



Andersen RacePark
10101 U.S. Highway 41 North
Palmetto, Fla. 34221
Tel.: (941) 723-3900
Fax: (941) 723-3992
E-mail: info@usf2000.com
Web site: usf2000.com

Media inquiries:
Linda Mansfield, Restart Communications
Cell: (317) 201-0729
E-mail: LKMRestart@gmail.com

USF2000 Cooper Tires Winterfest Slated for January at Sebring and Homestead

PALMETTO, Fla., Sept. 29 — Junior formula car drivers who want to step up their game in 2011 can get the new season off to a rousing start by competing in the \$25,000 Cooper Tires Winterfest, a special five-race series in Florida this coming January organized by the “Cooper Tires Presents the USF2000 National Championship Powered by Mazda.”

A driver who makes a New Year’s resolution to win more races in 2011 could have two victories under his belt in the new year before all the confetti is swept up in Times Square, as the first two races in the series will be held Monday and Tuesday, Jan. 3-4, on the long course at Sebring International Raceway in Sebring, Fla.

The series then moves to the road course at Homestead-Miami Speedway in Homestead, Fla. for a race on Wednesday, Jan. 12 and a doubleheader on Thursday, Jan. 13.

The top three finishers in the Championship class will earn \$1,000, \$750 and \$250, respectively, in each of the five races. Each polesitter will receive the series’ usual \$500 Cooper Tires ‘Don’t Give Up a Thing’ Award. The National class winner will also receive a cash prize of \$500 per race.

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The overall champion of the series in the Championship class will receive a \$10,000 certificate that can be used for entries throughout the 2011 USF2000 National Championship season.

Officials will enforce a three-set maximum tire rule for the Sebring event and a four-set maximum tire rule for the Homestead tripleheader. The 2010 rulebook will be utilized, although the National class cars' ECU maps will be slightly different than in 2010 to more closely match the Championship class' cars' horsepower.

A one-time registration fee of \$350 per driver is required to earn points and prizes in the Winterfest. Race-entry fees, licensing requirement and the complete schedule can be obtained by calling the series' office at (941) 723-3900 or e-mailing info@USF2000.com. That information will also be posted on the series' Web site at USF2000.com.

"The Cooper Tires Winterfest is an excellent opportunity for teams and drivers to get started on their working relationship and get some good seat time in during the pre-season for a very reasonable budget," noted Dan Andersen, the series' promoter.

Andersen added that he expects to release the 2011 schedule for the "Cooper Tires Presents the USF2000 National Championship Powered by Mazda" shortly. He hinted that there will be some exciting new venues added for 2011 to the series' already impressive schedule of high-profile events that give the series' drivers and sponsors prime exposure.

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About Mazda:

On any given weekend there are more Mazdas on the road courses of America than any other brand of vehicle. MX-5 Miata, RX-8, MAZDA3, MAZDA6, RX-7 and other vintage Mazda models are all popular race cars because every Mazda has the soul of a sports car. In fact, the largest road-racing class in the world is Spec Miata. With more than 2,500 first- and second-generation Miatas tearing up America's racetracks, it the most-raced production car in the world. Mazda's involvement in motorsports extends to its relationship with one of the world's premier road courses, Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca in Salinas, Calif., and the Skip Barber Schools for driving and racing.

Celebrating its 40th anniversary in the United States in 2010, Mazda North American Operations is headquartered in Irvine, Calif. It oversees the sales, marketing, parts business and customer service of Mazda vehicles in the United States, Canada and Mexico through nearly 900 dealers. Operations in Canada are managed by Mazda Canada, Inc., located in Ontario. Operations in Mexico are managed by Mazda Motor de Mexico in Mexico City.

For more information see MazdaUSA.com.

About Cooper Tire & Rubber Company:

Cooper Tire & Rubber Company is a global company that specializes in the design, manufacture, marketing and sales of passenger car and light truck tires and subsidiaries that specialize in medium truck, motorcycle and racing tires. With headquarters in Findlay, Ohio, Cooper Tire has manufacturing, sales, distribution, technical and design facilities within its family of companies located in 10 countries around the world.

For more information visit Cooper Tire's Web site at coopertire.com.

About the Cooper Tires Presents the USF2000 National Championship Powered by Mazda:

Many top drivers in the IZOD IndyCar Series and endurance sports car racing honed their skills in F2000, and the Cooper Tires Presents the USF2000 National Championship Powered by Mazda is an important training ground for rising stars.

Debuting in 2010, it is the revival of the very popular USF2000 series of 1990 through 2006. Sanctioned by the Indy Racing League, it is the first step on its Road to Indy ladder system, preceding Star Mazda and Firestone Indy Lights.

It is also part of the prestigious MAZDASPEED Motorsports driver development program. The top driver in the series' Championship class earns a scholarship package from Mazda valued at \$350,000 to help him or her advance to Star Mazda the following season.

USF2000 races are contested on road courses, street courses and ovals in order to give the series' drivers experience on all the different types of tracks they will face as they proceed up the ladder.

For more information visit USF2000.com.