GLENN MCGEE GETS SIDEWAYS WITH HIS $100,000 MAZDA SCHOLARSHIP

MCGEE TO COMPETE WITH SICK SIDEWAYS IN 2016 BATTERY TENDER GLOBAL MAZDA MX-5 CUP PRESENTED BY BFGOODRICH TIRES

IRVINE, Calif. (April 22, 2016) – Mazda Motorsports is pleased to announce that professional gamer, turned professional race car driver, Glenn McGee has signed with Sick Sideways Racing, a championship winning team, to contest the 2016 Battery Tender Global Mazda MX-5 Cup Series presented by BFGoodrich Tires.

Described by many in the gaming culture as an “Alien,” [a term for simulation drivers with seemingly in-human speed.] McGee made history in 2015 as the first driver from the virtual-world to win the Mazda Road to 24 Shootout (#MRT24), earning his entry into the Shootout as a world champion representative from iRacing.com’s online motorsports simulation service. Awards from the competition included a $100,000 Mazda scholarship to support up-and-coming drivers and McGee will be applying it towards his professional debut in the series.

After winning the Battery Tender MX-5 Cup title last year, Sick Sideways Racing will enter 2016 as series champions looking to repeat its success with increased resources, staff, and a strong driver line-up that includes the Mazda scholarship driver.

“I’ve been a long-time fan of the Mazda MX-5 Cup series and of Sick Sideways and now I’m racing with them in the series. It’s just crazy,” exclaimed McGee. “I’m just amazed at the place I find myself; it’s been a dream of mine and many sim-racers across the globe to have our virtual champions recognized and ‘go pro.’ Thanks to Mazda’s innovative nature, we can see that dream come alive! I never imagined I’d be the one doing it. This will be a development year for me as I transition from the virtual-world. I want to grow as much as possible towards becoming an elite athlete with Mazda as its first sim-to-pro driver and prove to the world that sim-racing is a legitimate talent pool. For that, I need a team that can not only give me a competitive car, but the staff, resources, and culture to work in concert with Mazda in my development. Beyond being proven champions, Sick Sideways has these attributes, a history of winning, and a stable of fast drivers to learn from.”

“We are really happy to have someone with Glenn’s talent and potential join us,” said Sick Sideways’ Team Principal and 2015 MX-5 Cup champion John Dean. “A lot of pro drivers in our series have used iRacing’s software to train for each race, but this is the first time seeing it work the other direction, with Mazda pulling the world’s top simulator drivers to place them in real competition,” Dean continued. “It’s an interesting concept, but we’ve already been very impressed with his out-of-the-box pace, willingness to learn, and the extra sweat equity he is putting in to add value to our team and partners. I think he’ll be surprising a lot of people this year and we are very happy to invest in his development.”

John Doonan, director of motorsports, Mazda North American Operations noted that “The Mazda Road to 24 has introduced us to racers from a wide variety of backgrounds. We were obviously impressed with how Glenn approached our shootout. We expect his success will encourage other iRacers to start racing with Mazda.”

The MX-5 Cup is the signature series for the Mazda Road to 24 (#MRT24), the sports car counterpart to the Mazda Road to Indy (#MRTI). The MX-5 Cup champion earns a $200,000 scholarship to further their racing career. On both paths, Mazda-powered champions earn a Mazda scholarship to advance their career, either toward a goal in the IMSA Mazda Prototype (#MRT24) or the IndyCar Indy Lights (#MRTI) car.

The 2016 MX-5 Cup season will feature the all-new fourth generation Mazda MX-5 Miata. For the first time, Mazda has commissioned complete turnkey racecars, ensuring all cars are as close to identical as possible, and all to ensure the best drivers rise to the top. The first orders for the new racecar were accepted starting on October 1, 2015, and within the first 36 hours after the announcement, more than 40 racers placed $10,000 deposits for the $53,000 race car. More than 90 deposits have now been accepted, with more than 60 cars delivered to date. Information on the car is online at www.mazdamotorsports.com

The MX-5 Cup season consists of six double-header race weekends.

Rounds	Date	Venue	Racing With
1-2	April 28 – May 1	Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca	IMSA

3-4	May 13-15	Watkins Glen International Raceway	Trans Am
5-6	June 17-19	Road America	SCCA
7-8	July 8-10	Canadian Tire Motorsport Park	IMSA
9-10	August 26-28	VIRginia International Raceway	IMSA
11-12	Sept 28-30	Road Atlanta	IMSA

About Mazda Motorsports

Mazda Motorsports boasts the most comprehensive auto racing development ladder system of any auto manufacturer in the world. The Mazda Road to 24 program offers a number of scholarships to advance drivers up the sports car racing ladder, beginning with the Global MX-5 Cup series and culminating with the Mazda Prototype team. The Mazda Road to Indy is a similar program that includes Mazda-powered categories of USF2000, Pro Mazda and Indy Lights. In grassroots road racing, more Mazdas race on any given weekend in North America than any other manufacturer. Mazda is also the title sponsor of the renowned Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca in Monterey, Calif. Follow all of the latest news at MazdaMotorsports.com, @MazdaRacing on Twitter, and MazdaMotorsports on Instagram and Facebook.

Mazda North American Operations is headquartered in Irvine, Calif., and oversees the sales, marketing, parts and customer service support of Mazda vehicles in the United States and Mexico through nearly 700 dealers. Operations in Mexico are managed by Mazda Motor de Mexico in Mexico City. For more information on Mazda vehicles, including photography and B-roll, please visit the online Mazda media center at www.mazdausamedia.com.

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