MAZDA MX-5 CUP: NIKKO REGER AND MARK DRENNAN WIN IN CANADA

CANADIAN TIRE MOTORSPORT PARK ROUNDS OF BATTERY TENDER GLOBAL MAZDA MX-5 CUP PRESENTED BY BFGOODRICH TIRES YIELDS NEW POINTS LEADER - NATHANIEL SPARKS

BOWMANVILLE, Ontario, Canada (July 10, 2016) – The Battery Tender Global Mazda MX-5 Cup presented by BFGoodrich Tires ventured North of the border to Canadian Tire Motorsport Park (CTMP) for another doubleheader race weekend. Two exciting races resulted in a shakeup in the hunt for the $200,000 Mazda Road to 24 championship scholarship. Entering the weekend, Dean Copeland (No. 7 Copeland Motorsports) led the points but because of a penalty in race 1, Nathanial Sparks (No. 8 Sick Sideways) moved to the top of the standings despite missing a podium finish in both races. Sparks would exit the weekend with a 27 point lead.

The two race winners showcased the range of experience and age, as 18-year-old Nikko Reger (No. 01 Copeland Motorsports) from Houston Texas and 50-year-old Mark Drennan (Winding Road Team TFB) from San Jose, California won their respective races.

Race Recaps

The Saturday race was held in early evening with a 6:15 p.m. start time. The first race included a thrilling battle in the front pack with more than a dozen racers contending for a podium finish. After the rain cleared and the dust settled, 18-year-old Nikko Reger scored the win, his third of the season

The green flag dropped in dry conditions, but a cloudburst over turns five and six made for more treacherous conditions as the track was sunny and bone dry in areas and soaking wet in others.

The first half of the race involved a fierce battle with Justin Piscitell (No. 13 ALARA Racing) Nikko Reger, Nathanial Sparks, and Ara Malkhassian (No. 11 ALARA Racing). All drivers exchanged positions ahead of the freight train of cars. The race ran green until lap 14 when Marco Gallaher had a single car accident. Gallaher was uninjured.

With 12 minutes remaining, the race restarted with a localized yellow in turn 5. Nikko Reger stretched his lead to one second over a seven car battle for second .

With multiple lead changes in the race, Reger's win was hard fought and well deserved.

The Sunday afternoon race was another action packed sprint race that was cut short after 35 minutes. Nathanial Sparks who started in the front row led the first five laps before Mark Drennan moved overtook the lead. Drennan led a nine car pack when the race was red flagged on lap 12 due an accident between Matt Fassnacht (No. 9 ALARA Racing), Nick Evancich (No. 41 Sick Sideways), and Nikko Reger. All drivers were uninjured. The win marked Drennan's second win of the season and moves him into seventh in overall points and first among the series rookies.

Podium performances: Joining Reger on the Saturday podium was Tim Barber (No. 22 Winding Road Team TFB) in second and John Dean II (No. 16 Sick Sideways) in third. On Sunday, Rookie Mark Drennan took the win with John Dean II in second and Ara Malkhassian (No. 11 ALARA Racing) in third.

Pole Position: The first race of the weekend had a surprise pole winner with former MX-5 Cup racer Justin Piscitell making a return to the series as a substitute driver in the #13 ALARA Racing MX-5. Piscitell replaced Brent Mosing in the first race of the weekend due to a scheduling conflict, however Mosing jumped back into the seat in the Sunday race. Piscitell barely missed the MX-5 Cup track record on challenging conditions due to an overnight storm and also managed to score the pole for the Sunday race, but handed the car over to Mosing. The driver change put Mosing in the back of the field.

Fast Laps: Drake Kemper (No. 99 Sick Sideways) set the fastest race lap in the Saturday race while Nikko Reger set the track race lap record with a time of 1:35.602.

How close was it? 17 minutes into the first race, the lead battle of 18 cars was covered by just five seconds.

Who were the Battery Tender Hard Charger Winners?

On Saturday, Nick Bruni (No. 76 MEATHEAD Racing) moved from 24th to 11th position to score the Battery Tender Hard Charger Award. On Sunday, the big mover was Marco Gallaher (No. 7 Winding Road Team TFB) moving up ten positions from 35th to 25th position.

Results can be found on www.MX-5Cup.com

Quotes:

Nikko Reger: “The race was fantastic, full of adverse weather, heated on-track battles, and a whole lot of fun. Thanks to everybody I raced alongside today for driving clean Thankfully, I finished without contact. Thanks to the phenomenal guys at Copeland Motorsports for the more than capable car and the support both on and off-track, I couldn’t accomplish what I have without their exceptional work. The race couldn’t have gone any better, thanks to everyone involved, BFG, Battery Tender, and Mazda.”

Mark Drennan: “It’s been a tough season with some unfortunate accidents but this is an amazing day. I really love this track. I started from third and was able to move up front. I think Nikko caught second gear instead of fourth in turn nine and spun his car. I was able to go around him. After that, I kept my head down and hoped that the train wouldn’t pass me in the back straight. It feels amazing to be the Rookie Points leader after today’s win and I’m looking forward to VIR and repeating the win. ”

Nathanial Sparks: “It feels pretty good to be leading the (overall) points this year especially after all the things that have been happening this year. I haven’t won a race yet. I’ve just been finishing well. I didn’t have an exciting weekend here but I came away with the points lead and that’s something I’m really excited about for myself and my Sick Sideways team.

Who is leading the championship after eight of 12 races?

The top five overall in points are:				
1	Nathanial Sparks	Spanish Fort, AL	Sick Sideways	383
2	Ara Malkhassian	Houston, TX	ALARA Racing	356
3	Dean Copeland	Bowie, MD	Copeland Motorsports	348
4	Drake Kemper	Thermal, CA	Sick Sideways	307
5	Nikko Reger	Sebring, FL	Sick Sideways	305
The top three rookies are:				
1	Mark Drennan	San Jose, CA	Winding Road Team TFB	282
2	Chris Stone	Salt Lake City, UT	ALARA Racing	282
3	Glenn McGee	Tampa, FL	Sick Sideways	221

What’s next: Rounds nine and ten of the 12-race championship will be held at VIRginia International Raceway, on August 26-28, 2016 in conjunction with the Michelin GT Challenge IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship weekend. http://virnow.com/events/michelin-gt-challenge/

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 80 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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