

MAZDASPEED MOTORSPORTS DRIVER DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Published on 08/29/2007

Raphael Matos becomes first multi-championship example of Mazda's connect-the-dots approach
Jason Saini locks up 2007 MX-5 Cup Championship

August 23, 2007 (IRVINE, California). Earlier this month, Raphael Matos accepted a check for \$2,000,000 from Steve Johnson on behalf of the Champ Car World Series, towards a ride in the 2008 Champ Car World Series. Matos earned this check by winning the 2007 Cooper Tires Champ Car Atlantic Championship Powered by Mazda, top rung of the Mazda ladder series for open-wheel racing in North America. Matos' career has blossomed based upon talent alone, having come to America from his native Brazil, with virtually no money or racing contacts. Prior to his Atlantic Championship, Matos had won a Skip Barber Championship and the 2005 Star Mazda Championship, before graduating to the top open-wheel training series in the world.

Meanwhile at the Grand Prix of Trois-Rivières, Jason Saini scored his fifth win of the season to secure the 2007 SCCA Pro Racing SIRIUS Satellite Radio MX-5 Cup drivers championship. In 2008, Saini will advance up the sports-car ladder to race a MAZDA 6 in the 2008 SCCA Pro Racing SPEED World Challenge Touring Car Championship.

Announced earlier this year, the Mazda career ladder is designed to allow drivers like Matos and Saini to advance to the next level based on talent alone. For open-wheel racers, Mazda specifically committed to the following awards:

- One successful kart racer will participate in a full season of the BFGoodrich Skip Barber National Presented by Mazda in 2008. The 2007 season shootout will take place in Sebring, Florida, in conjunction with the Skip Barber Racing School, this coming December. Selected karting champions from the World Karting Association (WKA), the Champ Car Rotax Kart Challenge, the Snap-on Stars of Karting presented by IndyCar, and Superkarts! USA (SKUSA) will be competing.
- The 2007 Skip Barber National Champion will be racing in the 2008 Star Mazda Championship Presented by Goodyear. With four races remaining, only 41 points separate the top three drivers. The final race will be Sunday, October 7, at Virginia International Raceway.
- The 2007 Star Mazda Champion will be racing in the 2008 Cooper Tires Presents the Champ Car Atlantic Series Powered by Mazda. The first nine races have been won by six different drivers. Three races remain to determine the Champion. The Star Mazda series will conclude on Saturday, October 19, at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca in Monterey, California.

While spec series and championship awards are nothing new, Mazda is the first company to reward winning drivers with significant prizes along a logical path from karting to the Champ Cars, or from autocrossing to professional sports car racing.

"Everyone at Mazda is looking forward to seeing Raphael Matos and Jason Saini graduate to the next level in their careers" noted Robert Davis, Senior Vice President, Product Development and Quality, Mazda North American Operations. "Raphael is the first driver to have participated and won in all levels encompassed by the Mazda ladder. He started out in karts, which Mazda now supports; he graduated to the Skip Barber pro series, now presented by Mazda, and has completed two years in Star Mazda. And now, after two years in the Atlantic Championship with Mazda power, the racing world is knocking on his door." Davis continued, "Jason started out as a club racer with dreams of SPEED World Challenge, and Mazda's helping make a racing career a reality for him, too. Raphael and Jason's results speak for themselves."

In addition to the open-wheel ladder, Mazda is supporting sports-car racers with their own ladder.

- One winner of a 2007 Club Racing National Championship (in either the Sports Car Club of America or National Auto Sport Association) will be given a new MX-5 Miata and the parts to build an MX-5 Cup car for the 2008 professional series. To be eligible for the January 2008 shootout, a driver must win their 2007 national championship in a Mazda-powered car. 2006 shootout winner Andrew Caddell is currently second in points in the 2007 MX-5 Cup series, with one race remaining.
- The 2007 SCCA Pro Racing SIRIUS Satellite Radio MX-5 Cup champion will be awarded a full-season in the 2008 SCCA Pro Racing SPEED World Challenge Touring Car Championship. The 2007 MX-5 Cup season concludes on Saturday, September 15, at Miller Motorsports Park in Tooele, Utah.

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, MAZDA 3, MAZDA 6, 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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