



For Immediate Release

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Battery Tender Global Mazda MX-5 Cup presented by BFGoodrich Tires Returns to Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca

- \$50,000 for top rookie up for grabs as series closes season at home track -

MONTEREY, Calif. (September 21, 2017) – The 2017 Global Mazda MX-5 Cup season has been nothing short of remarkable as it heads to its 2017 finale this weekend at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca in Monterey, California, where \$50,000 in prize money is on the line for the season's highest-scoring rookie.

This comes after American racer Patrick Gallagher clinched the 2017 Global Mazda MX-5 Cup championship earlier this month at Watkins Glen International Raceway, claiming the \$200,000 in Mazda scholarship funding that goes with it. The \$50,000 Rookie of the Year (ROY) prize is the last major reward of the season still on the line, and its recipient is far from certain.

In nine of the 10 races run thus far, the margin of victory has been less than half a second. Seven of the 10 races have had either zero or just one caution period, making for a lot of green-flag racing for the full fields of Mazda drivers. With hundreds of passes for position each race, the first professional race series on the Mazda Road to 24 ladder has featured tight racing all the way through the field.

Robert Stout (No. 29 McCumbee McAleer Racing), Bryan Ortiz (No. 4 Copeland Motorsports), and Matt Cresci (No. 51 Mazda Road to 24/Slipstream Performance) are all mathematically eligible for the rookie honor.



Victories at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and Toronto street circuit helped push Stout to the front of the field of rookie runners with 177 points as he has exchanged the point lead with Ortiz through the season.

“I’ve always had the confidence of feeling like I had the rookie of the year points lead, even when I didn’t,” said Stout. “We found ourselves in a few bad situations this year. Some within our control, some completely outside of it. But in outright pace and running positions I feel we have always had one of, if not, the car to beat. With the momentum we have had all year, I don’t think I want a single thing to change as we enter Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca.

Just seven points adrift is Ortiz, who has three podium finishes to his credit. The Puerto Rico-based racer has been dealing with the after effects of Hurricane Irma at home but is looking forward to getting to the track and closing the year on a high note.

“I’ve only been to Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca once in 2007, and we had issues that weekend, so that is one that I need to prepare as best as possible for sure,” said Ortiz. “The only way to get ready for it is with iRacing simulation and videos from other years. The rookie battle has been very intense all year long.

At 126 points, 2016 Mazda Shootout Winner Matt Cresci (No. 51 Mazda Road to 24/Slipstream Performance) will need a lot of things to go his way in order to emerge with the ROY title.

“Mazda Raceway is the only track on the MX-5 Cup calendar that I have experience at, as it is one of my home tracks,” said Cresci, who hails from San Jose, California. “So, I feel extremely confident about that event and look forward to the local support that will push me to succeed.”

The series will make a visit to the SPCA for Monterey County on Friday, September 22 at 3 p.m. PST. Mazda Motorsports has partnered with the Northern California animal shelter since 2007 and has donated over \$130,000 over the years in an effort to support the local community. The SPCA animal shelter visit welcomes friends and family and is open to the public for those interested in attending.



Many current and past MX-5 Cup competitors, along with drivers from Japan and Europe, will return to Mazda Raceway October 12-14 to compete for a \$125,000 prize pool in the Global Mazda MX-5 Cup Challenge.

Follow along at <http://www.mx-5cup.com> as well as <https://twitter.com/globalmx5cup>.

About Battery Tender Global Mazda MX-5 Cup presented by BFGoodrich Tires:

The Battery Tender Global Mazda MX-5 Cup presented by BFGoodrich Tires is the first professional race series on the Mazda Road to 24 ladder, providing the series champion with a \$200,000 scholarship and the rookie-of-the-year winner with a \$50,000 scholarship. Utilizing the Global MX-5 Cup machine that is built by a single provider, the series focus on equipment parity puts the results in the drivers hands.

With every driver using the exact same SKYACTIV 2.0 liter engine as the MX-5 that you can buy at a Mazda dealer The cars are race-prepared at Long Road Racing in Statesville, North Carolina with the addition of safety equipment like a roll cage and over 200 motorsports-specific parts.

Key marketing and commercial partners for the series include Mazda, Battery Tender, BFGoodrich Tires, Pagid Racing, and VP Racing Fuels. The Global Mazda MX-5 Cup car had its first season of competition in 2016, with the field of drivers completing 23,852 miles of racing. The circumference of the earth is 24,901 miles.

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 600 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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