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## Excitement Mounts as USF2000 Series Expects Close Competition on the Ovals

INDIANAPOLIS, May 12 — Some exciting racing is expected at the next two Cooper Tires Presents the USF2000 National Championship Powered by Mazda point races, as the series moves to its two oval venues following the May 23 non-points races at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca in Monterey, Calif.

The first oval-track race of the year for the series, which is part of both the MAZDASPEED Motorsports driver development program and the Road to Indy ladder system, is Saturday, May 29 on the 0.686-mile oval at O'Reilly Raceway Park here when the series shares the card with Star Mazda and the USAC Mopar midjets. The USF2000 series will then move to the 0.875-mile tri-oval at Iowa Speedway in Newton, Iowa, where it will appear on June 19 as a support event to an IZOD IndyCar Series headliner.

The USF2000 series conducted nearly 40 oval races in the 1990s, and the ones at O'Reilly Raceway Park were always thrilling. The same is expected for Iowa Speedway, which will be a new venue for the series.

A new electronic control unit (ECU) map was introduced at the series' two-day test at O'Reilly Raceway Park last week. It reduces the horsepower for all

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Championship-class competitors to nearly match that of the National class, which will ensure great competition between both classes of cars.

The Cooper oval tire compound performed flawlessly at the test. Indications are that teams could use just one set of tires each weekend with little change in performance. Times from the recent test are posted on the series' Web site.

The series' drivers are also looking forward to the first annual "Indy Racing League Road to Indy Summit" leading up to the Indy 500. It will include track tours of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway with four-time Indy 500 winner Rick Mears and two-time winner Al Unser Jr.; pace car rides around the Speedway; a tour of the historic Hall of Fame museum with famed racing historian Donald Davidson; a Road to Indy reception at the Speedway; a breakfast seminar presented by Mazda; a Road to Indy drivers' meeting with Brian Barnhart, the IRL's president of competition and racing operations; a driver and spotters' seminar and more. The summit is open only to USF2000 and Star Mazda Road to Indy participants who are competing in the event at O'Reilly Raceway Park on May 29. Many of the series' drivers are also expected to participate in an autograph session at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway on Community Day, Wednesday, May 26.

### ***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 Monterey, 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](http://MazdaUSA.com).

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***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](http://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](http://USF2000.com).