

Patrick Dempsey to join Mazda Celebrations in Le Mans for the 20th Anniversary of Win

-- Actor/Racer to Drive Famed Mazda 787B in Pre-Race Activities --

Leverkusen, 08 June 2011. Twenty years ago this month, Mazda became the first – and to date, the only – Japanese automaker to score an overall win at the world's most famous endurance race, the 24 Hours of Le Mans. Endurance road-racing has been the cornerstone of Mazda's participation in motor sports since 1968, as it is the ultimate demonstration of quality, durability and reliability.

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the company's overall win, a dedicated team of Mazda Motor Corporation employees has prepared the striking looking and sounding, 700-horsepower, four-rotor Mazda 787B to once again take to the track at speed. This will not be a race, but demonstration laps to honor the achievement and to thank fans for 40 years of support for Mazda and the rotary engine in competition.

Behind the wheel will be a familiar face – familiar to a global audience of TV and movie fans, and familiar to North American road racing fans – Patrick Dempsey. Patrick will squeeze in the trip to France between racing his own Dempsey Racing Mazda RX-8 at Watkins Glen the week before and at Road America two weeks later, and a trip to the Cannes Film Festival in May. Dempsey scored a personal-best race-finish earlier this year with third-place at the 2011 24 Hours of Daytona.

Also behind the wheel during the Le Mans weekend will be Johnny Herbert, one of the three young racers who drove the Mazda 787B to victory and was competing in Formula 1 at the time, will be reunited with the car that he drove into the history books for the first time since that June day.

He will be joined for the celebrations and interviews on the Mazda stand in the Le Mans

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circuit village and on drivers parade by 1991 Mazda drivers David Kennedy (Ireland), Pierre Dieudonné (Belgium), Yojiro Terada (Japan) and other members from the 1991 dream team, as well as by Seita Kanai, Director and Executive Vice President, Mazda Motor Corporation.

Sum-up of Mazda activities in Le Mans 2011:

Mazda plans to hold the demonstration of the 787B race car on the Circuit de la Sarthe with Patrick Dempsey at 18:40 on June 9 and with Johnny Herbert at 12:30 p.m. on June 11, before the start of the race. Additionally, the 787B will also take part in the Driver's Parade through the Le Mans city center on Friday June 10 at 17:00.

A press conference with all participants above will be held on Friday 10 at 10:00 in the Dunlop lounge in the village, followed by an interview session in the Mazda stand in the village.

Quotes:

Patrick Dempsey: "I've been a member of the MAZDASPEED family since 2007. I race a three-rotor RX-8 in Grand-Am GT competition, and Mazda allowed me to drive the amazing RX-792P at Mazda Raceway last year. I love the heritage of the sport, and to be given the chance to drive THE car that scored the highest-visibility win in Mazda's storied racing history is indeed an honor."

John Doonan, Director, Mazda Motorsports, Mazda North American Operations: "This is a very special occasion for Mazda. This will bring together our most iconic prototype with our most recognizable racer. Over the past several years we have come to know Patrick as someone who is deeply committed the sport, and very knowledgeable about the heritage involved. We wouldn't allow just any racer to drive our masterpiece. Patrick earned this honor."

Seita Kanai, Director and Executive Vice President, Mazda Motor Corporation: "In 1991, Mazda was very much an underdog team competing against Mercedes and Jaguar. This win was the racing embodiment of our expression – the will to never give up. We are pleased to be able to share this car once again with our many fans and employees around the world."

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