

## Bumgarner Builds Momentum with Performance at St. Pete!



*Photos @ Indianapolis Motor Speedway Photography, LLC*

### Greetings from St. Petersburg, Florida...home of the fastest spring break!

After a five year hiatus from open-wheel competition, Michele Bumgarner kicked off a new season of competition with a solid performance in INDYCAR's Streets of St. Petersburg opening weekend. Competing in the Pro Mazda Championships Presented by Cooper Tires, Michele posted a quick time that was only 1.38 seconds off the leader's pace, staying incident free through the entire weekend.

This was Michele's first time racing the Streets of St. Pete and only her second street race, where concrete walls create tight spaces and can be very intimidating. After all, concrete hurts! Michele started the weekend with a focused mindset and gave herself the laps to get familiar with the track. In the first practice session on Friday, her starting pace posted an official best time of 1:16.0031. Her second session eclipsed that time by a full second. That's impressive.

When most people think of a second – they snap their fingers or blink an eye. But for a race car driver, a second is made up of 3/10<sup>th</sup> in one corner, 2/10<sup>th</sup> by braking 20 feet later into the next corner and another 1/10<sup>th</sup> or so getting back on the throttle faster. When you scrub a tenth off several corners of the 14-turns over 1.8 miles, you can move from 16<sup>th</sup> on the grid to the pole. But there is great deal involved in how and when you hit those brakes and when you can get back on the throttle. This is where Michele works with her team, the engineer and her driver coach to marry her driving style to the way the car handles - also known as the set up on the car. While track times are measured in hundredths and tenths, measurements on her Pro Mazda race car are measured in millimeters.

The first race of the weekend was held early Saturday evening after a substantial rain delay in the afternoon. (While INDYCAR will race in the rain – we try not to wave green flags in severe thunderstorms with hail and lightening.) So post the torrential rain, the drivers got set for Race 1 on a track surface that would be vastly different from practice. Michele rose to the occasion. She started the race 16<sup>th</sup> and besting her previous quick time she finished clean in 12<sup>th</sup> place.

Race 2 was held on schedule Sunday morning in what was an almost perfect day less a bit of a breeze. Based on the dry track conditions, the Pro Mazda cars did a standing start for the race. This is always very exciting for the fans with a field full of engines in high rev, ready to launch at the first sign of green. The full field got off to a clean start and raced into Turn 1 with spectators holding their breath to see if everyone made it through without incident. Although they were three-wide at some points, all cars made it through and set off for the 23-lap race. Michele stayed focused for a 13<sup>th</sup> place finished, posting her quickest time of the weekend of 1:13.6735. While not everyone escaped the concrete walls during the race, Michele's #16 Mazda Philippine Pro Mazda came home without a mark and all the butterflies looking great!

Michele was thrilled to have support from many new friends involved in the Philippine Cultural Foundation in Tampa with extra support from First Pinoy, Inc. – Heating and Air Conditioning Service. She also proudly carried the logo of Gawad Kalinga USA. The Gawad Kalinga vision is of ending poverty by building communities for the poorest of the poor. Over 1,700 GK villages are now standing with donations that are multiplied four times over through village sustainability programs.

**Next up for Michele:** She had such a great time with Pinoy community in Tampa that she is going straight back for the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Phil Fest 2014. Fans will have an opportunity to meet Michele at the event. **Next up on the race track:** Barber Motorsports Park, April 25 – 27 in Birmingham, Alabama.

As always a tremendous thanks to Mazda Philippines that is making this season possible through their support.

- Zoom, Zoom!

**PhilFest 2014:** <http://www.pcfitampa.org/philfest-2014/>

*Join us at PhilFest 2014, the biggest Filipino festival in the Tampa Bay Area from Friday to Sunday, April 4-6, 2014 at the Philippine Cultural Enrichment Complex and Bayanihan Arts and Events Center! The Philippine Cultural Foundation, Inc. and its member organizations are now getting ready for this momentous event that entices more than 13,000 visitors with a taste of Philippine Fiesta: food, entertainment, merchandise and more. The festival will also feature main events like "Tawag ng Tanghalan Singing Competition", "Tanghalang Pambata Children's Talent Competition", "Revolution Hip-Hop Dancing Competition and Youth Night", "Yugyugan Street Dancing Competition" and more!*

**Gawad Kalinga USA:** [www.GK-USA.org](http://www.GK-USA.org)

*Support the Gawad Kalinga movement through the Bayani Challenge USA. We are calling out to all bayanis (heroes) to support the activities of Gawad Kalinga in the US and the Philippines by raising \$100 each for ten (10) months into the Bayani Fund. For more information, see [Bayani Challenge USA](#). For check payments, please send your checks to: GK USA 13860 Stowe Dr Poway, CA 92064. Online Donations are also possible.*

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