

ATLANTIC CHAMP EDWARDS AND STAR MAZDA CHAMP CHRISTODOULOU TO RACE MAZDA RX-8 IN GRAND-AM GT CHAMPIONSHIP

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[Edwards & Christodoulou car design in Grand Am GT](#)

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IRVINE, Calif., Feb. 22, 2010 -- MAZDASPEED Motorsports Development today announced that 2009 Atlantic Championship winner John Edwards will team with 2009 Star Mazda Championship winner Adam Christodoulou in a SpeedSource-prepared Mazda RX-8 in the Grand-Am GT class, starting with next weekend's Homestead Grand Prix. This will be the first time either young driver has raced a Grand-Am GT car, and is the start of a full season program where the two will hone their skills in an unfamiliar form of racing, with the intention of helping Mazda win the 2010 Grand-Am GT class manufacturers' championship.

The RX-8 will be entered by SpeedSource/Newman Wachs Racing. Edwards won the 2009 Cooper Tires presents the Atlantic Championship powered by Mazda title with NWR, and the car will carry sponsorship from Entergy and the Nuclear Energy Industry (NEI). NEI's objective is to ensure the formation of policies that promote the beneficial uses of nuclear energy and technologies around the world. Entergy is the second largest owner and operator of U.S. nuclear energy plants. They operate 11 nuclear power plants in the NE region and SE.

The car has been sourced from Yellow Dragon Motorsports, owned by long-time Mazda club-racer Jack Smith, and will be prepared by Florida-based SpeedSource, Inc.. SpeedSource's Castrol Syntec-sponsored RX-8 won the GT class at the 2008 and 2010 runnings of the Rolex-24 at Daytona.

Pertinent quotes:

Robert Davis, Senior Vice President, Product Development and Quality, Mazda North American Operations, and the man responsible for Mazda's North American motorsports programs under the MAZDASPEED Motorsports Development banner:

"Over the past 15 years Mazda has become the vehicle of choice among grassroots road-racers. This gave Mazda an opportunity to do what no other automaker had done before: create a ladder to assist up-and-coming racers progress through the ranks. The foundation of that ladder is our 9,000 club racers and our four Mazda-exclusive series - Atlantics, Star Mazda, Skip Barber, and MX-5 Cup.

The current global economy has impacted our sport, and Mazda been affected as well. That said, our commitment to the ladder remains intact, and we are adding a new series for 2010: the Cooper Tires USF2000 Championship Powered by Mazda.

Davis, Continued:

"For 2010, two of our 2009 champions are moving up along a different path than the 2008 champions. Both John Edwards and Adam Christodoulou will be racing in the Grand-Am GT series this year, and this will enable them to add valuable closed-wheel racing experience to their resumes, similar to the opportunity we were able to offer to Jonathon Bomarito, who teamed with SpeedSource to win the 2010 Rolex 24 at Daytona."

Eddie Wachs, on his team's 2010 Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series debut:

"I am absolutely thrilled to be joining Mazda and the 2010 Rolex 24-winning team of SpeedSource for the 2010 Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car season. I am even more pleased to be joined again by our 2009 driver, John Edwards, as well as welcoming Adam (Christodoulou) to our NWR family. In working with the MAZDASPEED Motorsports Development program this past year with John, we formed a mutually beneficial relationship and have found a way to carry that over into 2010. The bar is set very high for our pair of drivers but I am confident that they will, as always, perform above even our greatest expectations. With the continued support from our sponsors including Entergy and the nuclear energy industry, we are able to make this deal possible and we can't thank them enough as well."

John Edwards, 2009 Atlantic Championship Powered by Mazda Champion:

"A lot of pieces had to be put in place to make this happen, but Mazda, Newman Wachs Racing, Entergy, and SpeedSource came together to make what will be a very competitive effort in the 2010 Grand-am season. SpeedSource has proven in their results that they are the top team in Rolex GT, and I am very excited to continue climbing the MAZDASPEED ladder. Mazda has proved once again that they strive to support young drivers. I am very thankful to Eddie Wachs and Entergy for their continuing support, and I'm eager to win some more races with them in 2010!"

Adam Christodolou, 2009 Star Mazda Championship Champion:

"After a fantastic two seasons racing in 2008 and 2009 winning two titles back to back in two different championships from around the world, I'm now being thrown my next challenge. In 2010, the MAZDASPEED

Motorsports Development program is helping me to further my career to the next level. This is a big step for me as I have never competed out of single-seater racing, I'm looking forward to getting behind the wheel and proving to everyone that I'm competitive in whichever series I race. I think it's going to be great working with John, as I know we both want the same thing: to be fast, competitive and to win races. I don't think I could have been partnered up with a better team and team mate.

Without the *MAZDASPEED* ladder and its support of young drivers, I may not have been driving this year."

Sylvain Tremblay, owner, SpeedSource:

"From victory at the Rolex 24 to this -- what an incredible month we have had! Anytime you are successful in motorsports, it is because you surround yourself with the best. Having the reigning Atlantic championship team and its driver John Edwards, along with the Champion from the Star Mazda series, Adam Christodoulou, join us in the battle for the 2010 Grand Am GT manufacturers championship, is for sure a "best case scenario". The people at Newman Wachs are incredible; they are winners and we hit it off from the first contact. This is proof-positive that Mazda's ladder works, and we are proud to help them develop young talent to the highest levels."

Jack Smith, Team Principal, Yellow Dragon Motorsports:

"Yellow Dragon Motorsports is excited to have this opportunity to support SpeedSource, Newman Wachs Racing and Mazda in fielding a third car in the Grand-Am Rolex GT series. We are proud to be included in the Mazda Motorsports family, and are glad we can assist Mazda in its quest for the manufacturer's championship in the Rolex GT series."

ABOUT MAZDA

On any given weekend, there are more Mazdas on the road-race tracks of America than any other brand of vehicle. At the track, you'll see MX-5 Miata, RX-8, MAZDA3, MAZDA6, RX-7 and other vintage Mazda models competing, because every Mazda has the Soul of a Sports Car. In fact, the largest road-racing class in the world is Spec Miata, with more than 2,500 first- and second-generation Miatas tearing up America's racetracks, making it the most-raced production car in the world. Mazda's involvement in motorsports extends to its relationship with Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca, one of the world's premier road-racing circuits, and the Skip Barber Schools for driving and racing.

Celebrating its 40th Anniversary in the United States in 2010, Mazda North American Operations is headquartered in Irvine, Calif. and oversees the sales, marketing, parts and customer service support of Mazda vehicles in the United States, Canada and Mexico through nearly 900 dealers. Operations in Canada are managed by Mazda Canada, Inc., located in Ontario; and in Mexico by Mazda Motor de Mexico in Mexico City.

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