



For Immediate Release:

USF2000 Champion Petri Suvanto Joins Defending Star Mazda Championship Team



ST. PETERSBURG, FLA. (January 20, 2012) – Team Pelfrey is proud to announce that Finnish rising star Petri Suvanto (LEFT), a convincing winner of the 2011 USF2000 National Championship, will complete its line-up in the quest for continued success in the Star Mazda Championship Presented by Goodyear.

The team made a stunning series debut last March when Connor De Phillippi won the opening race at St. Petersburg, Fla., just a few miles away from its home base. De Phillippi maintained the momentum by adding three more race wins, and together with teammate Nick Andries claimed a total of three poles and 13 podium finishes en route to second and third positions in the drivers' championship. The pair also finished first and second in the season finale at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca to clinch the coveted Team Championship for Team Pelfrey.

Suvanto will join American Gustavo Menezes, who finished eighth in the 2011 Star Mazda series as a rookie with Juncos Racing, and Englishman Jack Hawksworth, a race winner in last year's Formula Renault 2.0 UK Championship, in a three-pronged attack on the 2012 title-chase.

"Winning is our obsession so who better to drive for us than the defending USF2000 champion," says Team Pelfrey Team Manager Geoff Fickling. "Petri is the perfect driver for a results-oriented team. He's extremely focused, self-motivated, and bloody quick! Some of his wins last year were shockingly impressive. We know the step up to Star Mazda is a big one and there's a learning curve that needs to be met in order to even utter the word championship, but I've laid out the most extensive pre-season testing program I've ever been a part of in order to get all three of our young drivers' learning curves accelerated as quickly as possible prior to the opener at St. Petersburg. Jack, Gustavo, and Petri – I couldn't be happier with our lineup."

Suvanto (BELOW RIGHT, testing with Team Pelfrey at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway last October) was extremely impressive in winning last year's Cooper Tires Presents the USF2000 National Championship Powered by Mazda title as a rookie and is now able to reach one step closer to his goal of competing in the IZOD IndyCar Series, courtesy of the Mazda Road to Indy scholarship ladder.

"It feels great to finally announce that I will be racing for Team Pelfrey," said Suvanto, 19, who is currently completing his mandatory National Service in his native Finland. "It's been very difficult to hold back the exciting news for so long while we finalized all the details! I have had a chance to get to know the team a little bit over the winter and I'm very excited to work with such a professional group of people again.

"Moving up to Star Mazda isn't going to be easy but I'm welcoming the challenge with open arms. The theme of the year is learning, and the more I learn the better the results are going to be. Things have changed a lot over the last 12 months. Last year at this time I was wondering

whether I would be able to ever race again, but from the moment I learned about the Mazda Road to Indy, I knew what I wanted. It worked out pretty well. 2011 changed my life and I'm very thankful to all the people who were part of it, especially everyone at Cape Motorsports with Wayne Taylor Racing. Now it's time to start a new chapter full of new challenges. I'm already counting the days until the first race."



Once his National Service is completed, Suvanto will join the team in a busy schedule of testing in preparation for the first race of the season which will be held in conjunction with the IZOD IndyCar Series opener, the Honda Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, on March 25.

About Team Pelfrey:

Dale Pelfrey's race team, based in the St. Petersburg, Fla., area, is built upon the same principles he used 35 years ago when establishing his business career – hire the best, acquire the best and demand the best in order to achieve the most. After fielding cars in the IZOD IndyCar Series from 1998 until 2000, Team Pelfrey was reformed in 2011, winning on its Star Mazda debut and going on to earn the Team Championship as well as second and third in the drivers' title-chase with Connor De Phillippi and Nick Andries. Team Pelfrey is fielding three cars in the 2012 Star Mazda series in addition to expanding its driver development program within the Mazda Road to Indy ladder system by supporting Spencer Pigot in the USF2000 National Championship.

About Petri Suvanto:

Born in Nurmo, Finland, on November 13, 1982, Suvanto enjoyed an impressive career in karting, beginning at age 5. He claimed race wins and championships at every level, competing throughout Europe, and made the transition to cars in 2010 after winning a scholarship from BMW to contest the Formula BMW Europe Championship. When he began exploring his options for 2011, Suvanto learned about the Mazda Road to Indy and the opportunities it presented young drivers seeking to race in the IZOD IndyCar Series. He impressed in a USF2000 test with Cape Motorsports with Wayne Taylor Racing, quickly signed a deal for the 2011 season, and claimed five poles and five race wins en route to the crown. Suvanto only once failed to finish on the podium during the 12-race season.

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