

## Piscitell Tops Thursday Playboy Mazda MX-5 Cup Practice at Road Atlanta

**BRASELTON, Ga.** - Justin Piscitell, of Weston, Conn., was quickest in each practice session on Thursday for the SCCA Pro Racing Playboy Mazda MX-5 Cup at Road Atlanta, part of the Classic Motorsports Mitty presented by Mazda. Piscitell topped both the morning and afternoon time sheets to earn the fastest overall time. He was followed on the combined practice sheets by Ara Malkhassian, of Houston, Texas, and Michael Cooper, of Syosset, N.Y., each of who turned their fastest times under the afternoon sun.

Piscitell turned his fast time of 1:40.170 (91.284 mph) on the second lap of the 25-minute session on the 12-turn, 2.54-mile circuit just north of Atlanta. Piscitell's time is unofficially quicker than the existing MX-5 Cup qualifying record of 1:40.763 (90.747 mph) at Road Atlanta, set by Eric Foss in 2008, and paving the way for fast times in tomorrow's qualifying session.

"MER gave me an awesome car this weekend right out of the box," Piscitell said. "There are some minor adjustments, probably, but other than that it feels great. I owe it all to my teammates, we planned the draft and all we had to do was execute. We went out on a set of stickers, I'm real happy with it, and I'm looking forward to qualifying.



*Justin Piscitell led both MX-5 Cup practice sessions at Road Atlanta on Thursday.*

"We're feeling pretty good about qualifying. I'm really taking a liking to the tires that BFGoodrich gave us. It's got an awesome amount of grip and it doesn't seem to fall off, so I'm confident that if I don't get a good run on the first lap I'll be able to do it on the second."

Malkhassian was quickest in the second practice session at VIRginia International Raceway in race one, and followed that up as the second quickest this weekend at Road Atlanta. Malkhassian turned a time of 1:40.628 (90.869 mph) in the No. 11 ALARA Racing/Bulldog Productions Mazda MX-5.

"We were the only team on old tires in that session, so our performance really looks good when you consider everyone else went out on fresh tires," Malkhassian said. "It's nice to have Jesse Combs back on board as a teammate, and he and Lyonel Kent and I can put together the ALARA train for drafting. It's a track we love. I always do well on the big, high speed tracks, this is the kind of place that suits me."

With a time of 1:40.981 (90.551 mph), Cooper became the third driver to unofficially drop under the track qualifying record. Round one's third place finisher, Cooper's No. 84 AMG Racing/Bromante Landscaping & Design MX-5 is fast again this weekend.

Mark Carpenter, of Charlotte, N.C., drove his No. 14 AMG Racing/GGS Technical Publication MX-5 to fourth with a time of 1:41.449 (90.134 mph), just behind his AMG teammate.

Kent, of Knoxville, Tenn., joined teammate Malkhassian in the top five in his No. 13 ALARA Racing/Bulldog Productions MX-5 with a best time of 1:41.480 (90.106 mph).

Nick Evans, of Powell, Ohio, was second in the morning practice session but did not improve his time in the second 25-minutes, and finished eighth with a time of 1:41.566 (90.030 mph) in the No. 28 Team MER/Mazda/Sparco MX-5.

The SCCA Pro Racing Playboy Mazda MX-5 Cup returns to the track on Friday afternoon at Road Atlanta at 1:00 p.m. (EDT) for qualifying, which will set the grid for Saturday's race at 1:30 p.m. (EDT). To follow each session's notes and timing, please visit [www.mx-5cup.com](http://www.mx-5cup.com).

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