

BUTTONWILLOW, California (April 29, 2017) – 2017 has been one of the most competitive seasons in the last 6 years with two different winners in the first two weekends and no less than 5 drivers fighting for the top step. The Pacific F2000 series enters weekend three with all the competitors holding their cards close to their chest.

There was no wait for the excitement as Saturday Qualifying was nothing short of racing perfection. Canadian Mitch Egner showed ‘The Great White North’ isn’t afraid of a little heat, taking provisional pole with 2 laps remaining in the session. Not to be outdone, reigning champion Tim ‘The Little Prince’ de Silva came to the checkered flag topping Mitch by just .073 sec. The last car on track, Tom Hope dropped the proverbial bomb on the field as he clinched pole with a 1:42.397, just .17 ahead of Tim, .25 separating the top 3 drivers. The top three were followed by Scott Huffaker in fourth with a 1:43.524. Fifth was Bob Negron with a 1:44.696, followed by Peter West in sixth on a 1:44.061 and Nick Kodenko in seventh with a 1:44.242. Rookie Jason Reichert held down eighth with a 1:44.975, while Gavin Aitken (another Canadian contender) turned a 1:46.333 in his first visit to Buttonwillow to secure ninth spot. The tenth place qualifier was Troy Tinsley who was the first of the National Class cars which use the older Pinto motors. After a six month hiatus from racing, Sterling Ellsworth slid into the eleventh spot just ahead of Kim Wilcox, who was the second National class car. Paul MacFarlane qualified thirteenth overall and third in the National Class. Paul Marino in his first outing with the HM Motorsports team had a rare car failure on the out lap for qualifying and would go no further this weekend. Series regular Robert Armington had a gearbox issue that prevented him from completing qualifying.

Continuing the momentum, Saturday’s race saw Tom Hope’s Dart Trucking/HM Racing machine going 2 wide with deSilva through turn 1. Hope edged out deSilva in turn two leading Egner, Huffaker, Negron, and West. Huffaker drove an incredible race, driving by Egner and deSilva just a few laps in as he set his sights on Hope. Mitch Egner put down some incredible lap times in his fight to the front, but fell victim to an off-track excursion that put him in a battle with veteran Bob Negron for 4th.

This race was never short of surprises as lap 7 would see deSilva attempt a pass on Huffaker in the 95mph ‘Phil Hill’ that would ultimately end his race. Nick Kodenko and Peter West had a tremendous scrap for 5th that would see the two trade positions with Kodenko edging out West to the line. The calculating Negron ultimately prevailed over Egner for 3rd with Huffaker clear of them both by 10 seconds. Finishing seventh was the steadily improving rookie Reichert. Gavin Aitken drove a consistent race to come in eighth, while Tinsley was ninth overall and the winner in National Class. Ellsworth also drove a steady race to finish tenth with MacFarlane finishing eleventh overall and second in the National Class. Tim deSilva was credited with twelfth, as he had completed more than half the race before retiring. Willcox, Armington and Marino failed to take the start, each suffering from car woes.

As good a race as this was, nobody had anything for the dominant Hope as he drove to the win 5 seconds ahead of Huffaker to become the third different winner in as many weekends.

This season the Pacific Formula F2000 Championship Series was included in the Mazda Road to Indy USF2000 \$200k Scholarship Shootout. The winner of the knockout style shootout will be provided with a \$200k Scholarship to enter the Cooper Tires USF2000 Championship Powered by Mazda in 2018 – the first rung in the Mazda Road to Indy ladder sanctioned by INDYCAR. The Mazda Road to Indy is the only driver development program of its type in the world offering a clear, scholarship-funded path to the Verizon IndyCar Series and Indianapolis 500. The Pacific F2000/F1600 series has a rich history and includes among its alumni drivers J.R. Hildebrand, 2011 Indianapolis 500 Rookie of the year and Dane Cameron, WeatherTech Series Prototype and GTD winning driver along with Pro Mazda Presented by Cooper Tires 2016 runner-up Patricio O'Ward and Cooper Tires USF2000 Championship Powered by Mazda drivers Nikita Lastochkin and Yufeng Luo the 2015 SCCA FC champion.

F2000 Qualifying: 1)Tom Hope 1:42.397, 2)Tim deSilva 1:42.574, 3)Mitch Egner 1:42.647, 4) Scott Huffaker 1:43.524, 5) Bob Negron 1:43.696,6) Peter West 1:44.061, 7) Nick Kodenko 1:44.242, 8) Jason Reichert 1:44.973, 9) Gavin Aitken 1:46.333, 10) Troy Tinsley N 1:50.201, 11) Sterling Ellsworth 1:53.342, 12) Kim Willcox N 1:54.113, 13) Paul MacFarlane N 1:59.443, 14) Paul Marino no time, 15) Robert Armington time disallowed did not report to impound

(All drivers in Van Diemen chassis. Drivers with N after name National class, all others using Zetec motors)

F2000 Round 5: 1) Tom Hope 1:43.072*, 2) Scott Huffaker -5.7, 3) Bob Negron -9.951, 4) Mitch Egner -1.641, 5) Nick Kodenko -12.025, 6) Peter West -1.817, 7) Jason Reichert -12.613, 8) Gavin Aitken -36.205, 9) Troy Tinsley -1 lap, 10) Sterling Ellsworth -1 lap, 11) Paul MacFarlane -2 laps, 12) Tim deSilva -7 laps, 13) Kim Willcox DNS, 14) Robert Armington DNS, 15) Paul Marino DNS

*1:43.072 (Hope) new lap record

BUTONWILLOW, California (April 30, 2017) – Since the Sunday morning qualifying session was optional, only a couple of drivers improved their time but not position; Sunday's starting order was the same as Saturday leaving the drivers and teams to make their final adjustments for the late afternoon shootout.

In what looked like a replay of Saturday's start with Tim de Silva (TLP) and Hope going 2 wide through turn 1. deSilva would prove he learned his lesson from the prior day and took the lead over Hope going into turn 2. This lead was short lived as Hope made a tremendous pass in 'Star Mazda' to take the lead and what looked like a repeat of his performance by pulling out a few seconds on deSilva.

This was not to be the case as defending champion Tim de Silva would push Hope lap after lap. After closing the gap, deSilva would make the move to pass Hope on lap 7 in a kind of serendipitous self-retribution for his mistake on the same lap the prior day. The pace between

these two saw a rare mistake by Hope when he locked up his brakes heading into the last corner, going off track, returning in 5th. “Tim and I were pushing the limits every lap and I overstepped for just a moment,” Hope lamented after the race.

Mitch Egner would prove that the mistakes from the prior race were well behind him as he drove inch perfect without putting a wheel wrong. Egner was able to capitalize on Hope’s mistake to take second place, just 3 seconds adrift of deSilva. Huffaker would find today’s battle was in his car setup as he would fight to stay in 3rd ahead of the charging Bob Negron.

Peter West and Nick Kodenko were joined in battle today by and Jason Reichert. The rookie, Reichert, showed his work is paying by putting the battle to West and Kodenko. Unfortunately, Reichert would fall victim to wheel-to-wheel contact with Peter West in a battle through traffic. We look to see great things from the the rookie in the coming races.

DeSilva would take the win over Egner and Huffaker to round out the podium. “We made a last minute change that made the difference today” explained TLP, “Credit to Dave Freitas and his team for having the confidence to risk it all. “Nobody had the pace for Tom (Hope) so far this weekend, but we took a chance and it paid off” said deSilva.

Negron prevailed over Hope to finish fourth. After his excursion off track, Hope had to settle for fifth followed by Kodenko and West in sixth and seventh. Sterling Ellsworth was the hard charger of the race moving up from eleventh to eighth. Troy Tinsley and Kim Willcox finished in ninth and tenth overall, and were first and second in the National class. Eleventh place Paul MacFarlane rounded out the National class podium.

Reichert had to retire after suffering suspension damage. Gavin Aitken had a big off early in the race and was unable to continue. Armington was very racy for the first few laps, but had a recurrence of the gearbox problems that plagued him all weekend.

The next round of the series will see the series enter Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca June 1-4.

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F2000 Round 6: 1)Tim deSilva 1:42.886 2)Mitch Egner -2.897, 3)Scott Huffaker -14.979, 4)Bob Negron -1lap 5)Tom Hope -1 lap, 6)Nick Kodenko -1 lap 7)Peter West -1 lap, 8)Sterling Ellsworth

-1lap, 9)Troy Tinsley -2 laps, 10)Kim Willcox -2 laps, 11)Paul MacFarlane -4 laps, 12)Jason Reichert -8laps,13)Gavin Aitken -13laps, 14) Robert Armington -14 laps, 15)Paul Marino DNS

Points after 6 Rounds:1)Bob Negron 129, 2)Tom Hope 126, 3)Tim deSilva 114, 4)Mitch Egner 107, 5)Peter West 79, 6)Jason Reichert 77, 6)Harindra deSilva 77, 8)Gavin Aitken 61, 8)Nick Kodenko 61, 10)Scott Huffaker 47, 11)Robert Armington 44, 12)Bill Kincaid 37, 13)Les Phillips 32, 14)Bruna Thomaselli 28, 15)Scott Vreeland 27, 16)Sterling Ellsworth 24, 17)Ira Fierberg 13, 18)Justice Lepe 1

National class points: 1) Troy Tinsley 68, 2) Paul MacFarlane 47, 3) Kim Willcox 25