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SAGE KARAM QUICKEST IN SHORTENED STAR MAZDA FRIDAY PRACTICE FOR THIS WEEKEND'S GRAND PRIX OF BALTIMORE

Baltimore Grand Prix / Sept. 2, 2011 – Dealing with a situation perhaps best described as 'fluid,' the cars and drivers of the 2011 Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear managed six laps during today's



single practice session, re-scheduled and shortened to 15 minutes, at the inaugural Grand Prix of Baltimore. Turning the quickest of those six laps was Sage Karam with a 1:34.346 (77.841 mph) in his #88 Andretti Autosport / MAZDASPEED / Comfort Revolution Mazda. Karam, the 2010 USF2000 champion who is racing in Star Mazda this season with scholarship funding from the Mazda Road to Indy, is currently 5th in the championship with two wins and six top-5 finishes.

Turning the second-quickest time was Connor De Phillippi, with a 1:35.495 (76.905 mph) in the #11 Team Pelfrey / Justice Brothers Products / Trademark Garage Floors Mazda. Like Karam, De Phillippi was a Mazda Road to Indy scholarship winner; he won the 2009 Skip Barber Pro Series championship and moved up to Star Mazda in 2010. He is currently second in the championship and one of two drivers with three victories. Third-quickest in the session that was shortened still further by a red flag that came out when one of the cars went into the tire barrier was the championship points leader Tristan Vautier; he turned a lap of 1:35.878 (76.597 mph) in the #5 JDC Motorsports / Cecibon / Circuit du Laquais Mazda.

Where a driver is in the championship becomes uniquely important this weekend because, per Star Mazda rules and a decision by IndyCar officials, tomorrow's 35-minute qualifying session -- scheduled for 1:30-2:05 pm -- has been re-categorized as a practice session... and cars will grid for Sunday's race according to the number of points each driver has in the championship. However, under this procedure, the point that usually goes to the pole-winner will not be awarded.

So, on the pole for the race will be French racer Tristan Vautier, with Connor De Phillippi on the outside of the front row. Starting third will be De Phillippi's Team Pelfrey teammate, Nick Andries, third in the championship with six podium finishes; he was 6th-quickest today with a lap of 1:37.486 (75.334 mph) in the #81 Team Pelfrey / Lithionics Battery / GS610 Brake Fluid / Trademark Garage Floors Mazda. Starting 4th will be Brazilian driver João Victor Horta who scored his first win of the season in Round 6 at Mosport and was 5th-quickest on today's practice with a 1:36.858 (75.822 mph) in the #7 Juncos Racing / Programa Leilões Mazda. And Sage Karam will round out the top-5, starting on the inside of the third row.



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In the Expert Series, a race-within-a-race for drivers 30 and older, points leader J.W. Roberts, the computer company CEO who is both owner of and driver for Team GDT, turned a 12-th-quick practice time 1:44.809 (70.070 mph) in the #65 Team GDT / General Data Tech Mazda.

Pos No.	Name	Best Tm	Best Speed	In Lap	Diff	Gap	Sponsor
1	88 Sage Karam	1:34.346	77.841	6			MAZDASPEED / Comfort Revolution
2	11 Connor De Phillippi	1:35.495	76.905	6	1.149	1.149	Justice Brothers Products / Trademark Garage Floors
3	5 Tristan Vautier	1:35.878	76.597	4	1.532	0.383	Cecibon, Circuit du Laquais, Fontanel
4	39 Joao Jardim	1:36.760	75.899	5	2.414	0.882	
5	7 J.V. Horto	1:36.858	75.822	6	2.512	0.098	Programa LeiLoes, Athlete of Christ
6	81 Nick Andries	1:37.486	75.334	4	3.140	0.628	Lithionics Battery / GS610 Brake Fluid / Trademark Garage Floors
7	20 Carlos Linares	1:38.877	74.274	6	4.531	1.391	Mindeporte
8	26 J�rimy Daniel	1:39.753	73.622	6	5.407	0.876	FixAuto / Sherwin-Williams
9	55 Mikael Goikberg	1:39.823	73.570	6	5.477	0.070	Red Line Oil
10	28 Gustavo Menezes	1:40.788	72.866	1	6.442	0.965	www.truecar.com / Truecar, Inc.
11	10 Tatiana Calderon	1:43.538	70.930	4	9.192	2.750	JAC Motors
12	65 J.W. Roberts	1:44.809	70.070	6	10.463	1.271	General Data Tech
13	23 Walt Bowlin	1:48.137	67.914	5	13.791	3.328	Tampa Bay Jaw Surgery
14	99 Learic Cramer	1:50.298	66.583	4	15.952	2.161	JWR

For more information on the Star Mazda Championship and its drivers, as well as the Mazda Road to Indy, 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.

Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/starmazdaseries>

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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.mx-5cup.com www.skipbarber.com www.usf2000.com www.starmazda.com

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