FRENCH RACER TRISTAN VAUTIER QUICKEST IN FINAL STAR MAZDA PRACTICE
FOR TOMORROW'S ROUND 10 AT THE GRAND PRIX OF BALTIMORE

Baltimore Grand Prix / Sept. 3, 2011 – After a Friday practice session shortened to 15 minutes by delays in finishing construction on the 12-turn, 2.4-mile Grand Prix of Baltimore street circuit, French racer Tristan Vautier, made full and productive use of today's single 30-minute practice session for the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear; he cut three seconds from yesterday's quick time and topped the time sheets for the final practice with a 1:31.319 (80.421 mph) in the #5 JDC Motorsports / Cecibon / Circuit du Laquais Mazda.

Turning the 2nd-quick time was Florida racer Nick Andries with a 1:31.758 (80.037 mph)… nearly six seconds better than his time from yesterday. It should be noted that in yesterday's session, no driver got more than six laps, and Andries only got four.

Third-quick was Californian Connor De Phillippi with a 1:31.771 (80.025 mph) in his #11 Team Pelfrey / Justice Brothers Products / Trademark Garage Floors Mazda. And rounding out the top-5 were yesterday's quickest driver, Sage Karam, with a 1:31.827 (79.976 mph) in the #88 Andretti Autosport / MAZDASPEED / Comfort Revolution Mazda and Gustavo Menezes, who turned only a single lap yesterday and was still 10th-fast. Menezes was 5th-quick today with a 1:32.637 (79.277 mph) – more than eight seconds faster – in his #28 Juncos Racing / Truecar / Safety Park Mazda. The quickest driver in the Expert Series, a race-within-a-race for drivers 30 and older, was Texan J.W. Roberts, with an 11th-fast time of 1:37.915 (75.004 mph) in his #65 Team GDT / General Data Tech Mazda.

Vautier is one of two drivers with three race victories in the series; Connor De Phillippi is the other. De Phillippi is second in the championship, and his teammate, Nick Andries, is third with an impressive string of six podium finishes. Sage Karam is a two-time winner so far, and he and De Phillippi share the common experience of having won championships and moved up to Star Mazda via scholarship funding from the Mazda Road to Indy; De Phillippi won the Skip Barber Pro series in 2009 and moved up in 2010, and Karam was the 2010 USF2000 national champion, moving up to Star Mazda this year.

Gustavo Menezes, the second-youngest driver in the series (Karam is the youngest) took a huge step, moving from the top levels of international karting directly to Star Mazda this season. He is currently 6th

in the championship, having finished every race in the top-8; he scored his first podium on the Iowa Speedway oval and started the last race, the Indy Grand Prix of Sonoma, from the outside of the front row. Roberts, the owner of a computer services company, is both the owner of Team GDT and a driver for the team. He won the Expert Series championship in 2010 and leads again this year.

Pos	No.	Name	Best Tm	Best Speed	In Lap	Diff	Gap	Sponsor
1	5	Tristan Vautier	1:31.319	80.421	13			Cecibon, Circuit du Laquais, Fontanel
2	81	Nick Andries	1:31.758	80.037	11	0.439	0.439	Lithionics Battery / GS610 Brake Fluid / Trademark Garage Floors
3	11	Connor De Phillippi	1:31.771	80.025	11	0.452	0.013	Justice Brothers Products / Trademark Garage Floors
4	88	Sage Karam	1:31.827	79.976	5	0.508	0.056	MAZDASPEED / Comfort Revolution
5	28	Gustavo Menezes	1:32.637	79.277	13	1.318	0.810	www.truecar.com / Truecar, Inc.
6	39	Joao Jardim	1:32.770	79.164	12	1.451	0.133	Shopping M
7	7	J.V. Horto	1:32.779	79.156	9	1.460	0.009	Programa LeiLoes, Athlete of Christ
8	10	Tatiana Calderon	1:34.108	78.038	12	2.789	1.329	JAC Motors
9	20	Carlos Linares	1:34.153	78.001	12	2.834	0.045	Mindeporte
10	26	Jérimy Daniel	1:34.907	77.381	10	3.588	0.754	FixAuto / Sherwin-Williams
11	65	J.W. Roberts	1:37.915	75.004	5	6.596	3.008	General Data Tech
12	23	Walt Bowlin	1:39.303	73.955	11	7.984	1.388	Tampa Bay Jaw Surgery
13	99	Learic Cramer	1:46.218	69.141	9	14.899	6.915	JWR

Where a driver stands in the championship becomes uniquely important this weekend because, per Star Mazda rules and a decision by IndyCar officials that the drivers have had insufficient track time, today's session was downgraded from qualifying to practice… and the cars in Sunday's race will line up according to how many championship points the driver has. Under this rarely-utilized procedure, the single championship point that usually goes to the pole-winner will not be awarded.

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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.

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

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