



At the Monterey Sports Car Championships / Oct. 18 - 20

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## LAST CHANCE TO SHINE



- This is the Round Twelve finale of the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear. The 45-minute race begins at 12:30 pm, Saturday, Oct. 20. SPEED Channel will air the race in a 1-hour broadcast at 3:30 pm ET Saturday, October 27.
- The 2007 Star Mazda Championship was won by rookie Dane Cameron in Round Eleven at Road Atlanta on Oct. 5. He is only the second rookie in the 17 year history of the series to win the championship. Thanks to the Mazda Motorsport Ladder program, he will move up to the Cooper Tires Presents the Champ Car Atlantic Championship Powered by Mazda in 2008. He will drive for the 2007 Atlantic champion Serra Sierra team.
- Also as part of the Mazda Motorsports Ladder program, Joel Miller, winner of the 2007 BF Goodrich/Skip Barber National Championship Presented by Mazda, will receive a full-season sponsorship to race in the 2008 Star Mazda Championship. He has already tested with a top team in the series.
- The Star Mazda Championship is one of the richest, most successful and prolific driver development series in all of auto racing. The combined value of various prizes approaches \$1.5 million in value; graduates of the series have gone on to Formula One, Champ Car, the Indy Racing League and the Grand-Am Rolex Series.



With the Round Twelve season finale scheduled to take the green flag at 12:30 pm Saturday afternoon at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca, this is the last chance to shine this season for the rising open-wheel racing stars of the 2007 Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear.



Two of the series' three championships were clinched in Round Eleven at Road Atlanta on October 5. Dane Cameron, a native of Sonoma, California who turned 19 on Thursday, became only the second rookie in the 17-year history of the Star Mazda Championship to win both the title and Rookie of the Year award in their first season.

His 2007 record, so far, in the #19 JDC Motorsports/Finlay Motorsports Mazda, is three wins, five pole positions, four podium finishes and two top-5 finishes. He has finished out of the top-5 only twice so far this year. As a result, courtesy of the unique Mazda Motorsports Ladder program, Cameron will move up to the Cooper Tires Presents the Champ Car Atlantic Championship Powered by Mazda in 2008. He will race for the Sierra Sierra/ProWorks team, winners of the 2007 championship, with sponsorship from Mazda.

In the Masters Series, a championship-within-a-championship for drivers aged 45 and over, Steve Hickham of Corpus Christi, Texas, clinched the title with a 2<sup>nd</sup>-in-class/13<sup>th</sup>-overall finish. Driving the #17 Maxwell Racing/HB Turbo Mazda, Hickham's 2007 Star Mazda record includes five class wins and five podium finishes. The Expert Series for drivers aged 30 to 44, will be settled this weekend.

The fact that the championship has been won means that the drivers this weekend have been relieved of considerable inhibiting pressures and what fans will be seeing is open wheel racing at its most exuberant, the high-speed equivalent of hand-to-hand combat for the final honors available – winner of the last race of the season, and 2<sup>nd</sup>- and 3<sup>rd</sup>-place in the championship.

Top contenders for victory this weekend, in addition to Dane Cameron, include Australian racer James Davison, driver of the #7 Velocity Motorsports/Easternats Mazda. Davison, currently second in the championship with 352 points, has had a somewhat controversial season, crossing the finish line first in three races but having two victories taken away due to on-track rules violations. His victory in Round Ten at Mosport stands, however, and his record also includes three pole positions, one podium and five top-5 finishes. He finished 5<sup>th</sup> in Round Eleven at Road Atlanta.

Another contender for victory and a top-3 ranking in the championship is Ron White, of Santa Clara, California. He changed teams at the halfway point of the season and responded by scoring two victories in a row, at Road America and Trois Rivières, in the #69 Maxwell Racing/Maxwell Paper Mazda... but his momentum evaporated with a practice crash at Mosport and a 17<sup>th</sup>-place finish. In yet another dramatic twist, his relationship with the Maxwell team has ended and he is running the final two races on his own. This is his second season in the Star Mazda Championship (he won three races in a row in 2006) and he stands third in the points with 343. He finished 6<sup>th</sup> at Road Atlanta.

And Vancouver's Lorenzo Mandarino, driver of the #23 Newway Forming/Team G.Fro Mazda, brought his victory total for the year to two win a win at Road Atlanta and is a prime candidate to repeat at Laguna Seca. He has scored one podium finish and two top-5s, but a number of out-of-the-money results has taken its toll and he stands 7<sup>th</sup> in the championship with 311 points.

Other top contenders include the remainder of the podium at Road Atlanta, notably Quebec racer Devin Cunningham who finished 2<sup>nd</sup>. He won the Discovery Channel's 'Star Racer' competition in 2006, and is racing his prize in 2007 – the #33 Discovery Channel/SH Karting Mazda fielded by AIM Autosport. He won Round Five of the Star Mazda Championship at Portland and finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in Toronto but difficulties in several other races have relegated him, currently, to 4<sup>th</sup> in the championship with 317 points.



Finishing third at Road Atlanta was newly-emerging talent Alex Ardoin of Lafayette, Louisiana, driver of the #51 Mundill/Oral and Facial Surgery Center Mazda. He has two podium finishes to his credit this year, and four top-10 finishes, but his sliding sideways driving style is exhilarating to watch. He is 8<sup>th</sup> in the championship with 301 points.

Other driver to keep an eye on include Jonathan Goring, winner of Round Six at Cleveland in the #14 Andersen Racing/Skip Barber Racing Mazda and Nick Hays driving the #37 JDC Motorsports/ Quantum Sphere Mazda as well as Toronto's Marco Di Leo (who won the season-opener at Sebring) in the #21 Maxwell Paper/Nugget Mazda.

The Star Mazda Championship also has categories for more experienced racers in whom the competitive fire still burns brightly. Top competitors in the Expert Series (drivers aged 30 to 44) include Tony Rivera (#52 Mundill Racing Mazda), who leads the points battle with four class wins, Dan Tomlin III (#56 Team Tomlin Mazda) with one class win and seven top-3 in class finishes, Phil Fogg, Jr. (#29 Northwest Autosport/Consus Health Services Mazda) and Road Atlanta class winner Richard Zober (#66 Comprint Motorsports/Zober Industries Mazda)

Master Series competitors include class champion Steve Hickham (#17 Maxwell Racing/HB Turbo Mazda), Dan Tomlin Jr. (father of Expert Series driver Dan Tomlin III and driver of the #58 Team Tomlin Mazda) and Gerry Kraut (#55 JDC Motorsports/Dougherty & Co. Mazda), who has four class wins this year, including Road Atlanta.

While the Expert and Master drivers run for love of the speed and competition, for the younger drivers the Star Mazda Championship is the college football of open-wheel racing, an exciting, competitive and well-established training ground for future stars of the sport. Alumni of the Star Mazda Championship include such top open-wheel racers as Champ Car star Graham Rahal, IRL standout Marco Andretti and America's most recent Formula One driver Scott Speed.

Also on the list of graduates is Michael McDowell, the 2004 Star Mazda champion who has raced Champ Cars, Daytona Prototypes and has just completed a star-making rookie season in the RE/MAX ARCA series on his way up the NASCAR ladder. And 2005 Star Mazda Champion Raphael Matos, who graduated via the Mazda Motorsports Ladder to the Champ Car Atlantic series in 2006, won the championship this year and will move up to Champ Car in 2008.

And here's the story on what the latest pride of young lions are all fighting for; forty years ago, on May 31, 1967, Mazda introduced the first street car with a rotary engine, the Cosmo Sport. Since then, they've built two million rotary-engined vehicles and the company has built its very identity on the idea of Zoom-Zoom and every vehicle they produce having the soul of a sports car.

In pursuit of that ideal, the company has created the unique Mazda Motorsports Ladder 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, provided by Champ Car, toward a Champ Car drive.



So they're all racing for a dream, and the opportunity of a lifetime. The series champion not only gets the full-season Atlantic sponsorship, he also receives \$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 15<sup>th</sup> place, a total -- with contingency awards from participating suppliers such as Goodyear, BBS Wheels, Quartermaster Clutches, VP Fuels, Performance Friction Brakes and Staubli Dry Break Systems -- approaching \$1.5 million in 2007.

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 'Renesis' rotary engine that produces 240 horsepower, top speeds of over 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 comparable open wheel series in the U.S. or Europe.

On-track action at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca begins with testing sessions on Thursday, October 18 and a pair of timed practice sessions on Friday, October 19. Qualifying to set the starting grid for the race will take place from 8:00 am to 8:30 am Saturday, October 20. The 45-minute Round Twelve season finale of the 2007 Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear will take the green flag at 12:30 pm Saturday.

Star Mazda races are broadcast on the SPEED Channel, with the Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca event scheduled to air on Saturday, October 27 at 3:30 pm. The race will be re-broadcast on Monday, October 29<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 pm and again at 4:00 am. All times are ET. To confirm this air time and find out when future Star Mazda races will air, log on to [www.speedtv.com/programs](http://www.speedtv.com/programs).

For more information on the Star Mazda Championship and its drivers, as well as the Mazda Motorsports ladder system, please visit [www.starmazda.com](http://www.starmazda.com) and [www.mazdausa.com](http://www.mazdausa.com).

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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.

For more information on the various Mazda spec series, visit:

[www.champcaratlantic.com](http://www.champcaratlantic.com)

[www.starmazda.com](http://www.starmazda.com)

[www.skipbarber.com](http://www.skipbarber.com)

[www.mx-5cup.com](http://www.mx-5cup.com)

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