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DE PHILLIPPI QUICKEST IN FRIDAY NIGHT STAR MAZDA PRACTICE SESSION AT LUCAS OIL RACEWAY

Lucas Oil Raceway / Indianapolis / May 25 – Connor De Phillippi, winner of the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear 'Night Before the 500' event last year at Lucas Oil Raceway, again showed his strength on ovals, turning the quickest time in tonight's two-hour night practice session.



While just a tick slower than his lap record of 19.999-sec., set in qualifying for the 2011 race, his quick lap this evening, a 20.131 in his #2 Juncos Racing / ModSpace Racing / One24 Mazda, set him 0.151-sec. clear of 2nd-quick Sage Karam who turned a 20.282 in the #88 Andretti Autosport / Comfort Revolution Mazda. Karam, the 2011 Star Mazda 'Rookie of the Year,' won two of the three ovals on the schedule last season.

Rounding out the top five, all of whom showed similar speed in the official series full-day test on May 5, were Zach Veach, 3rd quick with a 20.303 in the #77 Andretti Autosport / K12.com / Zakoski Data Backup Mazda, Gustavo Menezes 4th with a 20.408 in the #83 Team Pelfrey / TrueCar.com Mazda and current championship leader and 2-race winner Jack Hawksworth with a 20.450 in the #82 Team Pelfrey / TORGOEN Swiss Watches / EXA Networks Mazda.

The top-10 cars in the 16-car field were all within one second of each other, a reasonable indicator that tomorrow night's Night Before the 500 is going to be a crowd-on-its-feet, wheel-to-wheel affair.

This evening's test was relatively free of drama... but only relatively. The biggest incident of the evening came about half-way through when Camilo Schmidt used the right side of his #21 Linares Racing Mazda to try and scrub the Lucas Oil Raceway logo off the turn-3 wall.

But the quietest, and perhaps most consequential drama of the evening was the non-appearance of Petri Suvanto, winner of the USF2000 event here last year. The Finnish racer went on to win the USF2000 championship and is competing in the Star Mazda Championship this season with scholarship funding from the Mazda Road to Indy. He turned the quickest lap of the official series test on May 5, but on this particular evening, however, both Suvanto and his #81 Team Pelfrey / Mazda Road to Indy Mazda sat in the pits as mechanics chased 'electrical gremlins.'



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"Well, better now than tomorrow," was his realistic take on the situation. "Of course it would be better if I could have had the practice time, but we have another hour of testing tomorrow before qualifying, and the team always gives me a good car for the race. I am disappointed, but not concerned."

Pos No.	Name	Best Tm	Best Speed	In Lap	Diff	Gap	Sponsor
1	2 Connor De Philippi	20.131	122.676	74			ModSpace Racing / One24
2	88 Sage Karam	20.282	121.763	67	0.151	0.151	Comfort Revolution
3	77 Zach Veach	20.303	121.637	64	0.172	0.021	K12.com / Zakosi Data Backup
4	83 Gustavo Menezes	20.408	121.011	63	0.277	0.105	TrueCar.com
5	82 Jack Hawksworth	20.450	120.763	74	0.319	0.042	TORGOEN Swiss Watches/ EXA Networks
6	19 Gabby Chaves	20.553	120.158	83	0.422	0.103	OMP
7	9 Juan Piedrahita	20.636	119.674	86	0.505	0.083	Petrosur / GFK Motors
8	22 Martin Scuncio	20.731	119.126	80	0.600	0.095	Pullman Bus
9	57 Diego Ferreira	20.750	119.017	78	0.619	0.019	Team Viso Venezuela
10	15 Bruno Palli	20.851	118.440	78	0.720	0.101	Team Viso Venezuela
11	53 Andre Mendez	20.891	118.214	95	0.760	0.040	GrupoKriterion.com / DataFile.com.co
12	66 Zack Meyer	21.207	116.452	80	1.076	0.316	Partners III
13	21 Camilo Schmidt	21.265	116.134	75	1.134	0.058	
14	91 Ashley Freiberg	21.295	115.971	24	1.164	0.030	TRUECar.com
15	20 Carlos Linares	21.487	114.935	46	1.356	0.192	Mindeporte
16	81 Petri Suvanto	-	-	0			Mazda Road to Indy / RKM Building

Practice for Round 6 of the 2012 Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear, the Night Before the 500 at Lucas Oil Raceway continues on Saturday, May 26 with sessions from 12:05-12:35 pm and 1:20-1:50 pm. Single-car qualifying will take place from 4:55-5:40 pm, with the 45-minute/100-lap race scheduled to take the green flag at 8:25 pm.

Star Mazda Championship cars all carry two Replay XD1080 cameras to provide exciting driver POV footage for races that are broadcast tape-delayed during the Mazda Motorsports Hour on Discovery's Velocity Channel; click [here](#) to search for broadcast dates, times and channel in your area.

For more information on the Star Mazda Championship and its drivers, as well as the Mazda Motorsports ladder system, please visit www.starmazda.com and www.mazdausa.com. For information, interviews and photos, please contact Star Mazda Communications Director Peter Frey at (818) 398-5733 or StarMazdaPR@aol.com.

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