

19 May 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Raphael Matos captures
35th 'Fastest Rookie' award**

INDIANAPOLIS – Driver **Raphael Matos** was honored today (Tuesday, May 19) by the American Dairy Association of Indiana as recipient of the 35th annual Fastest Rookie of the Year Award.

Matos, driver of Luczo Dragon Racing's US Air Force No. 2, secured the honor when he qualified for the 93rd Indianapolis 500 on Sunday, May 10 at a four-lap average speed of 223.429 mph. He will start Sunday's race from the outside of Row Four.

The 27-year old native of Belo Horizonte, Brazil received a \$5000 cash award and a plaque, and his name has been added to the American Dairy Association's Fastest Rookie trophy on permanent display at the Speedway's Hall of Fame Museum. The by-invitation-only event, at The Pavilion at Brickyard Crossing, was attended by nearly 300 representatives of the nation's dairy industry, members of the racing fraternity, and local, national and international media.

THE GUEST OF HONOR

Matos was born August 28, 1981. He began his racing career in 1996 driving karts. He honed his talents over the next half-decade, winning numerous championships.

In 2002, he moved to the US and began competing in Skip Barber regional championships, where he earned Rookie of the Year honors and won the Formula Dodge National Shootout. The next year, he was that series' champion, scoring four wins and five pole positions.

The next years brought wins and championships in the Star Mazda Pro Series – including four consecutive victories at Sebring, Road Atlanta, Mid-Ohio and Montreal.

In 2006 he moved into the Atlantic Series and Firestone Indy Lights competition. In Indy Lights, for Guthrie Racing, he earned back-to-back wins in his very first outing, a two-race weekend at St. Petersburg.

The following year, he won the Atlantic Series championship, posting six wins in 12 starts, and raced for the Mazda factory team at the 12 Hours of Sebring.

Last year, Matos claimed the Firestone Firehawk Cup as champion of the Firestone Indy Lights, driving for Andretti Green Racing / AFS Racing – with a total of three wins, five poles, and 13 Top 10 finishes. His domination in that series caught the eye of Luczo Dragon Racing, and he was signed to compete in the IndyCar Series full-time in 2009.

Four other rookies made this year's field and were recognized at the luncheon: **Mike Conway** of England; **Robert Doornbos**, The Netherlands; **Nelson Philippe**, France, and **Alex Tagliani**, Quebec, Canada. Driver **Stanton Barrett** of Bishop, California also attended the luncheon, but did not make the field.

Five former Fastest Rookie award recipients are in this year's "500": defending champion Scott Dixon (03), Danica Patrick (05), Tony Kanaan (02), Marco Andretti (06), and Hideki Mutoh (08).

GREAT TRADITIONS

The Fastest Rookie of the Year Award is one of the Speedway's longest-running programs under the same sponsorship since its inception, and 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 Lane celebration for the better part of 70 years. The legendary Louis Meyer, Indy's first three-time winner (1928, '33, '36) is acknowledged as the driver who began the tradition by requesting a cold glass of buttermilk after his victory in 1933.

Following his win in '36, 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 ceremony by Indianapolis Motor Speedway owner Tony Hulman.

2009 marks the 54th consecutive year for the Bottle of Milk tradition.

Hosts for Tuesday's luncheon included 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; treasurer **George Crosby** of Greensburg, and Albion's **Steve Phares**, secretary, along with MPSI general manager **Deb Osza** of Lapel.

Board members **Sam Schwoeppe** of Huntingburg and **Franklin Weaver** of Bennington will represent the American Dairy Association of Indiana in Victory Circle on Race Day, awaiting the winner of the 93rd "500" with the fabled, ice-cold Bottle of Milk in hand. Both were present at Tuesday's event.

Vince Welch, motorsports commentator for ABC-TV and ESPN, emceed the luncheon for the 11th consecutive year. Guests included Indianapolis Motor Speedway chairman of the board **Mari Hulman George**; IMS staff advisor **Laura George**; Speedway president & COO **Joie Chitwood**; Speedway historian **Donald Davidson**; 2009 Indiana Dairy Princess **Courtney Lipply** of Plymouth; "500" Festival Queen **Annie Berning** of Indianapolis, and the legendary Voice of the 500, **Tom Carnegie**.

Board vice president Paul Mills entertained guests for the fourth consecutive year with a heartfelt rendition of "Back Home Again in Indiana" to bring the luncheon to a close.