



## De Silva Clinches Pacific F2000 to Earn MRTI \$200K Scholarship Entry

PALMETTO, Fla. – Tim de Silva has become the second driver to secure an entry to the inaugural Mazda Road to Indy USF2000 \$200K Scholarship Shootout which will be held at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca, near Monterey, Calif., on December 6-7. The scholarship winner will claim a \$200,000 Mazda Scholarship to move onto the first step of the acclaimed Mazda Road to Indy, the Cooper Tires USF2000 Championship Powered by Mazda, in 2017.

The Shootout will be an unprecedented event, bringing the 2016 champions of select junior open-wheel and karting series from around the world together for the first time to vie for the scholarship in a knockout-style format.

De Silva, 20, from Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif., earned his opportunity after clinching the Pacific F2000 Championship Presented by Primus Racing Parts last weekend at Sonoma Raceway. He joins Michael Scott, 21, from Te Puke, New Zealand, who clinched a berth in the shootout by winning his national Formula Ford Championship earlier this year.

Pacific F2000 and New Zealand Formula Ford are among a plethora of junior categories from around the globe designated as Official Feeder Series of the Mazda Road to Indy, which offers a series of scholarships to allow talented youngsters to progress all the way from the grassroots of the sport via USF2000, the Pro Mazda Championship Presented by Cooper Tires and Indy Lights Presented by Cooper Tires to the Verizon IndyCar Series and the Indianapolis 500.

“If you had told me a couple of years ago that I would have the opportunity to compete in the Mazda Road to Indy USF2000 \$200,000 Scholarship Shootout, I do not think I would have believed you,” said de Silva, whose first exposure to the sport came at the tender age of 4 when, at the behest of his father, an avid vintage racer, he began driving a quarter midget race car and a Yamaha 50cc motorcycle in his backyard.

De Silva raced karts from the age of 11 before progressing into the vintage ranks with a Formula Atlantic Ralt RT-1. After a couple of years of dovetailing his racing with his studies at Claremont McKenna College, de Silva has taken the Pacific F2000 series by storm in 2016. He has won seven of 10 races aboard a Dave Freitas Racing-prepared Van Diemen and posted new lap records at Willow Springs, Buttonwillow Raceway Park, Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca and, most recently, Sonoma Raceway. De Silva’s points tally cannot be eclipsed even with two races remaining in the season.

“I feel very fortunate just to have been able to participate in the 2016 Pacific F2000 Championship in addition to attending college and playing collegiate golf,” continued de Silva. “Working with Dave Freitas Racing this past year was an unforgettable experience, both because I spent time working with great friends and because I was able to learn from some of the best in motorsports.

“I am thrilled about the opportunity to compete with great drivers from around the world in the Mazda Road to Indy Shootout. Regardless of the outcome, I am confident that I will remember this experience for the rest of my life. What excites me most about the Shootout is the opportunity to interact with drivers who share my passion and success. Every one of these drivers will have a unique path they took to get to this Shootout. Seeing the different ways people with my same passion have found success will be a tremendous learning experience for me.”

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**About USF2000:** The Cooper Tires USF2000 Championship Powered by Mazda debuted in 2010 and is a continuation of the highly-regarded USF2000 series which ran from 1990 through 2006, launching the careers of many of today's top drivers. Sanctioned by INDYCAR and managed by Andersen Promotions, the series is the first official step on the Mazda Road to Indy ladder system. The top driver in the Championship class will earn a scholarship package from Mazda to advance to the Pro Mazda Championship Presented by Cooper Tires. Additional information can be found at [www.usf2000.com](http://www.usf2000.com).

**About Mazda, Mazda Motorsports:** Mazda Motorsports boasts the most comprehensive auto racing development ladder system of any auto manufacturer in the world. The Mazda Road to 24 program offers a number of scholarships to advance drivers up the sports car racing ladder, beginning with the Global MX-5 Cup series and culminating with the Mazda Prototype team. The Mazda Road to Indy is a similar program that includes Mazda-powered categories of USF2000, Pro Mazda and Indy Lights. In grassroots road racing, more Mazdas race on any given weekend in North America than any other manufacturer. Mazda is also the title sponsor of the renowned Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca in Monterey, Calif. Follow all of the latest news at [MazdaMotorsports.com](http://MazdaMotorsports.com), [@MazdaRacing](https://twitter.com/MazdaRacing) on Twitter, and MazdaMotorsports on Instagram and Facebook.

**About Cooper Tire & Rubber Company:** Cooper Tire & Rubber Company, together with its subsidiaries, is a leading designer, manufacturer and marketer of innovative, great-performing tires that people depend on for all of life's road trips, whether on city streets, off-road adventures or high-speed tracks. In fact, Cooper Tire is proud to sponsor and race in all three levels of the Mazda Road to Indy development program within the IndyCar racing series. Cooper tires can also be seen on the track as a sponsor of the IMSA Prototype Lites Series, and competing in the short course off-road TORC Series. Headquartered in Findlay, Ohio, Cooper, together with its subsidiaries, has manufacturing, sales, distribution, technical and design facilities in 11 countries around the world. This year, as we head into our second century in the tire industry, Cooper is looking toward a future where innovation will continue to drive our products and our products will continue to drive the world. To connect with Cooper Tire, visit [www.coopertire.com](http://www.coopertire.com), [www.facebook.com/coopertire](https://www.facebook.com/coopertire) or [www.twitter.com/teamcoopertire](https://www.twitter.com/teamcoopertire).