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Karam Does It Again on Sunday In USF2000 Action at Road America

ELKHART LAKE, Wis., Aug. 22 — It was deja vu all over again Sunday at Road America for Round 10 of the 12-race “Cooper Tires Presents the USF2000 National Championship Powered by Mazda,” as the podium finishers were the same on Sunday as they were for the first half of the doubleheader here on Saturday.

Andretti Autosport’s Sage Karam led all 11 laps in Sunday’s non-stop race just as he did on Saturday to post his seventh victory of the year in the series, which is part of both the Indy Racing League’s Road to Indy ladder system and the MAZDASPEED Motorsports driver development program.

This time the 15-year-old from Nazareth, Pa. had a 9.405-second advantage over JDC MotorSports’ Mikhail Goikhberg of St. Petersburg, Russia with his red No. 8 Van Diemen Mazda, which is sponsored by the Michael Fux Foundation, Comfort Revolution, Bell Helmets, Alpine Stars, Walters Web and artrotundo.com.

Andretti Autosports’ Zach Veach of Stockdale, Ohio finished third, 5.756 seconds behind Goikhberg, with his No. 7 sponsored by ADS, Retail Pro and Secure IT.

Patrick McKenna of Dublin, Ireland, who drives for Cape Motorsports with Wayne Taylor Racing, started third and vaulted into second on the first lap. He held that

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position until lap six when he spun in Turn 6. McKenna, who is sponsored by Motorsport Ireland and Willsborough Transport, regrouped to place seventh at the checkered.

Javier Barrales of Concepcion, Chile, who drives for Cape Motorsports with Wayne Taylor Racing and Fuerza Chile Motorsports, started sixth but passed both Veach and Raphael Abbate at the start to move into fourth place. Veach got around him on lap three, but Barrales' hopes for a top-five finish were dashed when his car ended up in a tire wall off Turn 10 of the 4.048-mile, 14-turn road course with five lap down. He emerged unscathed and the accident did not require a full-course caution.

In the end fourth place went to veteran Tonis Kasemets of Mundelein, Ill., who drives for Pabst Racing Services. Rounding out the top five for the second time in less than 24 hours was Abbate, a driver from Sao Paulo, Brazil who drives a Van Diemen Mazda fielded by JDC MotorSports and sponsored by Avery Dennison and Alphacolor.

Although the field got strung out, McKenna and Matthew Powers of Danville, Calif. had a stirring battle for sixth at the end. Powers had that spot with 15 minutes gone but McKenna passed him on lap nine, right before Scott Andersen of Fort Collins, Colo. pulled off the track near Turn 13 with a broken suspension piece in his Z Sports Midwest No. 21. Powers got McKenna back on lap 10 and went on to finish sixth one lap later in his Liberty Motorsports No. 41 sponsored by the Ghilotti Brothers. Powers started 13th, and his drive earned him the \$200 Tilton Hard Charger award.

McKenna ended up seventh, with Liberty Motorsports' Felix Serralles of Ponce, Puerto Rico in eighth place in a Liberty Motorsports car sponsored by SS Discount Tire of Haines City, Fla. Martin Scuncio of Concepcion, Chile, who drives for Fuerza Chile Motorsports/Cape Motorsports with Wayne Taylor Racing, placed ninth. Rounding out the top 10 was David Cheng of Sammamish, Wash., who drives for Z Sports Midwest. Cheng won the \$200 Staubli award, which is given randomly.

J.R. Smart of Fitchburg, Wis. placed 11th overall and won the National class again on Sunday for Pabst Racing Services with his Smart Motors Van Diemen Ford. Ardie Greenamyre of Louisville, Ky. was right behind him to place second in that class for AccelereRace Motorsports and his sponsors: Bidazzled.com, Sabelt, Sube Sports, ChaseCam, MemeTech and NEXAIRA.

The class-winning teams, Andretti Autosport and Pabst Racing Services, received PFC gift certificates of \$100 and \$50, respectively, as part of their winnings.

The two fastest laps on Sunday were both set on lap 11 when Karam was timed in 2:10.654 (111.529 miles per hour) and Goikhberg ran a 2:11.062 (111.190 mph). Karam's

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time was a new track record, as it was 0.812 of a second faster than his fastest lap on Saturday.

The championship will go down to the last event of the season, a doubleheader at Road Atlanta in Braselton, Ga. Sept. 30-Oct. 1. Karam goes into that event with 285 points to McKenna's 230. Goikhberg is still third with 182 points. Abbate is fourth with 164 and Veach rounds out the top five with 145 points. At stake is a year-end scholarship from Mazda valued at \$350,000 to help the champion advance to the Star Mazda series next year.

Greenamyre leads the National class point standings with 168 points to Smart's 124.

Andretti Autosport continues to lead the team point standings with 284 points, but JDC MotorSports moves into second in those standings with 216 points to Cape Motorsports' 203.

The complete point standings and other information is available on the series' Web site at USF2000.com.

Post-race quotes follow:

Sage Karam: "Andretti Autosport is an awesome team. I want to thank everybody, especially Michael Andretti, the Michael Fux Foundation, Comfort Revolution, Mazda, Cooper Tires and the Road to Indy program. I also want to thank Steve Knapp of Elite Engines for giving us such a reliable Mazda engine.

"We started out on old tires and the car got loose on me. But it was hooked up and it stuck to the ground. I can't thank Andretti Autosport enough."

Mikhail Goikhberg: "Just like yesterday we had a little mistake at the start, but hopefully we can learn from that. Today I went a little early so I had to slow down, and I lost my momentum. It took me awhile to get around McKenna because of it, but he spun in Turn 6.

"We moved up in the points on McKenna, so that's good. I want to thank my team, JDC MotorSports."

Zach Veach: "I can't thank Andretti Autosport enough. We did a one-day test before we came here and it really helped. I also want to thank Mazda, Cooper Tires and my sponsors: ADS, Retail Pro and Secure IT.

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“My car had an understeer, but we didn’t want to go to the bar too soon. That’s what we did yesterday, and we burned up the tires. We were on used tires today, and we just tried to make it to the end.”

J.R. Smart: “I want to thank Cooper Tires, Mazda, Pabst Racing Services, Smart Motors, the Road to Indy and my mentor, Tonis Kasemets, for his support and tutelage.

“I think the track conditions were a little slicker today than they were yesterday. I used my bar to improve the way I was getting through the Carousel, and that helped. The team helped me keep my head down and focused on going full-speed ahead, and it paid off with the National class win.”

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.

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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.