

## **LIAM DWYER PAYS TRIBUTE TO MAZDA LEGEND**

### **DWYER WILL WEAR HELMET DESIGN OF THE LATE MAZDA RACER YOSHIMI KATAYAMA**

IRVINE, Calif. (October 5, 2017) – Yoshimi Katayama was a Mazda factory driver for nearly three decades, and he traversed the world as the embodiment of Mazda’s “Never Stop Challenging” ethos. Now, that role is carried by Mazda racer Liam Dwyer, the Marine Staff Sgt. (Ret.) who has overcome more than 50 surgeries and the loss of his left leg while on patrol in Afghanistan. Dwyer’s injuries haven’t deterred his driving career as a race-winning driver in the IMSA Continental Tire SportsCar Challenge series. At the season-finale race at Road Atlanta this Saturday, Dwyer will pay tribute by wearing a helmet design that Katayama wore during his career. The Fox Factory 120 at the Petit Le Mans will take the green flag at 1:40 pm ET Friday, and can be seen live online at IMSA.tv and heard at RadioLemans.com.

Katayama, who passed away last year, began his career on two wheels, and was a race-winning Grand Prix motorcycle rider. Then, he made the switch to cars with Mazda in 1964. He drove nearly every model of Mazda racer and played a huge role in developing the rotary engine, including driving the Mazda Cosmo in the first-ever race for the rotary. From there, he raced in a countless number of Mazdas around the globe, including Mazda Le Mans prototype cars that he drove to class victories at the 24 Hours of Le Mans and the Rolex 24 at Daytona. Katayama retired from racing in 1990, and is credited with a large role in developing the Mazda 787B that won the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1991.

Like Katayama, Dwyer wears helmets by Arai, so the connection made even more sense for him to carry the tribute look this weekend after Mazda officials met with Katayama’s family in Japan late last year. The Freedom Autosport driver who shared the No. 26 Semper Fi Fund Mazda MX-5 with co-driver Andrew Carbonell, is coming off of a second-place finish at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca.

“I am absolutely honored Mazda has bestowed upon me the privilege to wear this Arai tribute helmet in memory of Yoshimi Katayama,” said Dwyer. “The importance of Katayama-san’s contributions to Mazda are unmeasurable. After Petit, this helmet will be displayed at Mazda’s headquarters in Japan. It’s indescribable to me knowing Katayama-san and I will be forever linked. His ‘Never Stop Challenging’ motto will forever be felt at Mazda.”

### **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 (#MRT24) 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 (#MRTI) 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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