



GOODYEAR



REPEATING THE FEAT -- DE PHILLIPPI WINS FROM THE POLE IN A CLEAN, GREEN SEASON-OPENER OF THE 2012 STAR MAZDA CHAMPIONSHIP AT THE GRAND PRIX OF ST. PETERSBURG

March 24, 2012 / G.P. of St. Petersburg – Connor De Phillippi, winner of this race last year, repeated the feat with a clean, green run, leading from flag-to-flag in the 2012 Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear season-opener at the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg.



Starting from the pole in the #2 Juncos Racing / ModSpace Racing / One24 Mazda, De Phillippi experienced only one moment of real drama in the race when, on the final lap, Jack Hawksworth in the #82 Team Pelfrey / TORGOEN Swiss / EXA Networks Mazda, made a passing attempt in Turn 13 that just missed... and wound up costing him a couple of car lengths. Forced to settle for 2nd place, he crossed the finish line just 0.486-seconds back. He did, however, turn the quickest lap of the race and thus won the PEAK Performance Pole Award and the prime starting spot for tomorrow's Race 2.

Rounding out the top-3 was rookie Gabriel 'Gabby' Chaves in the #19 JDC Motorsports / OMP Mazda. Joining them on the podium was the first finisher in the Expert Series from drivers 30 and older, top AMA SuperBike racer Larry Pegram, making one of his periodic forays from the world of 2-wheel racing to 4-wheels. He finished 16th overall in his #72 AIM Autosport / Tampa Bay Jaw Surgery / Foremost Insurance Mazda.

"It really was an ideal race in most respects; I got a good start, was able to control the pace and save my tires for the end when I needed them to defend against Jack," said De Phillippi. "I pulled out a lead of almost two seconds during the race, but then Jack closed it up to nose-to-tail right at the end, so we'll have to have a look at that in the engineering de-briefing, but overall I was very happy with the car that Juncos Racing gave me. My only regret is that the grid for the second race, tomorrow, is being set by the quickest lap you turned today, and while I won the race, I only turned the 7th-fast lap, so I'll be starting from a bit back in the field tomorrow. Fortunately I've done that before and know how to win here even when it involves some passing."

The 30-minute race went green slightly behind schedule, but with nearly ideal conditions; slight overcast and a cool breeze. Most of the field made it through the first lap, and indeed the first half of the race with little drama. The notable exception was Zach Veach in the #77 Andretti Autosport / Zakoski Data Backup Mazda, victim of a sticking throttle that forced a minor mishap on Lap 1 that necessitated a visit to the pits. He returned one lap down and running without his front shock cover and finished 17th.



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And at Lap 12, the wheel-to-wheel battle between Hawksworth and Martin Scuncio in the #22 Juncos Racing / Pullman Bus Mazda, came to a head with the two entering Turn 1 side-by-side, Hawksworth pinched into putting his right-side tires up on the curbing, and then making contact with Scuncio. A momentary bobble, and Scuncio continued to finish 6th, but it allowed Chaves, as well as Juan Piedrahita in the #9 JDC Motorsports / Petrosur / GFK Motors Mazda and Petri Suvanto in the #81 Team Pelfrey / Mazda Road to Indy Mazda, to slip past and finish 4th and 5th respectively.

A notable drive was put in by 2011 Star Mazda Rookie of the Year Sage Karam who, due to a combination of penalties, mechanical issues and plain bad luck, was denied an opportunity to qualify; he started from the back of the field in the #88 Andretti Autosport / Comfort Revolution Mazda, moving up to 11th by Lap 6 and up to 8th by the time the checkered waved. Not the way he would have wished to start his season, but not indicative of how it's likely to go, either.

Results for Race 1

Pos	PIC No.	Name	Laps	Diff	Sponsor
1	1	2 Connor De Philippi	25		ModSpace Racing / One24
2	2	82 Jack Hawksworth	25	0.486	TORGOEN Swiss Watches/ EXA Networks
3	3	19 Gabby Chaves	25	4.051	OMP
4	4	9 Juan Piedrahita	25	6.381	Petrosur / GFK Motors
5	5	81 Petri Suvanto	25	6.782	Mazda Road to Indy / RKM Building
6	6	22 Martin Scuncio	25	12.962	Pullman Bus
7	7	57 Diego Ferreira	25	20.109	Team Viso Venezuela
8	8	88 Sage Karam	25	22.027	Comfort Revolution
9	9	91 Ashley Freiberg	25	23.808	TRUECar.com
10	10	93 Stefan Rzadzinski	25	24.106	PoweredbyAlberta.com
11	11	10 Jerimy Daniel	25	38.972	FixAuto / Sherwin-Williams
12	12	21 Camilo Schmidt	25	40.391	Mindeportes
13	13	83 Gustavo Menezes	25	42.710	TrueCar.com
14	14	15 Bruno Palli	25	1:02.353	Team Viso Venezuela
15	15	53 Andre Mendez	24	1 Lap	GrupoKriterion.com / DataFile.com.co
16	16	72 Larry Pegram	24	1 Lap	Foremost Insurance
17	17	77 Zach Veach	24	1 Lap	Zakosi Data Backup / ADS IT Solutions
18	18	23 Walt Bowlin	24	1 Lap	Tampa Bay Jaw Surgery
19	19	66 Zack Meyer	23	2 Laps	Damis Partners III
20	20	20 Carlos Linares	14	11 Laps	Mindeporte
21	21	33 Ryan Tveter	14	11 Laps	Alpha / Ryan Tveter LLC

With the grid for Race 2 being set according the quickest lap time for each car in Race 1, Hawksworth will start on the inside of the front row, with Petri Suvanto alongside. Suvanto is the 2011 USF2000 champion and is racing in Star Mazda this year with scholarship funding from the Mazda Road to Indy. Juan Piedrahita will start from the inside of Row 2, with Gabby Chaves on the outside.





Starting Grid for Race 2

Pos No.	Name	Best Tm In Lap	Hometown	Team
2	82 Jack Hawksworth	1:11.439	17 West Yorkshire, England	Pelfrey
5	81 Petri Suvanto	1:11.443	7 Nurmo, Finland	Pelfrey
4	9 Juan Piedrahita	1:11.484	8 Mexico City, Mexico	JDC Motorsports
3	19 Gabby Chaves	1:11.517	7 Bogota, Colombia	JDC Motorsports
6	22 Martin Scuncio	1:11.589	5 Bahia Blanca, Argentina	Juncos Racing
10	93 Stefan Rzedzinski	1:11.653	11 Edmonton, Canada	JDC Motorsports
1	2 Connor De Philippi	1:11.658	5 San Clemente, CA	Juncos Racing
13	83 Gustavo Menezes	1:11.744	9 Coto de Caza, CA	Pelfrey
17	77 Zach Veach	1:11.751	8 Stockdale, OH	Andretti
7	57 Diego Ferreira	1:11.761	8 Maracay, Venezuela	Juncos Racing
19	66 Zack Meyer	1:12.029	6 Toronto, Canada	Aim Autosport
8	88 Sage Karam	1:12.076	8 Nazareth, PA	Andretti
20	20 Carlos Linares	1:12.134	8 Caracas, Venezuela	Linares Racing
14	15 Bruno Palli	1:12.286	3 Maracay, Venezuela	Juncos Racing
9	91 Ashley Freiberg	1:12.390	6 Homer Glen, IL	JDC Motorsports
12	21 Camilo Schmidt	1:12.557	8 Merida, Venezuela	Linares Racing
15	53 Andre Mendez	1:12.568	12 Bogota, Colombia	Team GDT
11	10 Jerimy Daniel	1:12.715	7 Chateauguay, Quebec	TRC
21	33 Ryan Tveter	1:12.738	8 Oyster Bay, NY	Team GDT
16	72 Larry Pegram	1:13.903	8 Baltimore, OH	Aim Autosport
18	23 Walt Bowlin	1:16.307	8 Tarpon Springs, FL	Aim Autosport

Star Mazda Race 2 (of 2) is scheduled to take the green at 10:05 am, Sunday, March 25. The races, as part of the Mazda Motorsports Hour, will air on the Discovery Channel's Velocity TV in the U.S. and globally on ESPN International. For air dates and times, go to www.StarMazda.com and click the Star Mazda TV icon.

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 high-res 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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