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## Scuncio Earns Podium Finish on the Streets of St. Petersburg Season-Opener



St. Petersburg, Fla. (March 26, 2011) – Martin Scuncio, 19, topped the time sheets on Friday’s official practice day, won the pole position in this morning’s qualifying, and finished second in today’s race at the Honda Grand Prix of St. Petersburg. The Chilean rookie had a great start and remained in the lead for the premier lap, but when a full course caution came out, he lost his first place position to Team Pelfrey’s Connor De Phillippi on the restart. Scuncio then had

a solid run in second position for the remainder of the race and proudly ended the day on the second step of the podium.

“The race went really well,” said Scuncio. “I made a little mistake on the restart and lost my first place position. It’s so hard to pass here, and I couldn’t catch (Connor) De Phillippi. I’m really happy with the second place finish, though. It shows that we can go for the victory at the next race. I am looking forward to getting to Barber Motorsports Park and getting in the car again as fast as possible!”

Gustavo Menezes greatly impressed the team in his debut race in the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear. The 16-year-old go-kart star managed to stay away from trouble and gain positions throughout his first ever formula car race, ultimately producing a solid eighth place finish. Menezes also collected a grab bag of on-track experience in an event that was filled with an assortment of different racing situations.

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“It was a really good race for me,” said Menezes. “I came into the weekend with very little experience in the Star Mazda car and hadn’t even done a practice start, but I still got a really good takeoff. Unfortunately, I saw Tatiana (Calderon)’s crash, and I was able to manage my way through it. I got a lot of good experience in the race like avoiding crashes, practice starts, and more. It was a good way to start the season, and now I can go to the next race a little bit smarter. I am still learning the limits of the car, and I think I can push it a little more next time. I hope I can keep learning throughout the season.”

Teammate J.V. Horto’s struggles in this afternoon’s race were preceded by an unfavorable qualifying session this morning in which the Brazilian made contact with the wall. He then had to give up a starting position as a penalty for the incident, but seemed to welcome the challenge as he began to move up through the grid at the beginning of the race. Whenever he gained positions, however, he seemed to lose them due to complications with braking. The 20-year-old ended up finishing the race two laps down in 14<sup>th</sup> position.

“The race was not what I expected, but we were fast,” said Horto. “We had a great car, and I was even up to sixth at one point from ninth which was positive. I have to get used to the brakes, though, because I had some problems during the race, especially when I was trying to pass people. The team and I are going to work together and find out what happened. I want to congratulate Martin (Scuncio) on his podium; I think with him, we proved the team is ready to win. It’s only the first race of the championship, so we will look ahead to doing well at Barber Motorsports Park.”

After a strong start to the weekend with the third overall fastest practice time and a sixth place qualifying position, Tatiana Calderon encountered the worst luck of the bunch in today’s race. The Colombian racer wasn’t even able to complete one lap of the season-opener due to a collision with the #81 car of Nick Andries. The incident ended her much anticipated race far too early, scoring her in 18<sup>th</sup> position and leaving her with a disappointing opening to the season.

“I had a pretty good start,” said Calderon. “I was on the inside for the second turn, and then I just saw (Nick) Andries hit the wall and come backwards towards me. I tried to avoid him, but our wheels touched and that was it. It’s unfortunate, but that’s racing. I am ready to get to Barber now. It’s going to be really good, and the team has been working really hard, so I want to congratulate them on all they’ve done so far.”

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“Overall, it was a good weekend,” said Team Owner Ricardo Juncos. “It’s difficult at the start of the season because there are always questions and answers. We had a little bit of bad luck with two of our drivers and good results with other two. We knew Martin (Scuncio) could win the race, and he had the car to do it, but unfortunately on the restart, he lost the position to Connor (De Phillippi). We are still delighted with a second place finish, though.

“I think Gustavo (Menezes) did a great job. The target was to finish the first race, and with very little experience in the Star Mazda car, an eighth place finish was great. The race was a good overall experience for him, too. Unfortunately, Tatiana (Calderon) had some bad luck in the race. That is part of racing, though, and that is how things happen, so we will keep looking forward. We know we have the car to win.

“J.V. (Horto) was running fast enough for the pole this morning before he hit the wall, and then he had to start the race in ninth position. He felt he had the car to win, but when you start in ninth position, it’s so hard to make your way up to the front, especially on a street course. At the same time, it’s racing, so we are going to keep working and work even harder now to get what we lost this weekend with J.V. (Horto) and Tatiana (Calderon). Hopefully with Martin (Scuncio) we can keep doing the same thing we are doing now and continue to fight for another championship.”

Up next for Juncos Racing is the second race of the 2011 season at Barber Motorsports Park in Leeds, Alabama April 7-10. For more information or to follow Juncos Racing, go to [www.juncosracing.com](http://www.juncosracing.com).

### **João Victor Horto, #7** Juncos Racing / Programa Leiloes

Session	Started	Finished	Best Lap Time	Best Speed
Race	9 <sup>th</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>	1:12.847	88.954

### **Tatiana Calderon, #10** Juncos Racing / JAC Motors

Session	Started	Finished	Best Lap Time	Best Speed
Race	6 <sup>th</sup>	18 <sup>th</sup>	-	-

### **Gustavo Menezes, #28** JR/TRUECar/SafetyPark/Oakley/Performance Physixx/Fitness Concepts/Racing Optics

Session	Started	Finished	Best Lap Time	Best Speed
Race	10 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	1:13.146	88.590

### **Martin Scuncio, #60** Juncos Racing

Session	Started	Finished	Best Lap Time	Best Speed
Race	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	1:12.016	89.980

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**About Juncos Racing:** Juncos Racing is centrally located in Vero Beach, Florida, U.S.A. to offer diverse levels of racing year round. Juncos Racing operates out of a state of the art facility which houses vehicles suitable for all levels of racing, from go-karts to open wheel Formula race cars. It is one of the few teams in the United States which offers a development program starting from racing go-karts to racing professional open wheel race cars. The team's goal is to provide young and older drivers alike with a foundation upon which they can build a career in motorsports. Juncos Racing offers two and three-day racing schools which cover theoretical and hands-on driving techniques. With your dedication and the team's expertise and advanced training techniques, Juncos Racing is confident that you will achieve and master the fundamentals of racing. For more information, please visit [www.juncosracing.com](http://www.juncosracing.com).

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