



March 31, 2008

Molecule Formula Mazda Challenge & Star Mazda West Coast Series Opens at Infineon Raceway

Almost 50 cars race green to checker at first event

March 31, 2008
Sonoma, CA

The Molecule Formula Mazda Challenge and Star Mazda West Coast Series opened up this weekend at Infineon raceway. The event which was a part of the SCCA Regional weekend saw almost 50 entries. "We chose this particular event as our opening race as it would allow our drivers who have not run with the local SCCA to get used to the club, and would also allow them to see first hand how the club operates," stated Eric McCombs the series administrator. "Michael Smith and Peter Nosler who are both board members of the San Francisco Region SCCA arranged for a group meeting and they were kind enough to allow the participants to share their thoughts on how the program could be improved moving forward." The series has two more weekends planned with the SCCA for 2008.

In Sunday's race, Patrick O'Neill, who had qualified on pole, took off to a commanding lead and never relinquished it. O'Neill drove his red #64 O'Neill Construction Racing Pro Formula Mazda to the overall and PFM win followed by Phenom Racing's Molecule sponsored driver Mike Guasch. World Speed Motorsports driver Jim Mashburn rounded out the PFM podium in his Magma Grills sponsored entry. In the Formula Mazda class Bill Weaver was on pole and took the win followed by Derry O'Donovan, and Stew Tabak. The FE class finishing order was Brandon Aleckson on the top of the podium followed by James Davenport, and Archie Snider.

The Thursday and Friday prior to the weekend saw a contingent of Standing Start coaches out on the corners working with various participants in the series. Eric Freiberg, who is competing in the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear with World Speed Motorsports, came out to test on Thursday and spent the balance of the weekend coaching his sister Ashley who was competing in a WSM Standard Formula Mazda. "Ashley is fairly new to racing cars," stated World Speed Motorsports Operations Manager Mark Milazzo, "but she is really doing a great job. In most sessions she was within a second of multi-year champion and local Formula Mazda legend Bill Weaver. Due to a sound violation she had to start at the back of the pack in Sunday's race and she passed more than 20 cars on her way to finishing 4th in the FM class."

Eric Freiberg also spent Sunday morning showing the local Boy Scout troop around

his Pro Formula Mazda, and explaining to them the commitment needed to be a competitive driver.

Other notable runs during the race were by Kevin Woods a new driver to the series who was running as good as 4th overall before a sound violation required him to pit and lose a lap late in the race. Sean Prewett who is also new to the series had a great start but hit some oil early on and went off track. He recovered and went on to pass 30 cars before the end of the race.

Vince Gaddini, who has a Pro Formula Mazda being delivered to World Speed Motorsports this week, was racing most of the event with Paul Lahaye and Larry Schnur. Gaddini went on to win in the DSR class. The Molecule Formula Mazda Challenge Series and Star Mazda West Coast Series heads to Thunderhill Raceway next for an exclusive double header with NASA on May 3rd-4th.

For more information visit: <http://formulamazdachallenge.com>

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- [The MOLECULE Formula Mazda Challenge Website >>](#)

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With top locations, available driver coaching from Standing Start, and dealer support, the various Mazda West Coast Series are perfect for drivers that are preparing for a career in motorsports or just looking for an opportunity to race at some of the best tracks in the western United States.