



THE WEEKEND OF MANY HATS -- STAR MAZDA RETURNS TO THE STREETS OF TORONTO FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 2007 WITH A FULL SCHEDULE OF RACING, RECRUITING, TV AND VISITING VIPs

Toronto, Canada / July 4, 2012 – Returning to the 2.84-kilometer, 11-turn street circuit for the first time since 2007 – a race won by Dane Cameron, who went on to win the series championship – the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear heads into a run of three straight Canadian street races – beginning with this weekend's Toronto Indy.

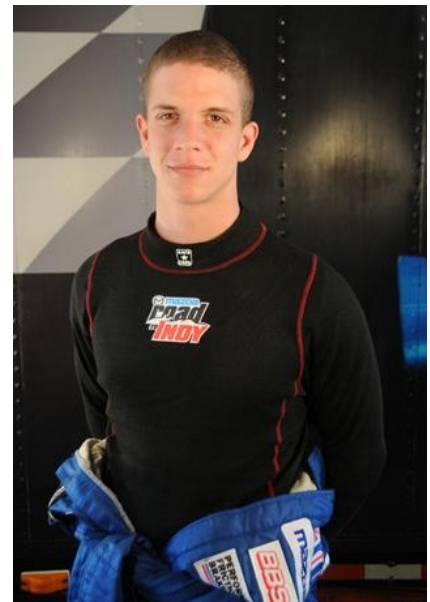


And if ever there was a prime example of the multiple hats a modern race driver is required to wear, it's this weekend's schedule for the Star Mazda drivers; not only are there two Star Mazda races, one on Saturday and one on Sunday, along with the usual driver meetings and autograph sessions, but drivers will also be holding meetings with VIPs from Mazda Canada who are attending the race to find out what this Mazda Road to Indy is all about – racing scholarships for series champions from karting to IndyCar -- and how they can get involved.

Star Mazda drivers will also be hosting 25 top young Canadian kart racers who have been invited to the event by IndyCar and the Mazda Road to Indy to explore their racing options. IndyCar is working with Tony Ventresca, who operates E-KartingNews Canada, on this part of the 'hotshoe outreach program' that is actively seeking out top young drivers early in their careers and steering them toward the Mazda Road to Indy.

Similar events will take place at the Edmonton Indy and the GP3R at Trois-Rivières, with the young karters getting the advice and information from current Star Mazda drivers and Mazda Road to Indy officials. A similar program executed by the Williams Harfield Sports Group and taking place in England at Formula Ford races will see drivers from 'across the pond' attending races later this season, including the Baltimore IndyCar race, with a view toward racing in the Mazda Road to Indy in 2013.

On top of their weekend duties as ambassadors and educators,





GOODYEAR



individual drivers, such as home-town hero Zach Meyer (#66 AIM Autosport / Damis Partners III Mazda), racing for the home-town AIM Autosport team, face the additional pressures of both media focus and performing in front of Canadian fans. And then there's young American rookie Ryan Tveter (#33 Team GDT / Rogers TV Mazda), who is the focus of a documentary being shot throughout the weekend by his Canadian sponsor, Rogers TV.

For English racer Jack Hawksworth (#82 Team Pelfrey / TORGOEN Swiss Watches / EXA Networks Mazda), a two-race winner who led the championship since the first race, only to lose it at the Iowa Speedway oval due to a suspension failure that put him into the wall, the weekend will be about getting both his personal mojo (he was flying at Iowa and just laps away from a podium finish) and team momentum back.

And for the most experienced driver in the series, American racer Connor De Phillippi (#2 Juncos Racing / ModSpace Racing / One24 Mazda) – who inherited the championship lead at Iowa with a 3rd-place finish – it will be a laser focus on building on his two race wins so far and leaving Toronto with a bigger points margin than he has now (139 vs. 135).



Another driver with something at stake is Andretti Autosport driver/protégé Sage Karam (#88 Andretti Autosport / Comfort Revolution Mazda), the 2011 Star Mazda Rookie of the Year, who won one oval this year (Iowa Speedway), and two ovals last year (Iowa and Milwaukee) – but has yet to win on a street circuit. Also with one win, and currently third in the points, is De Phillippi's teammate, Chilean driver Martin Scuncio (#22 Juncos Racing / Pullman Bus Mazda), an extremely quick driver running with a championship-winning team.

Other drivers running near the top of the points and always a threat to break through with a win include Gabby Chaves (#19 JDC Motorsports / COMCEL / Marca Pais / Coldeportes Mazda), a member of the 2012 FIA Institute Young Driver Excellence Academy and Petri Suvanto (#81 Team Pelfrey / Mazda Road to Indy Mazda) the 2011 USF2000 champion who is racing in Star Mazda with scholarship funding from the Mazda Road to Indy.

Aside from outright victory in the race, there are other titles being contended this weekend; Hawksworth may be second in the points, but he leads the Rookie of the Year standings, while De Phillippi's move to the top helped move his team Juncos Racing, into the lead of the team championship battle.

This weekend's Round 5 of the 2012 Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear will be the 7th and 8th races of a 10-weekend, 17-race 2012 schedule that includes a well-rounded menu of ovals, street circuits and natural-terrain road courses. Most, such as the Indy Toronto, are with IndyCar and most are double-headers with two races per weekend and the quickest lap of each car in Race 1 setting the grid for



GOODYEAR





GOODYEAR



MAZDASPEED
MOTORSPORTS DEVELOPMENT



Race 2. Star Mazda uses standing starts on street circuits and road courses. This is the first of three Canadian races in a row, followed by Indy Edmonton on July 21 – 22, and then by the legendary GP3R Grand Prix de Trois-Rivieres, August 3 – 4, where Star Mazda will share the stage with Indy Lights.

On-track Star Mazda action begins with a 30-minute practice session from 8 – 8:30 am Friday, July 6, followed by a second half-hour session from 1:05 – 1:35 pm Friday afternoon. Star Mazda drivers from eight different countries and three continents will qualify for Race 1 from 8 – 8:30 am Saturday, July 7, with Race 1 scheduled for 12:10 – 12:50 pm Saturday afternoon. Star Mazda Race 2 will take place 9:50 – 10:30 am, Sunday, July 8.



Star Mazda Championship cars all carry two Replay XD1080 cameras to provide exciting driver POV footage for races that are broadcast tape-delayed on Discovery's Velocity Channel and globally on ESPN International. In the U.S., the race will air on Velocity at 12 Noon, Saturday, August 4. For international dates and times, please visit www.StarMazda.com and click the Star Mazda TV logo on the home page; or go to <http://intl.tv.espn.com/>.

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.

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

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/starmazdaseries>

Live timing: <http://starmazda.com/timing/>



GOODYEAR



PERFORMANCE[®]
FRICTION
BRAKES



BBS



REPLAY XD

