



2007 Star Mazda Championship Overview

Formula Mazda was created in 1991 by Gary Rodrigues, an engineer/pilot/racing driver and former General Manager of Ferrari North America. The series was designed to create an affordable form of open wheel racing for enthusiasts and a step up for drivers looking to build a career in the sport.

The Star Mazda Championship has become the college baseball of open-wheel racing, an exciting, competitive and well-established training ground for future stars of the sport. Recent alumni of the Star Mazda Championship include such top open-wheel racers as Champ Car star Graham Rahal, IRL standout Marco Andretti and American F1 driver Scott Speed. Also on the list is Michael McDowell, the 2004 Star Mazda champion who has raced Champ Cars, Daytona Prototypes and is now battling to become the ARCA stock car champion in his rookie year. And the 2005 Star Mazda Champion, Raphael Matos, graduated via the Mazda motorsports ladder to the Champ Car Atlantic series, won the championship this year and will move up to Champ Car in 2008.

All the drivers in the 12-race 2007 Star Mazda Championship are racing identical high-tech open-wheel cars that feature a carbon fiber chassis, fully-adjustable suspension and a sequential 6-speed gearbox. Powering all of the Star Mazda race cars is Mazda's legendary rotary engine that produces 240 horsepower, top speeds of 150 mph and 0 to 60 mph acceleration of 2.4 seconds. This engine is so reliable that it can last an entire racing season without a re-build, helping to keep the cost of racing in Star Mazda down to a fraction of the budget required to compete in any other open wheel series in the U.S. or Europe.

The Star Mazda Championship is now a major step on the Mazda 'motorsports ladder,' a unique scholarship program that reaches all the way from karting to Champ Car. The winner of a shootout among 2007 karting champions will get a scholarship in the 2008 Skip Barber series, while the Skip Barber champion moves up to Star Mazda. The Star Mazda champion moves up to the Champ Car Atlantic Series Powered by Mazda and the Atlantic champion gets \$2 million toward a Champ Car drive.

The Star Mazda Championship winner not only gets the Atlantic sponsorship worth \$750,000, they also receive \$100,000 for winning the championship. The series' 'Rookie of the Year' award is worth \$10,000 and prize money is paid down through the field to 15th place, a total -- with contingency awards from participating suppliers such as VP Fuels, Performance Friction and Staubli -- approaching \$1.5 million.

Drivers in the series may also pursue any one of six divisional championships based on geographically determined schedules (east, west, central, southwest, southeast and northwest) in addition to the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear. Formula Mazda race cars may be seen at amateur and club racing events; it is eligible for Regional and National championship competition in the Sports Car Club of America's Formula Mazda Class. In a typical season, Formula Mazdas will appear in over 150 pro or amateur races in North America.

