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UK Sportscar racing stars at one with the Mazda3

* Oliver Jarvis and Harry Tincknell drive for Mazda North America in the IMSA Sports Car Series.
* In the UK both drivers enjoy a driver-focused Mazda road car as their day-to-day vehicle.
* Watch our new ‘driver and car as one’ film here: <https://youtu.be/D0U7-wweIHE>

Fresh from a strong showing at this year’s Daytona 24 Hours, the opening round of the 2020 IMSA Sportscar Series, Mazda North America’s British racing drivers Oliver Jarvis and Harry Tincknell returned to the UK to spend a day with the innovative Skyactiv-X powered Mazda3, to explore how, whether on road or track, Mazda’s focus on the connection between car and driver is at the forefront of development.

Living in the UK but competing on the other side of the Atlantic, both drivers race for Mazda Team Joest in North America’s leading sportscar series: the IMSA Sportscar Championship. A multi-class series contested across 10 rounds with race distances varying from 24 hours to just one hour and forty minutes, the Mazda RT24-P race cars compete in the fastest Daytona Prototype Class for overall victories. In 2018, Mazda Team Joest secured three victories with Harry Tincknell in the winning car at Watkins Glen and Road America, while after securing pole position earlier in the season at the Daytona 24 Hours, Oliver Jarvis was in the winning car at Mosport in Canada.

This season has seen Oliver Jarvis repeat his Daytona 24 Hours pole position, and sharing the number 77 Mazda RT24-P with Olivier Pla and Tristan Nunez, finish in 2nd place in the race – Mazda’s best ever overall result in America’s most famous endurance race. Having faced technical issues in the closing hours, Harry’s number 55 car crossed the line in 6th place.

While their day job involves racing the high-tech, lightweight and powerful Mazda RT24-P prototype, Mazda’s ‘Jinba Ittai – Car and Driver and One’ engineering ethos ensures that the synergy between road and race car is there to feel from behind the wheel. With driver focused cockpits, personally moulded seats and the need to feel what the car is doing at the limit at all times, motorsport represents the very pinnacle of being at one with the car. Whether it’s steering feel, confidence on the brakes or the direct communication of the cars grip level through the suspension, success and speed in competition relies entirely on the driver being intuitively connected to the car.

A concept that is similar to the one that Mazda’s road car engineers pursue with their philosophy of ‘Jinba Ittai’. This sense of complete oneness with the car, which sits at the heart of every Mazda, has become a well-acknowledged trait of Mazda’s range. From the MX-5 sports car to the CX-5 SUV, a human centred development approach has ensured that every Mazda, delivers the driver position, comfort and intuitive feedback needed for the driver to feel connected to the road and at one with the car, regardless of the type of drive.

Commenting on the Skyactiv-X Mazda3, Oliver Jarvis said: “while you’re obviously not pushing as hard as you are in the race car, with accurate feedback, well-weighted controls and a great driving position, the Mazda3 still communicates with the driver and makes you feel engaged behind the wheel, regardless of what type of drive you are on, so there’s a correlation between track and road.”

Adding, “with both road cars and racing cars the amount of engineering effort and skill that goes into making a car feel natural in its driver feedback is huge. Whether it’s for comfort, safety and enjoyment on the road or performance on the track it’s crucial to be at one with the car”.

Harry Tincknell said: “whether it’s dealing with the high speeds of the Daytona banking, coping with the bumps of Sebring or navigating the tight corners of a street course like Long Beach you need to feel completely at one with the race car. Things are changing every second and you have to be able to react instinctively, and that’s no different on the road, where you need a good level of comfort and confidence to enjoy the experience as much as possible. There may be hundreds of different things that are just one per cent better and you might not notice them when you jump into the car, but the combined result is that everything just feels natural and connected.”

Two of Britain’s biggest sportscar racing stars, Oliver Jarvis and Harry Tincknell will next be in action for Mazda at the Sebring 12 Hours, which takes place at the legendarily bumpy Floridian airfield circuit on the 21st March. With a CV that includes class wins in the Daytona and Le Mans 24 Hours, plus an overall win at the Sebring 12 Hours for Audi in 2013, Oliver Jarvis will be hoping to add another outright Sebring victory to his tally. Also a class winner at Le Mans and a championship winner in the European Le Mans Series, Harry will equally be challenging to add the prestigious Sebring 12 Hours to his sportscar racing achievements.

Whether it’s enjoying their Mazda3s day-to-day in the UK or competing in the Mazda RT24-P in North America, both Oliver and Harry get to enjoy Mazda’s focus on the driver and the importance of being at one with the car. A synergy that is highlighted in our latest film: <https://youtu.be/D0U7-wweIHE>

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