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## McKenna Takes Up the Gauntlet By Leading Every Session During USF2000's Two-Day Test at O'Reilly Raceway Park

INDIANAPOLIS, May 8 — After Andretti Autosport's Sage Karam dominated every session at the USF2000 National Championship's season-opening doubleheader at the Honda Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, Patrick McKenna said he and his team, Cape Motorsports with Wayne Taylor Racing, had some work to do if they wanted to stop Karam from doing the same thing on May 29 at the Night Before the 500 at O'Reilly Raceway Park here.

McKenna is second in the point standings but it certainly seems like he has stepped up his game because it was he, not Karam, who led every session of the series' two-day test on the oval at O'Reilly Raceway Park on Wednesday and Thursday.

McKenna and many of the other drivers in the USF2000 series, which is presented by Cooper Tires and powered by Mazda, have limited or no experience racing on an oval speedway. McKenna has never even attended an auto race at an oval track.

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Still, the 22-year-old from Dublin, Ireland set the fastest lap of the test during the first practice session on Thursday morning when he took just 21.667 seconds to circle the 0.686-mile oval for an average speed of 113.980 miles per hour. Driving the No. 2 sponsored by Motorsport Ireland, Willsborough Transport and the Irish Sports Council, he pared almost six-tenths of a second off his best lap on Wednesday, which was a 22.251 set in the second of four sessions run that day.

Karam, of Nazareth, Pa., continued to impress everyone as he was only 0.180 of a second behind McKenna to claim the second-fastest lap of the test with a time of 21.847 seconds and an average speed of 113.041 mph. His red No. 8 is sponsored by Comfort Revolution, the Michael Fux Foundation, Bell Helmets, Alpine Stars, Walters Web and artrotundo.com.

Karam's new teammate, Zach Veach of Stockdale, Ohio, can't wait to stop testing and start racing. He was third-fastest at the test with a lap in 22.142 for an average speed of 111.535 mph. His No. 7 carries the colors of ADS, Retail Pro and Secure IT.

Mikhael Goikhberg of Toronto, who drives for JDC MotorSports, was fourth fastest with a time of 22.263 (110.928 mph). The native of St. Petersburg, Russia posted it during the second session on Thursday. His No. 10 advertises Chetverg Motor Sport.

McKenna's teammate, Josh Fielding of Chesterfield, England, clocked the third-fastest time on Wednesday and the fifth-fastest time of the test overall for the Cape brothers with a lap in 22.520 (109.663 mph), much to the delight of his sponsor, Euro-engines.com.

McKenna said his fastest lap of the test came in a simulated time trial.

"We did a little private test session last week at Gresham Motorsports Park in Georgia, but that was only about one and a half days due to rain," McKenna reported. "That test and this one is the first time I've driven on an oval track.

"I think oval tracks are cool," he added. "It's fun racing around the ovals. Hopefully we'll be even stronger when we come back here for the Night Before the 500 than we were at St. Pete, so we have something for Sage."

"I'm happy with what we accomplished here," added McKenna, who recently learned that he was chosen as the Irish Young Driver of the Month for March. "We were quickest both days.

"I had a couple of close moments though," he admitted. "I got loose and ran high, but then I caught it."

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“I’ve never even been to an oval-track race before,” he added. “I can’t wait to come here and race on Saturday night and then go to the Indy 500 the next day.”

The Night Before the 500 show at O’Reilly Raceway Park, which will feature the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear and the USAC Mopar Midgets in addition to the USF2000 series, is less than 24 hours before the Indianapolis 500 is held a few miles east at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. The USF2000 National Championship and the Star Mazda series are steps on the Indy Racing League’s official Road to Indy ladder system, and both are also part of the MAZDASPEED Motorsports driver development program. At the end of the year the top driver in the USF2000 series’ Championship class will earn a scholarship from Mazda to be used to race in the 2011 Star Mazda Championship.

Star Mazda will be making its first visit to O’Reilly Raceway Park this month, but seven F2000 races were held on the oval here in the past under USAC sanction. Aaron Justus won two of them, while Greg Tracy, Clay Collier, Anthony Lazzaro, Allen May and Memo Gidley won the other ones. Jonathan Clues and Mike Andersen, son of the USF2000 series’ promoter, Dan Andersen, won USAC Formula 2000 races on the road course here too.

The USF2000 series will stage a non-points exhibition doubleheader at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca in Monterey, Calif. on Sunday, May 23 before it returns to O’Reilly Raceway Park on May 29. Practice sessions will be held in the afternoon and evening on Friday, May 28. The following day more practice sessions will start at 9:50 a.m. before time trials start at 1:30 p.m. The 50-lap USF2000 race is slated to get the green flag at 6 p.m. USAC Mopar midget heats, the 45-minute Star Mazda race and the USAC midget feature will follow.

The USF2000 series’ second oval-track race of the year will be held June 19 at Iowa Speedway as a support event to an IZOD IndyCar Series race. The balance of the 12-race series will be contested on road courses.

For the rest of the schedule and more information, including all the test session results, see [usf2000.com](http://usf2000.com).

### ***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-

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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).

### ***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 from Mazda 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).