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AND THE SECOND SHALL BE FIRST – CONNOR DE PHILLIPPI QUICKEST IN STAR MAZDA FRIDAY OFFICIAL PRACTICE FOR THE 2011 SEASON FINALE AT MAZDA RACEWAY LAGUNA SECA

Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca / September 16, 2011 – Team Pelfrey driver Connor De Phillippi, currently second in the 2011 Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear points battle with three wins – and



the only driver standing between points leader Tristan Vautier and the championship - turned the quick time in today's first official practice sessions for this weekend's season finale at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca. De Phillippi, quick during most of the session, topped the time sheet with a 1:20.700 in his #11 Team Pelfrey / Justice Brothers Products / Trademark Garage Floors Mazda.

"It was quite a bit warmer today than yesterday, so the field spread out a bit more but there are a lot of very competitive cars out

there so I have my work cut out for me in qualifying and the race," said De Phillippi. "Even though this is the final race and the championship is on the line, Team Pelfrey is taking it one session at a time, like we do every race, working to improve the car and give us the best chance in the race. Qualifying will be very important here, but so will tire management and driving a perfect race, but we're very good at that and I think we'll be in the hunt on Sunday."

Juncos Racing driver João Victor Horta, winner of Round 6 at Mosport, who was quickest in both promoter test sessions on Thursday, was second-quick with a lap of 1:20.873 – nearly half a second faster than his best time of yesterday – in the #7 Juncos Racing / Programa Leilões Mazda. Rounding out the top-3 is fast-rising rookie – both De Phillippi and Horta are second-season drivers – Gustavo Menezes. The young Californian, the second-youngest driver in the series and a teammate of Horta at Juncos Racing, turned a 1:21.211 in his #28 Juncos Racing / Truecar / Safety Park Mazda.

Unlike yesterday, when the top-7 drivers were all within one second of each other, today's times were a bit more spread out; only the top-3 were within the same second. Turing the 4th-fast time was championship leader and JDC Motorsports driver Tristan Vautier with a lap of 1:21.757 in the #5 JDC Motorsports / Cecibon / Circuit du Laquais Mazda. The French racer, the only driver to have won four races so far this season, holds a substantial lead in the championship, but expect to see him racing for the win on Sunday. Completing the top-5 was Andretti Autosport driver Sage Karam, who went off in Turn 6 during the final session yesterday. The 2010 USF2000 national champion, racing in Star Mazda this season



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with scholarship funding from the Mazda Road to Indy, turned a lap of 1:21.866 in his #88 Andretti Autosport / MAZDASPEED / Comfort Revolution Mazda. The official lap record for a Star Mazda Championship car at Mazda raceway is held by Englishman Richard Kent, a 1:19.935, set in 2008. Lap records in Star Mazda are counted only in qualifying and the race.

The fastest driver in the Expert Series for competitors 30 and older was Irish racer, Patrick O'Neill, who was 13th-quick in the #64 O'Neill Racing / O'Neill Construction Mazda with a lap of 1:24.003. This is only his second Star Mazda race of the season, he also competed at the Indy Grand Prix of Sonoma at Infineon, but he won the 2010 West Coast Pro Formula Mazda Championship racing this same car.

This is the season finale for the 11-race 2011 season, and while the championship battle is between JDC Motorsports driver Tristan Vautier and Team Pelfrey driver Connor De Phillippi, the remainder of the field are all battling for the race win and the best placing in the championship – a ranking that has both bragging rights and substantial prize money considerations.

Pos	No.	Name	Best Tm	Best Speed	In Lap	Diff	Gap	Sponsor
1	11	Connor Dephillippi	1:20.700	99.836	12			Justice Brothers Products / Trademark Garage Floors
2	7	J.V. Horto	1:20.873	99.623	12	0.173	0.173	Programa LeiLoes, Athlete of Christ
3	28	Gustavo Menezes	1:21.211	99.208	14	0.511	0.338	www.truecar.com / Truecar, Inc. / Clearbook / SafetyPark / Oakley / K1speed
4	5	Tristan Vautier	1:21.757	98.546	13	1.057	0.546	Cecibon, Circuit du Laquais, Fontanel
5	88	Sage Karam	1:21.866	98.414	13	1.166	0.109	MAZDASPEED / Comfort Revolution
6	10	Tatiana Calderon	1:22.280	97.919	12	1.580	0.414	JAC Motors
7	81	Nick Andries	1:22.500	97.658	4	1.800	0.220	Lithionics Battery / GS610 Brake Fluid / Trademark Garage Floors
8	77	Zach Veach	1:22.560	97.587	8	1.860	0.060	Team Zakosi Data Backup / Retail Pro / ArtRotondo.com / ADS IT Solutions
9	33	Patrick Mckenna	1:22.893	97.195	4	2.193	0.333	Motorsport Ireland / Irish Sports Council / General Data Tech
10	20	Carlos Linares	1:22.935	97.146	12	2.235	0.042	Mindeporte
11	39	Joao Jardim	1:23.271	96.754	4	2.571	0.336	Shopping M
12	27	Nick Mancuso	1:23.291	96.731	4	2.591	0.020	Indeck, Lake Forest Sportscars / F.A.S.T. Race Products
13	64	Patrick O'Neill	1:24.003	95.911	8	3.303	0.712	O'Neill Construction
14	26	Jérimy Daniel	1:24.336	95.532	13	3.636	0.333	FixAuto / Sherwin-Williams
15	16	Lloyd Read	1:24.723	95.096	12	4.023	0.387	Maaco / Flextronics
16	65	J.W. Roberts	1:25.293	94.460	12	4.593	0.570	General Data Tech
17	37	Dom Bastien	1:26.682	92.947	3	5.982	1.389	



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Wrapping up one of the most competitive seasons in years, the Star Mazda Championship heads to the season finale with three of the four series titles – Series Champion, Expert Series Champion and Team Championship – still up for grabs. Sage Karam, driver of the #88 Andretti Autosport / MAZDASPEED / Comfort Revolution Mazda, has already clinched the Rookie of the Year title.

On-track action for the drivers and teams in the Star Mazda Championship continues tomorrow, Friday, Sept. 16 with early morning and just-after-lunch practice sessions. There is no on-track activity Saturday, Sept. 17, but on Sunday, Sept. 18, qualifying will take place from 8:00 am to 8:45 am, with the 45-minute season finale scheduled to get the green light at 10:40 am.

The 2011 Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear awards banquet will take place Sunday evening, Sept. 18 at The Clement Monterey Intercontinental Hotel (750 Cannery Row). The evening begins with a reception at 6:00 pm, dinner at 7:00 pm and the awards ceremony at 8:00 pm.

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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On any given weekend, there are more Mazda's 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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