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## CHILEAN ROOKIE MARTIN SCUNCIO CAPTURES ST. PETE STAR MAZDA POLE BY 5/100ths OF A SECOND OVER LOCAL HERO NICK ANDRIES

Grand Prix of St. Petersburg (March 26, 2011) – On the final lap of qualifying, and by the



thinnest of margins, Chilean rookie Martin Scuncio took the pole position for the 4:10 pm start of today's Round 1 of the 2011 Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear at the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg. His lap of 1:10.921 (91.369 mph) in the #60 Juncos Racing / Fuerza Chile Mazda was just .053 of a second quicker than local hero and St. Petersburg College student Nick Andries, who, on the previous lap, turned a 1:10.974

(91.201 mph) in the Team Pelfrey / Lithionics Battery / GS610 Brake Fluid / Trademark Garage Floors Mazda.

Needless to say, you could hear the collective groan from the Team Pelfrey crew when Scuncio posted his fast lap, as, to that point, it was to be a canary-yellow, all-Pelfrey front row with Californian Connor De Phillippi turning a 1:11.238 (90.963 mph) in the Team Pelfrey / Justice Brothers Products / Trademark Garage Floors Mazda. Instead, he will start on the inside of the second row, leaving Scuncio in a 'Pelfrey sandwich' that might have tactical implications in the first couple of corners after the green.

"I'm really excited and really happy," said Scuncio. "I am looking forward to the race this afternoon, especially now. The Juncos Racing team did a fantastic job. We are still improving in every session, so that's the best thing of all to me. I'm very happy to be on the pole. I want to thank the Mazda Road to Indy for putting together such a great program. It's really cool to be able to race alongside the IZOD IndyCar Series."

Starting on the outside of the second row will be Irish rookie Patrick McKenna, the 2010 USF2000 championship runner-up who graduated to the Star Mazda Championship this year; his lap of 1:11.417 (90.735 mph) puts him 4th on the grid for his first- ever Star Mazda F1-style standing start. Rounding out the top-5 is Tristan Vautier, the French second-season Star Mazda driver who dominated pre-season testing during IndyCar spring training at Barber Motorsports Park. He also led the first session of practice at St. Pete on Friday, but Scuncio showed his



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muscle in the afternoon, relegating Vautier to second on the time sheets. Today, his lap of 1:11.439 (90.638 mph) is good for the inside of the third row... still well within striking distance for a driver who won two races last season. Only one other driver in the top-5 has experience with winning a Star Mazda Championship race, Connor De Phillippi, who won the 2010 season finale from the pole at Road Atlanta.

Interesting to note that it was in this very Road Atlanta race that Martin Scuncio made his first-ever appearance in Star Mazda competition, stealing the show by very nearly qualifying on the pole and challenging the race leaders throughout the event. His pole at St. Pete confirms that performance was no fluke, and he will be a force to be reckoned with during the season.



Colombian second-year Star Mazda driver Tatiana Calderon – who was 3rd-quick in the last session of Friday practice - turned out the best qualifying result of her Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear career this morning with a fastest lap time that placed her in a sixth place starting position for this afternoon's race. The 18-year-old Colombian driver was the third overall fastest driver yesterday, and that combined with this morning's qualifying result proves she is ready to conquer the Streets of St. Petersburg.

"This was the best qualifying result I've ever had in the Star Mazda Championship," said Calderon. "I still need some more experience with short qualifying sessions and breaking in new, cold tires, but I'm really happy I'm starting near the top of the grid. Hopefully I can gain some positions in the race this afternoon."

The top qualifier in the Expert Series for drivers 30 and older was 2010 Expert Series champion J.W. Roberts; he scored the 14th spot on the starting grid with a 1:13.999 (87.569 mph) in his #65 Team GDT / General Data Tech Mazda.

Round 1 of the 2011 Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear will take the green Saturday afternoon at 4:10 pm.



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Pos No.	Name	Best Tm	Best Speed	In Lap	Diff	Gap	Sponsor
1	60 Martin Scuncio	1:10.921	91.369	11			Fuerza Chile
2	81 Nick Andries	1:10.974	91.301	10	0.053	0.053	Lithionics Battery / GS610 Brake Fluid / Trademark Garage Floors
3	11 Connor De Phillippi	1:11.238	90.963	10	0.317	0.264	Justice Brothers Products / Trademark Garage Floors
4	48 Patrick McKenna	1:11.417	90.735	11	0.496	0.179	Mosport Ireland / Irish Sports Council / General Data Tech
5	5 Tristan Vautier	1:11.493	90.638	9	0.572	0.076	Cecibon, Circuit du Laquais, Fontanel
6	10 Tatiana Calderon	1:11.545	90.572	10	0.624	0.052	JAC Motors
7	88 Sage Karam	1:11.695	90.383	8	0.774	0.150	Comfort Revolution
8	85 Chris Miller	1:12.256	89.681	7	1.335	0.448	Miller Milling, Red Line Oil
9	7 J.V. Horta	1:11.808	90.241	4	0.887	0.113	Programa LeiLoes
10	28 Gustavo Menezes	1:13.249	88.465	5	2.328	0.504	TrueCar, Inc. / www.TrueCar.com
11	20 Carlos Linares	1:12.460	89.429	7	1.539	0.204	Mindeporte
12	39 Richard Heistand	1:12.701	89.132	10	1.780	0.241	Masney Auto Transportation
13	27 Nick Mancuso	1:12.745	89.078	7	1.824	0.044	Jimmy John's Sandwiches / Indeck / Lake Forest Sportscars
14	65 J.W. Roberts	1:13.999	87.569	6	3.078	0.750	General Data Tech
15	66 Zach Meyer	1:14.541	86.932	6	3.620	0.542	
16	72 Larry Pegram	1:14.634	86.824	10	3.713	0.093	Foremost Insurance / Tampa Bay Jaw Surgery
17	23 Walt Bowlin	1:15.459	85.874	6	4.538	0.772	Tampa Bay Jaw Surgery
18	26 Jérimy Daniel	1:14.687	86.762	8	3.766	0.053	FixAuto / Sherwin-Williams

Fans can follow the drivers through the course of the weekend via the series' web site at [www.StarMazda.com](http://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.





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

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

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