationship with Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca, one of the world's premier road-racing circuits, the Skip Barber Schools for driving and racing, and the Mazda Road to Indy.

Mazda North American Operations is headquartered in Irvine, Calif. and oversees the sales, marketing, parts and customer service support of Mazda vehicles in the United States, Canada and Mexico through nearly 900 dealers. Operations in Canada are managed by Mazda Canada, Inc., located in Ontario; and in Mexico by Mazda Motor de Mexico in Mexico City.

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About Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear

For 2011, the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear will be a major part of the Mazda Road to Indy and will feature a 10-weekend, 11-race schedule, all on major race weekends and most with IndyCar. Two weekends are with the American Le Mans series, and one is a double-header with Indy Lights. Rising stars from around the world will be watched by more than a million fans as they compete for prizes valued at \$1.5 million, including a scholarship to move up and race in the 2012 Firestone Indy Lights series. Drivers 16 and older are welcome to compete and the Star Mazda Championship also features the Expert Series for drivers 30 and older. The Star Mazda Championship features standing starts, wheel-to-wheel racing at 160 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.

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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