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THE FIRST SEVEN AND FINAL FIVE TELL THE TALE – GABBY CHAVES TAKES THE PEAK PERFORMANCE POLE FOR THE 2012 STAR MAZDA SEASON FINALE DURING THE PETIT LE MANS AT ROAD ATLANTA

Road Atlanta / October 18, 2012 – Under very nearly ideal conditions, misty and cool but with a dry track, it was the first seven and final five laps of the 45-minute Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear



qualifying session that told the tale. In the final five Colombian racer Gabby Chaves scored his second consecutive PEAK Performance pole award with a lap of 1:19.279 and will start his #19 JDC Motorsports / CLARO / Marca Colombia / Tecpro Mazda from the inside of the front row in tomorrow's season finale of the 2012 Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear during the Petit Le Mans at Road Atlanta. Chaves, currently second in the championship, won from the pole in Race 2 of the previous event at Mazda Raceway three weeks ago. As a result, all he need to do is start tomorrow's race to clinch 2nd in the championship.

Starting along his right side (since Chaves has opted to start driver's left), and providing the dramatic position-swapping that punctuated the final five minutes of qualifying will be Sage Karam, who turned a 1:19.330... just 51/1,000ths of a second off the pole time... in his #88 Andretti Autosport / Comfort Revolution Mazda. Chaves held the pole for most of the session until Karam took it away from him with six minutes to go; on the next-to-last lap Chaves put in a flier to snatch the pole back and was obviously jubilant.

"I'm so thankful for this after all the work the JDC Motorsports team put in during the season, all the sacrifices my family has made and all the support from my sponsors," said Chaves, who was born into a racing family and is a member of the prestigious 2012 FIA Institute Young Driver Excellence Academy. "It's so important to start from the pole here because everybody in the race has nothing to lose and everything to gain, so it's going to be extremely competitive tomorrow."

The one driver in the field with the most to lose lost it on lap 7 of qualifying; California racer Connor De Phillippi, third in the championship and eager to move up to second – which he could have done only by scoring every possible point – slid his #2 Juncos Racing / ModSpace Racing / One24 Mazda off in Turn 1 and planted it into the tire wall right up to the cockpit, in the process tearing off both front corners and his front wing. With them went any chance of improving his place in the championship, even presuming the



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Juncos Racing team can get his car repaired in time for tomorrow's race. If so, the rules will add insult to injury by dropping him from third on the starting grid to ninth. Because he caused a red flag during qualifying, his quickest lap, set on lap 4 of the 7 he completed, will be dis-allowed and his second-fast lap, a 1:20.539, will determine his starting position.

As a result of De Phillippi's penalty, the inside of the second row will be occupied by Sage Karam's Andretti Autosport teammate Zach Veach; driving the #77 Andretti Autosport / K12 / Zakosi Data Backup Mazda, he turned his fast time – a 1:19.643 – on Lap 24. And filling in the outside of the second row will be Finnish racer Petri Suvanto, the 2011 USF2000 champion who is racing this season in Star Mazda with scholarship funding from the Mazda Road to Indy, the official driver development program of IndyCar. His quick time in the #81 Team Pelfrey / Mazda Road to Indy Mazda, a 1:19.858, came on lap 13. The top nine cars in the field all qualified within one second of each other, and the top-5 cars represent four different teams; JDC, Andretti, Juncos and Pelfrey.

Among the new drivers making their debut this weekend with a view toward a 2013 campaign is Juan Camillo Acosta, 22, of Cali, Columbia, who will be joining series regular Andres Méndez at Team GDT. Acosta will be making his first Star Mazda start ever after testing with the team on the road course at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Oct. 10-11 where he set the team's fastest lap. Interestingly enough he brings with him sponsorship from two young women's clothing lines: Studio F and Ela. He qualified 16th in the #97 Team GDT / STF Group / Studio F Mazda with a time of 1:21.352.

Another new face is Scott Anderson, the 2011 Skip Barber National Champion and MAZDASPEED Motorsports Development scholarship recipient. The Colorado native is coming off a stellar 2012 Cooper Tires USF2000 Series presented by Mazda season that saw him net third place in the overall championship. He carried that momentum into a recent test with the multi-time Star Mazda championship winning team JDC Motorsports of Lakeville, MN, and will be starting 11th on the grid with a time of 1:20.615 in his #16 JDC Motorsports / Laser Nail Centers / Neuropathy Testing Centers Mazda. This could be a particularly significant debut as Anderson is managed by F1 and IndyCar legend Derek Daly, who also manages the career of his son, Conor Daly; Daly is the 2010 Star Mazda champion and now racing GP3 in Europe.

Star Mazda on-track action at the Petit Le Mans weekend on Road Atlanta's 2.54-mile (4.088 km), 12-turn road course will continue tomorrow afternoon. The 2012 season finale of the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear is scheduled for 50 minutes and will take the green light for the series' spectacular F1-style standing start at 3:45 Friday, Oct. 19.

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, November 24. For information on international and Canadian air times, click [here](#).



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| Pos No. | Name | Best Tm | Best Speed | In Lap | Diff | Gap | Sponsor |
|---------|------------------------|----------|------------|--------|-------|-------|--|
| 1 | 19 Gabby Chaves | 1:19.279 | 115.339 | 20 | | | Claro/ Marca Colombia / Tecpro |
| 2 | 88 Sage Karam | 1:19.330 | 115.265 | 17 | 0.051 | 0.051 | Comfort Revolution |
| 3 | 77 Zach Veach | 1:19.643 | 114.812 | 24 | 0.364 | 0.119 | K12.com / Zakosi Data Backup |
| 4 | 81 Petri Suvanto | 1:19.858 | 114.503 | 13 | 0.579 | 0.215 | Mazda Road to Indy |
| 5 | 57 Diego Ferreira | 1:19.866 | 114.492 | 23 | 0.587 | 0.008 | Team Viso Venezuela |
| 6 | 9 Juan Piedrahita | 1:20.200 | 114.015 | 20 | 0.921 | 0.334 | Petrosur / Colombia es pasion / GFK Motors / Lamd Link |
| 7 | 15 Bruno Palli | 1:20.272 | 113.913 | 21 | 0.993 | 0.072 | Team Viso Venezuela |
| 8 | 83 Gustavo Menezes | 1:20.407 | 113.721 | 21 | 1.128 | 0.135 | Team Pelfrey / Safety Park / Oakley |
| 9 | 2 Connor De Phillippi | 1:20.539 | 113.535 | 3 | 0.245 | 0.194 | ModSpace Racing / One24 |
| 10 | 66 Zack Meyer | 1:20.601 | 113.448 | 22 | 1.322 | 0.194 | Partners III |
| 11 | 16 Scott Anderson | 1:20.615 | 113.428 | 21 | 1.336 | 0.014 | Laser Nail Centers / Neuropathy Testing Centers |
| 12 | 82 Ryan Tveter | 1:20.942 | 112.970 | 21 | 1.663 | 0.327 | CIMIER Swiss Watches / Motorola Mobility LLC |
| 13 | 53 Andres Mendez | 1:21.023 | 112.857 | 22 | 1.744 | 0.081 | GrupoKriterion.com / DataFile.com.co |
| 14 | 91 Ashley Freiberg | 1:21.055 | 112.812 | 21 | 1.776 | 0.032 | TRUECar.com |
| 15 | 21 Camilo Schmidt | 1:21.352 | 112.400 | 13 | 2.073 | 0.297 | |
| 16 | 97 Juan Camillo Acosta | 1:21.522 | 112.166 | 25 | 2.243 | 0.170 | STF Group / Studio F |
| 17 | 23 Walt Bowlin | 1:24.895 | 107.710 | 8 | 5.616 | 3.373 | Tampa Bay Jaw Surgery |

Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear

The Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear is a part of the [Mazda Road to Indy](http://www.mazdausa.com), the official driver development program for IndyCar. The 2012 schedule includes 17 races on 10 weekends, most with IndyCar. Rising stars from around the world are competing 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. Follow the series at <http://www.twitter.com/starmazdaseries> <http://www.facebook.com/starmazdaseries> and live timing at <http://starmazda.com/timing>

