

## **JARED THOMAS SELECTED AS WINNER OF MAZDA ROAD TO 24 SHOOTOUT**

### **INDIANA NATIVE WILL RACE SOUL RED CRYSTAL GLOBAL MAZDA MX-5 CUP CAR IN 2020 SEASON**

IRVINE, Calif. (December 4, 2019) – Six drivers competed in the Mazda Road to 24 Shootout on Wednesday, held at the Michelin Laurens Proving Grounds in Mountville, South Carolina, for \$100,000 to compete in the 2020 Battery Tender Global Mazda MX-5 Cup presented by BFGoodrich.

From a deep field of drivers with varying backgrounds in amateur sports car racing, Jared Thomas from North Vernon, Indiana was selected as the winner. Thomas is a Senior at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis majoring in Motorsport Engineering and represented his school in 2018 at the 61st Annual Purdue Grand Prix, winning the event. Thomas has competed in Spec Miata since 2017, with a highlight performance of second place at the 2019 NASA Nationals at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course.

Thomas will compete in the 2020 Global Mazda MX-5 Cup in the Soul Red Crystal Global Mazda MX-5 Cup and will contend for the \$75,000 Rookie of the Year title.

“First and foremost, I just want to thank Mazda, Michelin and BFGoodrich, and my competitors here today,” said Thomas. “This is definitely one of the hardest things I’ve ever done in racing and something in my life that I will always remember. I am able to share this with my Dad, who helped me to build my Spec Miata and has been with me since the very beginning at age five, gave me all of the opportunities and has been there at each step.

“Mazda really made sure in preparing for the Shootout that we had a business plan, and they made us work really hard on it. So we we’ll stick with it, work on it and continue to make our plan better which will help us prepare for the 2020 season.”

The other Mazda Road to 24 Shootout finalists were Tray Ayres of Gainesville, Georgia, Brandon Collins from River Forest, Illinois, Matthew Dirks from Johnston, Colorado, Aaron Jeansonne from Sulphur, Louisiana, and Stuart McAleer from Monticello, New York.

“Mazda Motorsports was extremely fortunate to have six very talented drivers take part in the Road to 24 Shootout,” said Nelson Cosgrove, Director, Mazda Motorsports. “They certainly did not make the decision of the judges easy, but Jared demonstrated to the judges that from the moment that he was nominated for the Shootout that he would be real contender. He will represent Mazda extremely well in next year’s Battery Tender Global Mazda MX-5 Cup presented by BFGoodrich.”

The Global Mazda MX-5 Cup season championship will begin April 3-5 at Barber Motorsports Park in Birmingham, Alabama.

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 Mazda Team Joest. 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](https://www.MazdaMotorsports.com), @MazdaRacing on Twitter, and Mazda Motorsports on Instagram and Facebook.

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 approximately 620 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](https://InsideMazda.MazdaUSA.com/Newsroom).

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