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USF2000 Teams Prepare For Next Two Doubleheaders

PALMETTO, Fla., July 14 — The excitement level for the next two doubleheaders in the “Cooper Tires Presents the USF2000 National Championship Powered by Mazda” is high after two recent series tests at Road America in Elkhart Lake, Wis., on Thursday, July 8 and at the Autobahn County Club in Joliet, Ill., on Monday, July 12.

The series will appear at those two tracks in reverse order in the next few weeks.

The series, which is part of both the MAZDASPEED Motorsports driver development program and the Indy Racing League’s Road to Indy program, will be featured on HDNet’s live coverage of the Harrah’s Autobahn Grand Prix Presented by Mazda at Autobahn Country Club’s 3.56-mile, 21-turn road course on July 31-Aug. 1. The series will then move to Road America’s 4.048-mile, 14-turn road course on Aug. 21-22 for another doubleheader which is part of the Time Warner Cable Road Race Showcase that supports an American Le Mans Series headliner.

Autobahn Country Club and Road America are the two longest tracks on the series’ 2010 schedule. Good results at both places will be important as the young

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USF2000 Teams Prepare/Page 2 of 3

guns in the Championship class vie for the MAZDASPEED Motorsports scholarship valued at \$350,000 that will go to the champion of that division following the season finale at the Petit Le Mans at Road Atlanta in Braselton, Ga., Sept. 30-Oct. 1.

Although no official times were taken, stopwatches at the Road America test showed the fastest time of the day for the USF2000 contingent to be around 2:12.1. Andretti Autosport was there with point leader Sage Karam and Zach Veach, while Patrick McKenna, who won the series' most recent race, represented Cape Motorsports with Wayne Taylor Racing. JDC MotorSports was busy working on the set-ups of cars driven by hard chargers Mikhail Goikhberg, Raphael Abbate and Martin Sala. Matt Powers practiced in one of Liberty Motorsports' cars, while that team's driver coach, Andersen Racing's Anders Krohn, sorted out a second Liberty Motorsports car.

Pabst Racing Services joined all of those teams for the test that followed at the Autobahn Country Club, as one of its National class drivers, J.R. Smart, is determined to regain the National class point lead now held by Ardie Greenamyer. Two additional drivers also tested there, as Fuerza Chile drivers Martin Scuncio and Javier Barrales participated in the test in a cooperative effort with Cape Motorsports. Krohn didn't drive for Liberty Motorsports at the Autobahn test, but Powers represented that team there as he did at Road America.

The unofficial fast time at the Autobahn test was 2:18.7 for the USF2000 cars.

Point leader Sage Karam was involved in a crash early in the morning, but the Andretti Autosport team had the car back on the track for the very next session. Carl Haas Automobile Imports was present at both tests to supply parts for just such incidents, while Steve Knapp of Elite Engines was also on hand to provide his expertise on the Mazda MZR engines and other powerplants used in the series.

"The USF2000 National Championship shared the test days with some Star Mazda teams," noted Michelle Kish, the USF2000 series manager. "The times for the USF2000 cars were surprisingly close to the Star Mazda cars, which have close to 90 more horsepower."

For more information on the series see usf2000.com.

USF2000 Teams Prepare/Page 3 of 3

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 is 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.