

FREEDOM WEEKEND FOR MAZDA ROAD TO INDY

FORTY-TWO YOUNG DRIVERS ARE AIMING TO GET ONE STEP CLOSER TO THE INDIANAPOLIS 500

IRVINE, Calif. (May 24, 2018) – With the eyes of the motorsports world on Indianapolis, Indiana this weekend, there are 42 young drivers competing for their chance to ascend to open-wheel racing's grandest stage – the Indianapolis 500.

The three ladders of Mazda's Road to Indy will compete this weekend in Indianapolis, with the Indy Lights series competing on Friday at Indianapolis Motor Speedway in the Freedom 100 as part of Carb Day. And, at the traditional Carb Night Classic at Lucas Oil Raceway, the Pro Mazda series will compete in the Freedom 90 while the USF2000 series will take part in the Freedom 75. This weekend will also mark the first oval races of the season for the MRTI.

The drivers in each step of the ladder are battling for championship prizes valued at over \$2.6 million, including a Mazda Scholarship valued at \$1 million dollars to the Indy Lights champion which guarantees three IndyCar Series races in 2019 including the Indianapolis 500. Mazda has provided this scholarship-funded path to Indianapolis for young drivers since 2010, allowing young drivers who embody Mazda's challenger spirit to fulfill their racing dreams.

This Sunday's Indianapolis 500 will see 25 drivers who are graduates of the Mazda Road to Indy take the green flag, including last year's Indy Lights champion Kyle Kaiser and former Freedom 100 winners Jack Harvey and Matheus Leist.

Indy Lights Presented by Cooper Tires. Only one point separates championship leader Patricio O'Ward from his closest pursuer, Colton Herta, after Herta swept the two Indy Lights races at the Indianapolis Grand Prix. A mere six points behind them is Santiago Urrutia.

Pro Mazda Championship Presented by Cooper Tires. Parker Thompson leads the Pro Mazda championship standings into Lucas Oil Raceway after winning the previous race at the Indianapolis Grand Prix. He also has the added benefit of having raced on the oval before in the USF2000 championship in 2016. Rinus Veekey holds second in the championship while third is held by Carlos Cunha.

USF2000 Championship Powered by Mazda. Kyle Kirkwood enters the Freedom weekend with a healthy 13-point lead in the USF2000 championship ahead of Alex Baron. The two of them, who split the victories at the Indianapolis Grand Prix, have distanced themselves from the rest of the field, setting up what already appears to be a two-horse race for the season championship.

The Freedom 100 will be broadcast live on NBC Sports on Friday, May 25 starting at 12:05 PM ET.

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. Follow all of the latest news at MazdaMotorsports.com, @MazdaRacing on Twitter, and Mazda Motorsports on Instagram and Facebook

Mazda North American Operations

Mazda North American Operations is headquartered in Irvine, California, and oversees the sales, marketing, parts and customer service support of Mazda vehicles in the United States and Mexico through nearly 700 dealers. Operations in Mexico are managed by Mazda Motor de Mexico in Mexico City. For more information on Mazda vehicles, including photography and B-roll, please visit the online Mazda media center at InsideMazda.MazdaUSA.com/Newsroom.

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