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Karam Wins Eighth USF2000 Cooper Tires Pole Award Saturday Morning at Road America

ELKHART LAKE, Wis., Aug. 21 — Sage Karam won his eighth Cooper Tires “Don’t Give Up a Thing” pole award Saturday morning at Road America in preparation for Round 9 of the “Cooper Tires Presents the USF2000 National Championship Powered by Mazda,” which is slated to get the green flag at 12:10 p.m. Saturday.

Karam, 15, of Nazareth, Pa., drives the Andretti Autosport Van Diemen Mazda No. 8 sponsored by the Michael Fux Foundation, Comfort Revolution, Bell Helmets, Alpine Stars, Walters Web and artrotundo.com.

Karam’s fastest qualifying lap was done in a sizzling 2:10.765 for an average speed of 111.443 miles per hour for the 14-turn, 4.048-mile road course. It was an automatic new track record, and it occurred on the seventh of 12 laps he turned in the 30-minute qualifying session.

It was also 0.918 of a second faster than the second-fastest time run in the session. Mikhail Goikhberg of St. Petersburg, Russia duplicated his best qualifying result in the series so far when he ran a 2:11.683 (110.666 mph) to earn the right to start alongside Karam in his JDC MotorSports No. 10.

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Zach Veach of Stockdale, Ohio will be right behind his teammate, Karam, for the start of the race, as he qualified third with a time of 2:12.140 and an average speed of 110.283 mph in his Andretti Autosport No. 7 sponsored by ADS, Retail Pro and Secure IT.

Dublin, Ireland's Patrick McKenna, the only driver other than Karam to win a pole in the series so far this year, will start fourth by virtue of his fastest lap in qualifying, a 2:12.191 (110.240 mph) clocked in his No. 2, which is fielded by Cape Motorsports with Wayne Taylor Racing and sponsored by Motorsport Ireland and Willsborough Transport.

Karam was the fastest driver in practice Friday too. He trimmed 0.370 of a second off his best time on Friday for Saturday morning's qualifying session.

"Everything is going well," Karam said after qualifying. "Hopefully Zach and I can make it an Andretti Autosport one-two in the race."

Tonis Kasemets of Mundelein, Ill. was the second-fastest driver in practice Friday but he qualified eighth in his Pabst Racing Services No. 6, a Zetec-powered Van Diemen.

J.R. Smart of Fitchburg, Wis. topped the National class with a time of 2:18.891 (104.923 mph), another automatic new track record. He'll start 13th in the 14-car field in the Smart Motors No. 9 fielded by Pabst Racing Services. Although the Championship class is devoted to Van Diemens, the National class is open to any F2000 chassis that meets the current SCCA Formula Continental regulations.

Live timing and scoring of Saturday's race and a similar one on Sunday at 8:45 a.m. will be available on USF2000.com. The starting line-up for Sunday's race will be established by each driver's fastest race lap during Saturday's race.

All times are Central.

The USF2000 doubleheaders are part of the Time Warner Road Race Showcase.

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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.