



**For Immediate Release**

## **INDY RACING LEAGUE LAUNCHES “ROAD TO INDY” DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM**

ORLANDO, Fla. (Thursday, Dec. 10, 2009) – Seeking to create a defined path for young, career-minded race drivers to reach the IZOD IndyCar Series and the Indianapolis 500, the Indy Racing League has launched the “Road To Indy,” a developmental ladder system that includes Firestone Indy Lights, The Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear and the Cooper Tires Presents the USF2000 National Championship powered by Mazda.

The announcement of the program, which is designed to advance drivers from Cooper Tires Presents the USF2000 National Championship powered by Mazda to the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear to Firestone Indy Lights, and finally, the IZOD IndyCar Series was made at the Performance Racing Industry Trade Show in Orlando, Fla.

“In creating the ‘Road to Indy,’ we are trying to bridge the gap between the premier open-wheel racing divisions and the entry level open-wheel series by creating a clear career path for aspiring racing drivers,” said Brian Barnhart, president of competition and racing operations for the Indy Racing League, which sanctions the IZOD IndyCar Series and the Firestone Indy Lights.

“With the ‘Road to Indy,’ a driver has the opportunity to hone his professional racing skills at an early stage of his or her career and has a chance to build upon those skills in a professional environment while driving similar-style open-wheel racing vehicles on similar tracks at every step.”

Drivers from each of the affiliated “Road To Indy” series will have the opportunity to progress to the next level of the ladder system through participation in programs put together by each series or the Indy Racing League, which also will sanction USF2000 National Championship races.

While the long-term goal of the “Road to Indy” is to help prepare drivers and teams to progress at the highest levels of motorsports, drivers and teams in the three “Road to Indy” series will see added benefits almost immediately.

All three affiliated series will offer the challenge of racing on ovals, road courses and temporary street circuits and program participants will have the opportunity to showcase their

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drivers and teams in front of IZOD IndyCar Series teams and owners each year. In 2010, all three series that make up the “Road to Indy” program will join the IZOD IndyCar Series at the Streets of St. Petersburg and Iowa Speedway.

Additionally, all four series will be conduct events in Indianapolis on Memorial Day weekend with Cooper Tires Presents the USF2000 National Championship powered by Mazda and Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear racing at O’Reilly Raceway Park at the “Night Before the 500,” while Firestone Indy Lights (Firestone Freedom 100) and IZOD IndyCar Series (Indianapolis 500) race at Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

“The Indy Racing League is open-wheel racing here in North America, and it is my great privilege to work with them again in the creation of a true ladder for young drivers to follow,” said Dan Andersen, co-owner and chief executive officer, Andersen Promotions, administrator of the Cooper Tires presents the USF2000 National Championship powered by Mazda. “There is finally a clearly defined path to a career in the IZOD IndyCar Series, and I am looking forward to seeing many of tomorrow’s IndyCar stars racing with us in the USF2000 series in 2010.”

In addition, the drivers and teams in the affiliated series will receive access to the promotional efforts of the Indy Racing League. Among the promotional tools available to Road to Indy participants are:

- Inclusion in online advertising promoting the Road to Indy program
- A micro Website dedicated to Road to Indy housed and promoted on the League’s official website IndyCar.com
- Invitation to participate in the Road to Indy Summit at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway in May.
- Opportunities to develop business-to-business relationships with Indy Racing League teams, sponsors and manufacturers.

“Today’s announcement is a formidable milestone in the 20th year of our history as a development series,” said Gary Rodrigues, founder of the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear. “For the Star Mazda Championship to be honored with a formalized position in the pathway to an Indy car driving career is not only gratifying to us, but provides a clarity that open wheel drivers and fans have long been seeking. Now young driving talent can know where they need to be and where they are trying to go. Race fans can now determine where to watch for tomorrow’s stars.

“I am convinced that everybody in our sport wins with this program. The best new talent can build their motorsports careers. Race fans in North America eventually get to see them in Indy cars.”

### **About IZOD IndyCar Series**

The IZOD IndyCar Series is the premier open-wheel series in the United States, competing on a challenging combination of superspeedways, short ovals, scenic road courses and temporary street circuits. In 2010, the IZOD IndyCar Series will conduct 13 races in the U.S., two in

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Canada and one both in Japan and Brazil, all available worldwide through comprehensive, long-term agreements with ABC and VERSUS in high-definition. The IZOD IndyCar Series continues to be the fastest and most competitive racing series, attracting a diverse lineup of drivers including Marco Andretti, Ryan Briscoe, Helio Castroneves, Scott Dixon, Dario Franchitti, Ryan Hunter-Reay, Tony Kanaan, Danica Patrick, Graham Rahal and Dan Wheldon. A leader in motorsports technology, the IZOD IndyCar Series is the first racing series to power its Honda engines on 100 percent fuel-grade ethanol, a renewable and environmentally friendly fuel. For more information on the IZOD IndyCar Series, visit [www.indycar.com](http://www.indycar.com).

#### **About Firestone Indy Lights**

Firestone Indy Lights is the premier ladder series for drivers and teams striving to compete in the IZOD IndyCar Series and the Indianapolis 500. Run in conjunction with the IZOD IndyCar Series, the Firestone Indy Lights' 13-race schedule features eight races on road courses/street circuits and five races on ovals, including the famed 2.5-mile circuit at Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Teams compete for nearly \$4 million in prize money in cars that are second only in speed to the IZOD IndyCar Series at most tracks they visits. The complete Firestone Indy Lights schedule is available through live Webcasts. Recent graduates of this fast and cost-effective series include Marco Andretti, Ed Carpenter, A.J. Foyt IV, J.R. Hildebrand, Alex Lloyd, Raphael Matos and Hideki Mutoh. For more information on the Firestone Indy Lights, please visit [www.firestoneindylights.com](http://www.firestoneindylights.com).

#### **About Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear**

For 2010, the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear will feature an 11-weekend, 13-race schedule, most on major race weekends with American Le Mans and the Indy Racing League. Rising stars from around the world will be watched by more than a million fans as they compete for prizes valued at \$1.5 million, including a Mazda-sponsored, full-season drive on the next level of the MAZDASPEED Motorsports Driver Development Ladder. Drivers 16 and older are welcome to compete and the Star Mazda Championship also features Expert (30 to 44) and Master (45 and older) classes for more mature racers. The Star Mazda Championship features standing starts, wheel-to-wheel racing at 150 mph and budgets a fraction of other top open-wheel ladder series. For more information on the Star Mazda Championship please visit [www.starmazda.com](http://www.starmazda.com)

#### **About Cooper Tires Presents the USF2000 National Championship presented by Mazda**

Many top drivers in the IZOD IndyCar Series and endurance sports car racing honed their skills in F2000, and the Cooper Tires presents the USF2000 National Championship powered by Mazda is an important training ground for rising stars. Debuting in 2010, it is the revival of the very popular USF2000 series of 1990 through 2006. Sanctioned by the Indy Racing League, it is one of only two series that are part of both the IRL's Road to Indy ladder system and the prestigious MAZDASPEED Motorsports driver development program. For more information, visit [www.usf2000.com](http://www.usf2000.com)

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