



BACK(WARDS) TO THE FUTURE – THE STAR MAZDA CHAMPIONSHIP BEGINS THE SECOND HALF OF THE 2012 SEASON WITH THE SERIES' DEBUT ON THE COUNTER-CLOCKWISE EDMONTON INDY CIRCUIT

Edmonton, Alberta / July 16, 2012 – The Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear begins the second half of the 2012 season by heading 'back(wards) to the future' during the series' debut on the unique counter-clockwise, 3.631 km, 13-turn Edmonton Indy street circuit. This is series' first visit to the Alberta capital and the second of three Canadian races in a row, including the Toronto Indy and the



upcoming GP3R at Trois-Rivieres where Star Mazda will share the spotlight with Indy Lights.

Local fans will be particularly interested in the two 'Alberta boys' (relatively speaking) entered in the event. Stefan Rzadzinski, 19, is an Edmonton native who

competed in this event last year in the Indy Lights series; this year he will pilot the #93 JDC Motorsports / PoweredByAlberta.com Mazda. Blair Robertshaw, 53, is an Alberta businessman and race team owner/driver making his professional open-wheel racing debut this weekend with the help of the championship-winning, Toronto-based AIM Autosport team. He will race the #42 Robertshaw Racing / SEKO Construction / Web Mechanical / Provincial Electrical Mazda.

Given that this event – in fact the next three events (including the Baltimore Indy on Sept. 1-2) – are street circuits, first up on the list of 'young hotshoes to watch' is English racer Jack Hawksworth, the current championship points leader and winner from the pole of three of the four Star Mazda street circuit events so far. Following up on a disastrous crash resulting from a mechanical failure while battling for a podium finish at the Iowa Speedway oval on June 23, Hawksworth re-bounded to win both races of the Star Mazda double-header at Toronto driving the #82 Team Pelfrey / TORGOEN Swiss Watches / EXA Networks Mazda. That brings his total wins for the season to four (he also won Race1 on the Barber Motorsports Park road course), as well as five PEAK Performance poles and five 'fastest laps'; he leads the championship with 197 points.

Hawksworth's nearest competitor, and the recipient of more bad luck than any talented young driver should have to endure, is California driver Connor De Phillippi, driver of the #2 Juncos Racing / ModSpace Racing / One24 Mazda. Now in his third season of Star Mazda competition and the most experienced driver in the series, De Phillippi started his season in the expected manner, with a win from the pole in Race 1 at the season-opening Grand Prix of St. Petersburg. Bad luck and bad timing saw him score two





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5ths and a 3rd in the following three races before winning again, from the pole and setting fast lap, in the Night Before the 500 on the oval at Lucas Oil Raceway in Indianapolis.

He followed that up with a podium on the Iowa Speedway oval, and then disaster struck at Toronto with rain halfway through qualifying for Race 1 relegating him to a deep-in-the pack start and a 6th-place finish. In Race 2, with laps to go and battling for a podium, the tire barrier in Turn 1 reached out and snagged his left-rear tire and dropped him to 17th in the results. Needless to say this highly-motivated young driver, competing for the championship-winning Juncos Racing team, will be laser-focused on reclaiming lost ground; the contest between he and Hawksworth should be spectacular.

Since no race is a sure thing, the list of top contenders must include Colombian racer Gabby Chaves, who was born into a racing family and honed his skills in European open-wheel competition (winning a spot in the prestigious chosen for the prestigious 2012 FIA Institute Young Driver Excellence Academy) before moving to race in the U.S. He has scored three podium finishes (including Race 1 at Toronto) driving the #19 JDC Motorsports / CLARO / Marca Colombia Mazda, and finished in the top-5 seven times. His breakthrough to the top step of the podium is more a matter of when than if, and having it happen this weekend would be no surprise at all.



The next two drivers on the list also met some motorsports version of Waterloo at Toronto, but they are also the only other drivers in the series besides Hawksworth and De Phillippi to have won a race this season. Fourth in the championship is Chilean racer Martin Scuncio, who won Race 2 at Barber Motorsports Park, has two podium finishes and seven top-7s. But Toronto was a mirror image of De Phillippi's disaster; he finished 16th in Race 1 and 7th in Race 2 driving the #22 Juncos Racing / Pullman Bus / Gobierno Regional del Bio-Biol Mazda.

Sage Karam was the Star Mazda 2011 Rookie of the Year and won two races on ovals (Milwaukee and Iowa). This year, he's 5th in the championship and has won one race on an oval, at Iowa Speedway. In Race 1 at Toronto he was left on the starting grid by a failed differential in his #88 Andretti Autosport / Comfort Revolution Mazda, and since the starting positions for Race 2 are determined by each car's fastest lap in Race 1, he started at the very back of the grid... and proceeded to demonstrate again what a talent he is by slashing his way up through a 21-car field to finish 3rd.

Other drivers to keep an eye on include Mexico City racer Juan Peidrahita in the #9 JDC Motorsports / Petrosur / GFK Motors Mazda. He ran in Star Mazda two years ago, but decided he needed more experience and moved down to the USF2000 series for 2011. Now he's back and his pace and racecraft



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are transformed; he's sixth in the championship with two podiums and five top-4 finishes. Finnish driver Petri Suvanto won the 2012 USF2000 championship and is driving in Star Mazda this season with scholarship funding from the Mazda Road to Indy. He's seventh in the championship with just one podium, but he's finished in the top-8 at every single race so far this season.

Star Mazda on-track action and the Edmonton Indy begins with a 30-minute practice session from 9-9:30 am, Friday, July 20, with a second session from 1:45-2:15 in the afternoon. Qualifying for the PEAK Performance pole will take place 11:00-11:30am Saturday, July 21, with Race 1 of the weekend's double-header taking the green light for the series' spectacular standing start at 2:30pm. Race 2, with the grid set according to the fastest lap turned by each car in Race 1, will take the green at 9:30am Sunday, July 22.

Star Mazda Championship cars all carry two Replay XD1080 cameras to provide exciting driver POV footage for races that are part of the Mazda Motorsports Hour broadcast tape-delayed on Discovery's Velocity Channel in the U.S. and globally on ESPN International. In the U.S., the race will air on Velocity at 12 Noon, Saturday, August 25. In Canada, the Mazda Motorsports Hour airs on Rogers Sports Net; please check your local listings for date and time, or go to <http://www.sportsnet.ca/tvschedule>.

About Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear

The Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear is a part of the [Mazda Road to Indy](#), the official driver development program for IndyCar. The 2012 schedule currently includes 17 races on 10 weekends, most with IndyCar. Rising stars from around the world will compete on road courses, street circuits and ovals in front of more than a million fans as they compete for prizes valued at \$1.2 million, including a scholarship to move up and race in the 2013 Firestone Indy Lights series. Drivers 16 and older are welcome to compete and the Star Mazda Championship also features the Expert Series for drivers 30 and older. The Star Mazda Championship features standing starts, wheel-to-wheel racing at 160 mph and budgets a fraction of other top open-wheel ladder series. For more information on the Star Mazda Championship please visit www.starmazda.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.

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