



GOODYEAR



MAZDASPEED
MOTORSPORTS DEVELOPMENT

RACING AND HUMAN INTEREST STORIES IN THE STAR MAZDA CHAMPIONSHIP SUPPORT RACE AT THE EDMONTON INDY, JULY 21-22

Fast Facts for Round 6 of the 10-weekend, 17-race 2012 Star Mazda Championship

- **THE SHORT VERSION OF WHY YOU SHOULD READ THIS** – [Star Mazda](#) is part of the [Mazda Road to Indy](#), the official IndyCar driver development system. The relevant metaphor would be baseball; Star Mazda is College Varsity, Indy Lights is Triple-A, and IndyCar is the major leagues. The difference is that the MRTI series all usually compete in the same stadium, on the same weekend, in front of the same fans. The Mazda Road to Indy provides scholarship funding to the champions in each series to move up and compete at the next level.
- **LOCAL DRIVERS SPAN THE AGE SPECTRUM** – Two local drivers in the Star Mazda support race at the Edmonton Indy span the age spectrum. Stefan Razdzinski, 19, raced at Edmonton last year in the Indy Lights class; this year he will pilot the #99 JDC Motorsports / PoweredByAlberta.com Mazda. Blair Robertshaw, 53, is a local businessman and race team owner/driver who has put together an impressive list of sponsors for his Star Mazda debut in the #42 Robertshaw Racing / SEKO Construction / Web Mechanical / Provincial Electrical Mazda. He will compete in the Expert Series, a race-within-a-race for drivers 30 and older that has businessmen/racers battling wheel-to-wheel at 140 mph with top young drivers from around the world.
- **FAST FEMALE DRIVING FOR CHAMPIONSHIP-WINNING TEAM** – Rising American star [Ashley Freiberg](#) is a champion kart racer, graduate of the Lyn St. James Driver Development Academy and history making-winner of 25 races in a row competing in the high school varsity of open-wheel racing, the Skip Barber series. She is one of six female racers (including IndyCar driver Katherine Legge) being sponsored by the TrueCar ['Women Empowered Initiative,'](#) a multi-year program supporting rising female racers in several series. Richard Branson's Virgin Group has recently signed on as a co-sponsor of the Women Empowered program.
- **HIGH-SPEED HIGH SCHOOL** – Four of the drivers on the Star Mazda grid this weekend are still in high school ([Gabby Chaves](#), [Zach Veach](#), [Juan Piedrahita](#) and [Gustavo Menezes](#)). Veach's school – K12 Online Education (www.K12.com) – is actually also the sponsor of his race car. Chaves is the newly-named spokesman for the ["Take 5 to Stay Alive"](#) anti-texting while driving campaign in Florida. You can see his TV commercial [here](#). Veach is a spokesperson for FocusDriven, an advocacy group for victims of motor vehicle crashes involving drivers using their cell phones. He also released a book titled ["99 THINGS TEENS WISH THEY KNEW BEFORE TURNING 16."](#)
- **THEY'VE GOT RACING IN FINLAND?** – This will be [Finnish driver](#) Petri Suvanto's rookie season in the Star Mazda Championship. As the 2011 champion in the USF2000 National Championship Powered by Mazda, where he scored five poles and five race wins – also in his rookie year. He is competing with \$350,000 in scholarship funding provided by the Mazda Road to Indy.

- **INDYCAR DRIVER SPONSORS STAR MAZDA RACERS** – Juncos Racing teammates [Bruno Palli](#) and [Diego Ferreira](#) are representing “[Team Viso Venezuela](#),” an initiative founded by the duo’s Venezuelan manager and IZOD IndyCar Series driver [E.J. Viso](#). The program promotes bringing top young Venezuelan racers to compete in the Mazda Road to Indy with the help of Venezuelan supporters. Both drivers have won national championships in their native Venezuela.
- **A FORMER INDYCAR TEAM GIVES STAR MAZDA DRIVERS THEIR 'BIG BREAK'** – [Team Pelfrey](#), one of the powerhouse teams in Star Mazda, was an IndyCar team from 1998-2001 noted for giving young drivers their 'big break'; Dale Pelfrey has revived the team and is fielding cars for three of the hottest young drivers in the series; championship leader Jack Hawksworth, Gustavo Menezes and Petri Suvanto.
- **STAR MAZDA GRADUATES IN INDY LIGHTS AND INDYCAR** – Now in its 22nd season, the Star Mazda Championship is the most successful open-wheel driver development program in North America. [Star Mazda graduates](#) in the IndyCar field this weekend include Graham Rahal, Marco Andretti and 2011 IndyCar 'Rookie of the Year' – and 2012 Indy 500 front row qualifier -- James Hinchcliffe. Alumni competing in Indy Lights include 2011 Star Mazda champion [Tristan Vautier](#), racing for Sam Schmidt Motorsports with scholarship funding from the Mazda Road to Indy. Also J.V. Horto, driving for Juncos Racing, which [competes in both](#) Star Mazda and Indy Lights, as well as [Peter Dempsey](#), Jorge Goncalvez and David Ostella.
- **\$2.5 MILLION IN 'RACING SCHOLARSHIPS'** – The Mazda Road to Indy provides 'racing scholarships' worth \$2.5 million per year to champions in each series to help them move up to race at the next level... all the way to IndyCar and the Indy 500. 2011 USF2000 champion Petri Suvanto received approximately \$350,000 to race in Star Mazda, and [2011 Star Mazda champion](#) Tristan Vautier won a \$660,000 scholarship to move up and race in Indy Lights.
- **DIVERSITY GOES ZOOM-ZOOM** – Top young drivers from around the world compete in the Star Mazda Championship. The field at the Toronto IndyCar race includes drivers from three continents and eight countries, including the United States, Canada, Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, Argentina, England and Finland; the top-4 drivers in the championship battle are each from a different country.
- **NEED TO KNOW** - For further information, interviews and photos, contact:
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