MAZDA ANNOUNCES U.S. DRIVERS FOR INAUGURAL MAZDA MX-5 CUP GLOBAL INVITATIONAL

TEN AMERICAN RACERS SEEK TO BE CROWNED GLOBAL CHAMPION

IRVINE, Calif. (August 15, 2016) – Mazda is excited to announce the ten drivers representing the United States at the Global Mazda MX-5 Cup Invitational taking place at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca in Monterey, California. The select group of U.S. drivers are a diverse unit comprised of past champions, rookies, teenagers and retired executives. Racers will compete with others from across the globe in two non-points, invitation-only races on September 9-11, 2016 as part of a Mazda-exclusive weekend that features both the Mazda Road to Indy and the Mazda Road to 24.

THE DRIVERS REPRESENTING THE UNITED STATES ARE THE FOLLOWING:

John Dean II, Sick Sideways Racing, Sebring, Florida
John Dean II is the defending Battery Tender MX-5 Cup Champion. His championship earned him a Mazda Road to 24 scholarship valued at $200,000 and the right to race in a Mazda Soul Red machine. John is the winningest racer in MX-5 Cup history. He has earned more pole positions and has led more laps than any other driver in the first eight races of 2016. In addition to being a driver, John is the owner of Sick Sideways Racing.

Mark Drennan, Winding Road Team TFB, San Jose, California
Mark Drennan currently sits as the top Rookie in points this season, amassing multiple podium finishes and two wins; he is seventh overall in points. Mark earned a reputation as being the racer to beat in the fierce world of Spec Miata with multiple championships. He is a corporate recruitment executive taking a sabbatical to pursue his racing dream full-time.

Robby Foley, Atlanta Motorsports Group, Randolph, New Jersey
Robby Foley won last year's Skip Barber *MAZDASPEED* Pro Challenge which earned him a Mazda Road to 24 scholarship valued at $100,000 and the right to race in a Mazda Soul Red machine. Robby has scored two race wins so far in 2016. He balances his racing career while being a full-time mechanical engineering student at Auburn University.

Ara Malkhassian, ALARA Racing, Houston, Texas
Ara Makhassian has been a competitor and team owner (ALARA Racing) in the series since its inception in 2006. He currently holds the record for most races started and has scored multiple race wins. Drivers for ALARA Racing have won the series championship in both 2013 and 2014. Ara currently sits in second in the 2016 Championship points standings. ALARA stands for Al+Ara for Alison and Ara Malkhassian, the husband and wife team owners.

Glenn McGee, Sick Sideways Racing, Tampa, Florida
Glenn McGee began his racing journey in front of a computer screen. In the 2015 iRacing Mazda MX-5 Cup, McGee tied for the most poles, most wins, and most world record times, becoming one of two iRacing's Mazda MX-5 Cup champion representatives in the 2015 Mazda's Road to 24 Shootout. Glenn left the shootout with the $100,000 Mazda Road to 24 Scholarship.

Sarah Montgomery, ALARA Racing, Lafayette, Louisiana
Sarah Montgomery is a recent college graduate and is the only competitor in the 2016 Battery MX-5 Cup sponsored by a city, her hometown of Lafayette, Louisana. She's been racing for a decade and started in dirt oval go karts when she was 10 before moving into Spec Miata. After four years of competing in Spec Miata, she moved to the Skip Barber *MAZDASPEED* Pro Challenge in 2014. Since 2015, she has been racing with ALARA Racing in MX-5 Cup.

Tim Probert, ALARA Racing, Houston, Texas
Tim Probert has been racing in MX-5 Cup since the first season, always with ALARA Racing. In addition to MX-5 Cup, Tim races in the Continental Tire SportsCar Challenge. He is a retired Fortune 500 corporate executive. Tim was born in the U.K, but calls Houston his home now.

Nathanial Sparks, Sick Sideways Racing
Nathanial Sparks has been "Mr. Consistency" in 2016 to lead the championship after eight of 12 races having scored multiple podium finishes. Nathanial started racing in late 2008 and quickly became one of the top Teen Mazda Challenge Spec Miata racers. He is a two-time Mazda Road to 24 Shootout Finalist. Nathanial joined MX-5 Cup as an independent team before joining

Sick Sideways Racing.

Chris Stone, ALARA Racing, Salt Lake City, Utah
Chris Stone currently sits in second of the Rookie point standings behind Mark Drennan. Chris' consistent and clean racing has allowed for a successful rookie year in the series. Chris started his racing career at age six in motorcycle and progressed to karts. Away from the track, Chris is the operations manager for LYFE Motorsports.

Aurora Straus, McCumbee-McAleer Racing, Cold Springs, New York
Aurora Straus is competing in her second season in MX-5 Cup with support from the Monticello Motor Club. When not racing, Aurora is a talented high school student who is looking to study both engineering and English in college. Among her non-driving talents, she is a singer and songwriter.

The Global Competitors: The nine international racers, selected and hosted by Mazda affiliates in Japan, Europe, and Australia, are as follows:

Oliver Allwood – United Kingdom
Erik Blixit – Sweden
Anthony Crawford – Australia
Kamil Franczak – Poland
Gabriele Gardel – Switzerland
Enami Kitahira – Japan
Moritz Kranz – Germany
Mike Sinclair – Australia
Yuui Tsutsumi – Japan

About MX-5 Cup

The MX-5 Cup race cars start as complete MX-5 road cars from the Mazda Hiroshima, Japan factory before being transported to engineering development partner Long Road Racing in Statesville, North Carolina where they are produced into a race car. The process includes disassembly of the production car, welding and paint of a full roll cage and interior, and assembly of the race car, adding more than 250 motorsports-specific parts. Other components of the car, including the Mazda SKYACTIV 2.0 liter engine are sealed to ensure even competition and a cost-effective platform.

The Battery Tender Global Mazda MX-5 Cup presented by BFGoodrich Tires 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.

Information on the car is online at www.mazdamotorsports.com.

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.

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