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MARCH 20, 2014

Pro Mazda: Johnson Will Again Support Wheelchairs 4 Kids During Grand Prix of St. Petersburg

MOUNT MORRIS, MICH. (March 20, 2014) - Paralyzed racer Michael Johnson and his team JDC MotorSports will again support non-profit organization, Wheelchairs 4 Kids during the Firestone Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, the season-opening round one and two of the 2014 Pro Mazda Championship Presented by Cooper Tires.

Johnson will provide the organization with prime advertising space on his No. 54 JDC MotorSports Pro Mazda entry, as he has done already in 2013, when he still was running in the Cooper Tires USF2000 Championship Powered by Mazda series.



*Michael Johnson will support Wheelchairs 4 Kids during the Pro Mazda Championship season-opener in St. Petersburg
(Photo: USF2000 Championship)*

Wheelchairs 4 Kids has local ties within St. Petersburg, Fla., due to the organizations headquarters in Tarpon Springs.

"We are so excited that Michael has chosen to support Wheelchairs 4 Kids again for this year's race," said Madeline Robinson, Wheelchairs 4 Kids Executive Director. "When we meet him a year ago, I simply could not believe what he is doing racing with hand controls only, he is an amazing young man and such an inspiration to our kids. We are really grateful that we can continue to have his support for our organization with him."

"I had a blast working with Wheelchairs 4 Kids last year when I was racing in the Cooper Tires USF2000 Championship Powered by Mazda series, so for sure there was no question that I wanted to continue supporting them when we race at St. Pete again in Pro Mazda this year," Michael explained.

Based in Tarpon Springs, Fla., north of St. Petersburg, Wheelchairs 4 Kids is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Their mission is to improve the lives of children with physical disabilities by providing wheelchairs, home and vehicle modifications, as well as other adaptive devices. Many children in the U.S. faced with these issues are in wheelchairs that are too small, in disrepair, or do not fit the child's needs.

In addition, families are faced with trying to care for their special needs child in homes that have not been properly modified. Imagine trying to lift your teenager in and out of bed or a bathtub without assistive devices or a modified bathroom. Picture a child in a home where they can't get upstairs. Children outgrow their wheelchairs before government or insurance programs will allow for a replacement. Would you want to sit all day in a chair that was too small resulting in pressure sores? Wheelchairs 4 Kids is prepared to address this much neglected need.

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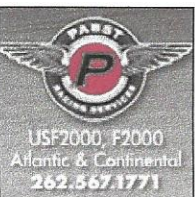
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The 21 year-old paralyzed racer Johnson is the first and only paralyzed licensed IndyCar driver. He was on his way to becoming a professional motorcycle racer, having won races and championships at regional and national level, when. on August 13, 2005, he was involved in an on-track racing accident which left him paralyzed from the mid chest down. After several years of recovery, Johnson has started racing and winning again and now has set his goal to become the first paralyzed driver to compete in the Indianapolis 500. He drives his specially modified race car with hand controls, and he became the first paralyzed racer to win in an open-wheel formula car during round two of the Skip Barber Summer Series at Watkins Glen International Raceway in 2011. He went on to claim two further victories at Road America, and finished the 2011 season with three wins, one pole position, four third place podiums, and several top-five finishes. In 2012, Johnson moved up to the Cooper Tires USF2000 Championship Powered by Mazda with championship-winning team JDC MotorSports. This is step one of the "Mazda Road to Indy" program.

In his first year as a professional licensed IndyCar driver, Johnson had several top-10 finishing positions in qualifying and races on his way to 15th position overall in the series. He is, once again, competing with JDC MotorSports in the 2013 Cooper Tires USF2000 Championship Powered by Mazda.

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