

MAZDA ANNOUNCES 2009 SCCA PRO RACING PLAYBOY MAZDA MX-5 CUP SERIES ENHANCEMENTS

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-- Increased Purses and New Awards Highlight Changes --

February 25, 2009 (Irvine, Calif.). While the economy is making life challenging for racers at all levels, Mazda is showcasing their dedication to the MAZDASPEED Motorsports Driver Development ladder with continued support of key series, including the SCCA Pro Racing Playboy Mazda MX-5 Cup.

Mazda announced several key enhancements to the MX-5 Cup series at their annual pre-season media gathering in Irvine today.

Contingency Awards Program Increases Payout

Mazda is increasing the contingency payout for the 2009 MX-5 Cup series - the top three positions will receive an additional \$500 per event in 2009. First place in each race will now pay \$5,000, second place is good for \$3,500, and third place is now \$2,500. Prize money is paid to the top 20 finishers in each race.

Two Free Entries for those Competing in Entire Season

To encourage teams and drivers to enter and compete in all ten race events in 2009, Mazda is happy to announce an entry fee incentive. Mazda will cover the entry fee for the final two events (rounds nine and ten) at Virginia International Raceway (VIR), if that car is entered, and competes, in each of the first eight events.

New Team Championship & Rookie of the Year Awards

A new Playboy MX-5 Cup Team Championship Trophy will be awarded at the end of the 2009 season. Single and multi-car teams will have an equal shot at the championship. The championship trophy will be awarded to the team with the highest number of points at the end of the year. Total year-end points for single car teams will be calculated using total points and averaging by number of events in which the car participated.

For multi-car teams, the total year-end points will be calculated as above. Total average points for each team car will be divided by number of team cars.

In addition, a series Rookie of the Year will be recognized in 2009.

2009 TV Coverage Grows

Broadcaster Rick Benjamin's Carolinas Production Group returns as the series' exclusive television partner for 2009, producing and distributing all ten Playboy Mazda MX-5 Cup events nationally.

"We are thrilled to return as the Series' TV partner", Benjamin noted. "We have some production enhancements in development for the season and are extremely gratified at the reception we received during our first year of coverage, from competitors, fans, and the long list of national and regional sports channels that carried the Playboy Mazda MX-5 Cup in 2008." Benjamin continued, "All of our affiliates are back and we've grown the MX-5 Cup Network by another 10 million households already for the new season, adding major market affiliates in Philadelphia, Hartford/New Haven, and the Caribbean. We can't wait to kick off the new racing season this spring at Road Atlanta."

Benjamin added that the series' groundbreaking effort to create a YouTube video-on-demand channel for the Playboy Mazda MX-5 Cup was a huge hit in 2008 and will continue for 2009.

Team Quotes

Shannon McMasters - Team MER Owner: "Our outlook is great for the upcoming year, as it is for the Playboy Mazda MX-5 Cup. When other race series are shrinking and struggling, I feel 2009 could be the strongest yet for this series. With the economy as it is, people still want to race and the affordable MX-5 Cup is flourishing. Competition will be tight, the racing will be exciting and Team MER means to be a factor every time. With nearly a full driver lineup, Team MER is still looking for a few drivers to join the team with the best track record!"

Ara Malkhassian - ALARA Racing principal: "ALARA Racing is excited about the 2009 season. With both series veterans and fresh talent behind the wheel, more races, and a great schedule, we are looking forward to this season. In the face of a difficult economy, the amazing value of the Playboy Mazda MX-5 Cup series becomes even more of a draw for drivers of all levels. We are also excited about the new team championship and are looking forward to vying for it as well as having several drivers challenging for the individual championship."

Mike Jenkins - Jenkins Brothers Racing: "We are excited and looking forward to the MX-5 Cup racing. The MX-5 Cup does an excellent job of managing the car specifications and the result is some of the most competitive driving in all of auto racing. They have a great schedule lined out on some truly fantastic tracks."

Mazda is the brand of choice for road-racers across North America. More than 9,000 grassroots racers compete in various classes with the Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) and the National Auto Sport Association (NASA). Racers who are years away from earning a driver's license can now begin their professional motorsports careers in the Mazda family. A driver can begin in karts and progress through the Skip Barber series, Club Racing Formula Mazda, professional Star Mazda and finally to Formula Atlantic, all with Mazda. No other car company has ever connected the dots this way.

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 1,500 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.

Headquartered in Irvine, Calif., Mazda North American Operations 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, Canada, and in Mexico by Mazda Motor de Mexico in Mexico City.

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