

DRIVER PROFILE

Alan Rudolph: Career Minded Rookie

Note: Rudolph was interviewed for this story in May, shortly after he won the Star Mazda Series North American Championship race at Nazareth Speedway.

As a former karting champion and chief instructor at the Bondurant SuperKart School in Phoenix, Alan Rudolph firmly advocates clocking as much seat time as possible, not only to hone driving skills, but to develop one's racing mentality as well.

He goes on to stress that "there's nothing better than kart racing for gaining seat time." And with ample karting experience, he believes that a good kart driver will have few problems in making the transition to Formula Mazda.

During 2003, Rudolph is applying his "more seat time" philosophy to his first season in FM by running both the pro Star Mazda Series and the Star Mazda Red Line Oil Championship in the west. In the latter series he has one victory and three podium finishes in the first eight events.

Commenting for his first pro win at Nazareth, Rudolph says, "I'm pretty stoked even though it wasn't an outright victory, which I would have rather had. But it's all about points and I'll take them any way I can get them. Right now I'm looking forward to the next race at Mazda Raceway which is a track I've actually raced on in a 250 shifter kart. So at least I know which direction the track runs."

Rudolph, who began racing karts at age nine, has been associated with the Bondurant organization for four years. Highlights from his kart racing background include 1998 WKA 125 national and grand national championships. He is also a three time winner of the SKUSA King of the Streets 125 shifter kart competition.

When asked what element he most emphasizes in instructing his students, Rudolph says, "Vision. Most drivers have a tendency to focus right in front of the car, whether on the track or on the street. They just don't look far enough ahead. For some people, learning to use vision properly is difficult."

Given his karting experience, Rudolph admits that the hardest part about his adjusting to the Formula Mazda was learning not to over-drive the car. "The Mazda is softer sprung than a kart so you have to wait for the weight transfer. You can't be as aggressive as with a kart and you have to trail the brakes longer."

Rudolph says he chose FM because of its affordability. "For me, it definitely offered the

most bang for the buck. I worked hard and found a sponsor so that I could run the Star Mazda Series which offers TV coverage and the chance to get noticed at major venues. And I love the new pro car. If I continue (in FM) next year I can move into more car without having to go to Formula Atlantic where I'd need almost a million dollars for the season. That's ridiculous when I figure I could run the 2004 Star Series for less than a quarter of that amount. And from the standpoint of attracting sponsorship, the series will continue to be a bargain given the exposure it provides."

Regardless of where his career as a driver takes him, Rudolph plans to have a continued, long-term involvement with karting. "My heart and soul is in racing," he says. "And I want to put something back into the sport."

Evidently when Rudolph looks down the road, he has no problem with his vision.★



Allan Rudolph recently placed second and third in Star Mazda Red Line Oil Championship races at Pacific Raceway earning himself a number two ranking in the Western Division standings.

Divisional Action Kicks-off 2003 Season

The 2003 Star Mazda Series season official opened on January 6 with a Southeastern Division SCCA National race at Sebring. By the end of May, there were already five races in the record book for that division and Donny Isley was at the top of the points' chart. Jack Morris and David Hamilton were ranked second and third respectively.

In the Western Division, after eight races in the newly named Star Mazda Red Line Oil Championship and 19 drivers had scored points in the series. Mike Anderson's four wins boosted his formerly slim lead over Alan Rudolf while Phil Fogg Jr. maintained his hold on third. The leader in the Western Division Masters Championship was Bob Negron.

Each of the top three drivers in the Star Mazda Red Line Oil Championship has already won one of the 11 Sparco Red Line Oil custom-made driving suits that will be among the prizes awarded in the division this year.

The Star Mazda Series-Southwest had its' season openers in a double at Motorsports

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Star Formula Mazda Dealer Directory

Valley Motor Center, Inc.
Pacoima, California
818-686-3355

Aubeta Motorsports
Seattle, Washington
206-576-5333

Formula Cars East
Savannah, Georgia
912-748-5530

Huffaker Engineering
Infineon Raceway
707-935-0533

Pro-One Motorsports
Chicago area
563-529-6505

Racers Edge Motorsports, Inc.
Augusta, New Jersey
973-579-2990

Texas Autosports, Inc.
Cresson, Texas
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Velocity Motorsports
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336-562-8000

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