ROOKIE MARK DRENNAN TAKES THE WIN IN WET AND WILD WATKINS GLEN MAZDA MX-5 CUP RACE

SPEC MIATA CHAMPION SCORES HIS FIRST SERIES WIN IN THE BATTERY TENDER GLOBAL MAZDA MX-5 CUP PRESENTED BY BFGOODRICH TIRES

WATKINS GLEN, NY (May 14, 2016) – Thirty-nine cars took to the Watkins Glen International circuit on Saturday afternoon for the first professional race at the newly repaved track in pouring rain. Series Rookie, Mark Drennan, used his Spec Miata experience and his confidence in the BFGoodrich rain tires to score the win after starting 12th and taking the lead just four corners from the checkered flag. It was also the first series win for Winding Road Team TFB.

Accompanied with 25 mph winds, Saturday conditions were far from ideal with qualifying being cut short due to weather. As a result, the grid for race one was set based on championship points standings. Mazda Road to 24 Scholarship driver John Dean II (No. 16 Sick Sideways Racing) began the race in pole position.

Due to the changing track conditions with a storm front moving through during the race, drivers had a hard time finding their footing. Racers only had 14 minutes of racing under green due to a few incidents on track. Rookie Mark Drennan (No. 12 WindingRoadRacing.com/TFB Performance) from San Jose, California took the win in dramatic fashion in the last lap due to an incident between Mazda Road to 24 Scholarship drivers Robby Foley (No. 63 Atlanta Motorsports Group) and John Dean II.

Podium Performances: Mark Drennan (No. 12 WindingRoadRacing.com/TFB Performance) from San Jose, California won by 0.152 seconds over Dean Copeland (No. 7 Copeland Motorsports) from Bowie, Maryland. Completing the podium was Drake Kemper (No. 99 Royal Rugby/Sick Sideways Racing) from Thermal, California.

How did they do it? Mark Drennan started in 12th and made steady progress towards the front, racing for third place with two laps to go. A penultimate lap incident between leaders Robby Foley and John Dean II, turned the battle for third into a battle for the win.

Who were the hard chargers? Nikko Reger (No.01 Copeland Motorsports) from Houston, Texas took the Battery Tender Hard Charger $1,000 award with 22 positions gained, moving from a 34th place starting position to 12th place finish.

Drake Kemper (No. 99 Royal Rugby/Sick Sideways Racing) recorded the fastest race lap (2:24.872) on his way to finishing third.

Matt Fassnacht (No 9 ALARA Racing Monticello Motor Club) started 27th and moved up to eighth.

Quotes:

Mark Drennan: “It feels amazing. I’ve been working towards this for a long time and I’m so happy to finally have it come true. I’ve had a number of disappointments from the SCCA Runoffs to some challenges at the season opener at Mazda Raceway, so this is great redemption. The talent of the field in the Battery Tender Global MX-5 Cup presented by BFGoodrich Tires is much greater and deeper than my SCCA Spec Miata races and I knew it was going to be tough. When I saw the weather coming in at the start of the race, I knew we had to have some rain tires on the car and it was the right call. The BFGoodrich rain tires were incredible and they are night and day compared to even the best rain tires I’ve driven.”

Dean Copeland raved about the tires, “The BFG rain tires were amazing. Mind blowing in fact. They were as good at the end of the race as the beginning.”

How did the rookies fare? Rookie Mark Drennan took the win. Other notable rookie finishes include Chris Stone in fourth, Matt Fassnacht in eighth, and Kenny Murillo in tenth.

What’s next: Round four of the MX-5 Cup will be at Watkins Glen at 11 a.m. on Sunday, May 15, 2016.

About the MX-5 Cup

The MX-5 Cup is the signature spec series for the Mazda Road to 24 (#MRT24), the sports car counterpart to the Mazda Road to Indy (#MRTI). On both paths, Mazda-powered champions earn a Mazda scholarship to advance their career. The MX-5 Cup champion earns a $200,000 scholarship.

The 2016 season features the all-new fourth generation Mazda MX-5 Miata. For the first time, Mazda has commissioned complete turnkey race cars, with the goal that all cars are as close to identical as possible, ensuring the best drivers rise to the top. Over 60 of the $53,000 race cars have been delivered to date. Information on the car is online at www.mazdamotorsports.com.

About SCCA Pro Racing

SCCA Pro Racing Ltd. is a wholly owned subsidiary of Sports Car Club of America, Inc.—a 60,000-member organization dedicated to motorsports events. SCCA Pro Racing provides full-service organization, operation and sanction for numerous professional racing series, documented within this website. Each series holds events on high-profile race weekends and annually crowns Champions. Known for its operational expertise, SCCA Pro Racing has been the choice of privately owned racing series, as well as those promoted by automobile manufacturers, to conduct all facets of their Championships.

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