



May 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Eight to compete for Fastest Rookie honors

INDIANAPOLIS – Eight rookie drivers will compete this month for one of the most prestigious honors associated with the Indianapolis 500-Mile Race: **the 37th annual Fastest Rookie of the Year Award.**

The American Dairy Association of Indiana and its Hoosier dairy farm families have been sponsors of the program since its inception in 1975.

The fastest qualifier from among the Centennial rookie class will be guest of honor at the Fastest Rookie of the Year Awards Luncheon on Tuesday, May 24 at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Plaza Pavilion. This by-invitation-only event, which salutes all of the first-year drivers in the race field, is attended annually by more than 300. Included among guests are representatives of the dairy industry from throughout Indiana and the US, a multitude of motorsports personalities, and a sizable contingent of local, national and international media.

Drivers who will compete for Fastest Rookie honors, their hometowns, car numbers and teams include:

- #4 JR Hildebrand**
Sausalito, California
Panther Racing

- #8 Ho-Pin Tung**
Wenzhou, China
Dragon Racing

- #18 James Jakes**
Leeds, England
Dale Coyne Racing

- #20 Scott Speed**
Manteca, California
Dragon Racing

- #36 Pippa Mann**
Ipswich, England
Conquest Racing

- #83 Charlie Kimball**
Camarillo, California
Novo Nordisk Chip Ganassi Racing

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#88 Jay Howard
Basildon, England
Sam Schmidt-RLL Racing

#06 James Hinchcliffe
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Newman/Haas Racing.

Last year's Fastest Rookie award recipient, **Mario Romancini**, captured top honors with a four-lap average speed of 224.641 mph. Among others who have their names on the Fastest Rookie of the Year trophy are Indy 500 winners **Rick Mears, Eddie Cheever, Jr., Jacques Villeneuve, Juan Pablo Montoya, and Scott Dixon**, plus **Tony Stewart, Chip Ganassi, Jimmy Vasser, Michael Andretti, Marco Andretti, Tony Kanaan, Bruno Junqueira, Danica Patrick, and Raphael Matos.**

The May 24 event will begin with an 11 am reception, followed by lunch at 11:45. The program and presentation of awards begin at 12:30 pm. The winning rookie's name and speed are engraved on a trophy on permanent display in the Speedway's Hall of Fame Museum. He or she also will receive a plaque and a \$5000 cash award.

Event hosts include members of the board of directors of Milk Promotion Services of Indiana (MPSI): president **Donald Gurtner** of Fremont, Indiana; vice president **Paul Mills** of Ossian, Indiana; treasurer **George Crosby**, Greensburg, Indiana, and Albion, Indiana's **Steve Phares**, secretary. MPSI general manager **Deb Osza** of Lapel, Indiana and her staff also will be on hand to welcome guests.

Vince Welch, a member of the ABC Sports television crew set to cover the May 29 race, will emcee the Fastest Rookie luncheon for the 13th consecutive year. Guests will enjoy a video presentation documenting the rookie drivers' first year at Indy and showcasing the Indiana dairy industry. Both the Fastest Rookie trophy and the iconic Borg-Warner Trophy will be on display, courtesy of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Hall of Fame Museum. Guests also will get an up-close look at the Winning Driver milk bottle destined for presentation to the champion of "The Most Important Race in History" in Victory Circle on Race Day.

Purdue Dairy Sciences is joining in the festivities this year, bringing a very special surprise to the luncheon, and nationally-renowned cheese carver **Sarah Kaufmann** – aka **The Cheese Lady** – will be on hand to create a masterpiece out of a huge block of cheese, right before guests' eyes!

The Fastest Rookie of the Year is one of the Speedway's longest running programs under the same sponsorship since its inception – second only to Borg-Warner. It is one of two programs that continues the long association between the Hoosier dairy industry and the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. The Bottle of Milk presented to the winner of the 500-mile classic has been

a traditional part of the Victory Circle ceremony for over 70 years – 56 of which have been consecutive.

The legendary Louis Meyer, the first three-time winner of the 500 (1928, '33, '36) is acknowledged as the driver who began the tradition by requesting a cold drink of buttermilk – his favorite beverage – following his victory in 1933. Three years later, Meyer was photographed drinking milk in Victory Lane. Milk was presented off and on during the next several years until, in 1956, the Bottle of Milk was made a permanent part of the post-race celebration by Indianapolis Motor Speedway owner Anton “Tony” Hulman.

The bottles have become prized possessions of race winners, who also receive a \$10,000 cash prize for enjoying that long, refreshing, nutritious post-race drink of milk in Victory Circle.