

DRIVING MATTERS + VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS = MAZDA MX-5 CUP @ VIR

BATTERY TENDER GLOBAL MAZDA MX-5 CUP PRESENTED BY BFGOODRICH TIRES HEADS TO THE FRESHLY REPAVED VIRGINIA INTERNATIONAL RACEWAY THIS WEEKEND

ALTON, Virginia (August 24, 2016) – The Battery Tender Global Mazda MX-5 Cup presented by BFGoodrich Tires enters the final third of the \$200,000 chase for the 2016 Mazda Road to 24 Scholarship this weekend at VIRginia International Raceway (VIR). This will be the first visit for the MX-5 Cup to VIR since 2012.

Nathanial Sparks, a native of Spanish Fork, Alabama (No. 8 Sick Sideways), moved to the top of the standings after the last doubleheader weekend. Sparks has a 27-point lead due to his amazing consistency of podium finishes with six top-five finishes in the first eight races.

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

The races will be broadcast live on www.MazdaLive.com and will include commentary from the Radio Le Mans team.

Rounds 9 and 10 Live Stream Schedule:

6:15 p.m. (Eastern) Saturday, August 27, 2016 VIRginia International Raceway – Race #1

8:45 a.m. (Eastern) Sunday, August 28, 2016 VIRginia International Raceway – Race #2

Weekend story leads:

A recent repaving of the track promises close action and new track records for the class. Among those teams with strong local connections to VIR are MEATHEAD Racing, and McCumbee McAleer Racing.

Sam Barnett, a Virginia Tech alumnus, will be racing at his home track with MEATHEAD Racing at VIR. [MEATHEAD Racing](#) will be collecting new books and toys during the race weekend to fill Jake’s Toy Box within Dr. Bear’s Closet at Children’s National in Washington, D.C. Jake’s Toy Box was created by MEATHEAD Racing founder [Mike Collins](#) and his wife Wendy in honor of their son, Jackson “Jake” Collins. The battle for Rookie-Of-The-Year is a tight battle between Mark Drennan (No 50 WindingRoad.com/TFB Performance) and Chris Stone (No 12 ALARA Racing).

Joey Dasilva, from New Bedford, Massachusetts will be making his series debut in the No 07 Ives Motorsports MX-5.

The 100th MX-5 Cup race car is being delivered this month to the Monticello Motor Club.

There will be a Mazda Owners Corral at VIR. http://www.etix.com/ticket/p/3915529/mazda-car-corral-danville-virginia-international-raceway?partner_id=240&cobrand=vir

The MX-5 Cup racers will be holding an autograph session for fans in the Battery Tender MX-5 Cup paddock on Saturday at noon.

Track Location:

VIRginia International Raceway

1245 Pine Tree Road

Alton, VA 24520

<http://virnow.com/>

Weekend MX-5 Cup Schedule Highlights:
Friday, August 26, 2016
8:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. Practice #1 – Battery Tender MX-5 Cup

12:50 p.m. – 1:20 p.m.	Practice #2 – Battery Tender MX-5 Cup
Saturday, August 27, 2016	
9:20 a.m. – 9:50 a.m.	Qualifying – Battery Tender MX-5 Cup
6:15 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	Race #1 (45 minutes) Battery Tender MX-5 Cup
Sunday, August 28, 2016	
8:45 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Race #2 (45 minutes) Battery Tender MX-5 Cup

Previous MX-5 Cup Winners at VIR:	
2009	Todd Lamb (Race 1)
	Lyonel Kent (Race 2)
2010	Brad Rampelberg
2012	Christian Szymczak
Fastest Qualifying Lap:	2:12.408 (88.907 mph), Nathaniel Sparks, 2012
Fastest Race Lap:	2:13.300 (88.312 mph), Ara Malkhassian, 2012
Smallest Margin of Victory:	0.024-second, Brad Rampelberg over Dean Copeland, 2010

Championship points leaders after eight of 12 races:		
The top five overall in points are:		
1 Nathaniel 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 John Dean II, 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

Complete results can be found on www.MX-5Cup.com

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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Additional assets available online:

[PHOTOS](#) ([1](#))

<https://news.mazdausa.com/2016-08-24-driving-matters-virginia-is-for-lovers-mazda-mx-5-cup>