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Karam Leads Every Lap Again Sunday To Beat Fielding and McKenna In USF2000 Action at St. Pete Grand Prix

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla., March 28 — Sage Karam of Nazareth, Pa. concluded a perfect weekend at the Honda Grand Prix of St. Petersburg on Sunday morning by leading all 20 laps of Round 2 of the USF2000 National Championship, which is presented by Cooper Tires and powered by Mazda. By backing up his victory in Saturday's season opener with another triumph on Sunday, Andretti Autosport officials said Karam also gave Michael Andretti his 50th victory as a team owner.

Being the first race on Sunday's card that featured the IZOD IndyCar Series meant that the drivers had to be careful not to be too aggressive too early, since their Cooper tires were cold and the track was green. That was no problem for Karam, and he had an even bigger margin of victory on Sunday than he had in Saturday's season opener for the series, which is part of both the Road to Indy and the MAZDASPEED Motorsports driver development programs.

Karam had a whopping 16.732-second lead over the first of two drivers from Cape Motorsports by Wayne Taylor Racing who shared the podium with him on

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Sunday. Josh Fielding of Chesterfield, England took the runner-up honors, while Patrick McKenna of Dublin, Ireland finished third for his second podium finish in as many days.

Karam was able to get a good start initially and on the one restart on lap five, and he had things his way throughout the race. He thanked Andretti Autosport, his sponsors — The Michael Fux Foundation, Comfort Revolution, Bell Helmets, Alpine Stars, Walters Web and artrotundo.com — and the series sponsors, Mazda and Cooper Tires, from the podium.

The two Cape Motorsports cars were very evenly matched, although stronger than the other in different sections of the 1.8-mile, 14-turn street course. McKenna said his car was better in the braking zones and Fielding's car was better off the corners, and they finished the way they started.

Fielding's car is sponsored by euro-engines.com and premiermiller.com, while McKenna's carries the colors of Motorsport Ireland, Willsborough Transport and the Irish Sports Council.

Fourth went to the driver who finished third on Saturday, Terrick Mansur of Aruba, who drives for Liberty Motorsports and promotes Aruba.com. Rounding out the top five was ZSports Midwest's Benjamin Searcy of Tuscaloosa, Ala., who is sponsored by Combustion Technologies. Searcy got the \$200 Tilton Hard Charger Award on Sunday after starting 12th. JDC MotorSports' Raphael Abbate of Sao Paulo, Brazil earned a similar award for starting 13th and finishing sixth on Saturday.

Rounding out the top 10 on Sunday were: AIM Autosport's Anthony Furfari of Woodbridge, Ontario; JDC MotorSports' Mikhail Goikhberg of St. Petersburg, Russia; AcceleRace Motorsports' Ardie Greenamyer of Louisville, Ky.; Liberty Motorsports' Matthew Powers of Danville, Calif. and the National class winner, Pabst Racing Services' J.R. Smart of Fitchburg, Wis. JDC MotorSport's Abbate; Pabst Racing Services' Martin Scuncio of Concepcion, Chile and JDC's Martin Sala of Bogota, Columbia completed the final rundown. Sala suffered a minor bruise on his right leg in an accident on the first lap that brought out the event's lone yellow flag from laps one to four to clean up the debris.

Staubli picks two drivers for a random \$200 award for each race. Goikhberg was that lucky winner on Saturday, while Powers got that prize on Sunday.

Karam now leads the Championship class' driver point standings over McKenna, Mansur, Fielding and Furfari.

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Cape Motorsports with Wayne Taylor Racing tops the team standings with 57 points to Andretti Autosport's 44. Liberty Motorsports, JDC MotorSports, AIM Autosport, Pabst Racing Services and AcceleRace Motorsports follow after the first doubleheader of the year.

With a street course under their belts, the USF2000 drivers will experience racing on an oval at the next race May 29 at O'Reilly Raceway Park in Indianapolis, Ind., when USF2000 shares the card with Star Mazda and the USAC MOPAR national midgets.

Additional information is available on usf2000.com.

Post-race quotes follow:

Sage Karam: "On the start and the restart, I knew I had to get a good jump and avoid the mayhem. I did that, and then checked out.

"I really learned how to race on cold tires in karting. I had a good idea of when I could get on it.

"After winning Saturday a little pressure was off, but I still had a job to do today."

Josh Fielding: "I couldn't keep up with Sage. Patrick and I were very equal in lap times. At the start of the weekend I was 3 seconds off, so to get second today is good. I'm a confident person; I'm always smiling.

"The team performed well and I couldn't ask for more. It was kind of difficult, but I kept breathing and kept my head straight and pulled it off."

Patrick McKenna: "I only got close enough to Josh once. It was a good race. We were stronger in different areas. I was better in the braking zones than he was. He was better off the corners. We were so evenly matched it was hard to pass him. He didn't make any mistakes. We have some work to do to catch Sage."

J.R. Smart (National class winner): "I just brought it home unscathed. I want to thank the event organizers for putting on such a great event. I'm living the dream!"

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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 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.

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.