



MAZDA PROVIDES ZOOM-ZOOM TO ROAD TO INDY INDYCAR developmental ladder to be known as Mazda Road to Indy

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ORLANDO, Fla. (Dec. 9, 2010) One of the biggest supporters of grassroots racing in America has joined forces with INDYCAR's Road to Indy as Mazda announced a multi-year partnership with the INDYCAR developmental ladder.

As the title partner of the Mazda Road to Indy, Mazda will provide scholarships to the 2011 champions of the three affiliated series – the Cooper Tires presents the USF2000 National Championship powered by Mazda, the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear and Firestone Indy Lights – to graduate to the next level of the sport.

"We want to strengthen our ladder system to further develop, reward and advance the best-of-the-best," said Randy Bernard, CEO of INDYCAR. "The Road to Indy was designed to cultivate young talent for the IZOD IndyCar Series and the Indianapolis 500. In Mazda, we've found a partner that not only has a history of nurturing such drivers, but also shares our desire to groom the future stars of INDYCAR racing through its commitment of providing driver scholarships. The addition of Mazda to the Road to Indy rounds out the formula car side of our ladder system in addition to our recently announced sprint car program."

Two new scholarships have been added to the Mazda Road to Indy program, which provides a defined path for career-minded drivers seeking to compete in the IZOD IndyCar Series and Indianapolis 500 both on and off track.

The Star Mazda Champion will receive a scholarship to compete in Firestone Indy Lights, while the Firestone Indy Lights champion will receive a scholarship to race in the IZOD IndyCar Series.

"We are currently the only governing body in motorsports that provides a clearly defined path and financial reward to elevate competitive drivers looking to reach its top level," said Tony George Jr, manager of business development, Road to Indy. "By having a partner like Mazda step up to provide scholarships, we are strengthening our ladder by allowing the opportunity for successful drivers to move to the next level based on talent, not financials."

Mazda will continue to offer a scholarship to the USF2000 National Champion to race in Star Mazda. In 2011, Sage Karam will drive a Star Mazda car for Andretti Autosport. Karam won the 2010 USF2000 National Championship as a Mazda-supported scholarship driver. This is in addition to the support Mazda provides to the BFGoodrich/Skip Barber National Presented by

Mazda, and the karting shootout that rewards a pair of Skip Barber National scholarships each year.

“Mazda is pleased to partner with INDYCAR to help develop young talent. While we are most recognized for sports cars, Mazda heritage in open wheel racing dates back to 1984. Mazda has been a partner in the Star Mazda Championship since 1990 so this is a great fit for our company, our series partners as well as the drivers and teams.” noted Robert Davis, Senior Vice President, Product Development and Quality for Mazda North American Operations, and the man responsible for the company’s North American motorsport programs under the MAZDASPEED Motorsports Development banner

In addition, Mazda will become a key partner with an increased involvement with the Mazda Road to Indy Summit held on Indianapolis 500 weekend at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Mazda’s brand will be featured prominently in several other promotional opportunities at INDYCAR events and in recaps featuring the Mazda Road to Indy series during IZOD IndyCar Series events.

“When we launched the MAZDASPEED Motorsports Ladder in 2006, we did so with the goal of helping drivers move up the ranks. Success in motorsports is dependent upon teaming up with like-minded people,” said John Doonan, MAZDASPEED team business development manager. “By blending the open-wheel side of our ladder with the Road to Indy we are making it much more straightforward for drivers to move up in a logical manner. Just this past weekend at Mazda Raceway, we hosted the Skip Barber karting shootout and have rewarded Danilo Estrela and Trent Hindman with rides in the 2011 BFGoodrich/Skip Barber National Presented by Mazda. It is easy to see how Danilo and Trent can now imagine a clear path from karts through Skip Barber, USF2000, Star Mazda, Firestone Indy Lights, and finally the IZOD Indycar series. That will be quite the journey.”

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 INDYCAR, Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca, one of the world’s premier road-racing circuits, and the Skip Barber Schools for driving and racing.