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Note: Photos of the open house are available.

## **Over 100 People Enjoy Andersen RacePark's Open House**

PALMETTO, Fla., Dec. 9 — Over 100 people attended an open house yesterday at Andersen RacePark, the new Palmetto, Fla. home of Andersen Racing that includes a 1-mile test track.

Two of the team's F2000 Championship Series cars were on display in the facility's 8,000-square-foot shop, which will eventually hold the team's two Indy Pro Series cars, four Star Mazda cars and four F2000 cars in its bays. Other cars can be housed in the 24 additional garages that line pit lane.

Some of the pitside garages are currently rented to local karters, and about 25 karters tested Saturday on a portion of the road course. The action was fast and furious on the 25-foot-wide track, as drivers ranging in age from 5 to 71 enjoyed the Florida sunshine. Jed Perkins, whose helmet is almost bigger than he is, was the very focused 5-year-old. The 71-year-old driver enjoying his kart, a 50th wedding anniversary present from his wife, was Seldon Whispell Jr. Both reside in nearby St. Petersburg.

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Before the day was over two of Andersen Racing's drivers, Star Mazda driver Jonathan Goring of Norfolk, Conn., and F2000 pilot Ricardo Vassmer of Caracas, Venezuela, borrowed karts to join in on the fun. Goring, who finished fifth in the Star Mazda series this year, drove a Rotax Tag Tony kart, Racer EV, owned by Derrick Lesinski of St. Petersburg. Vassmer, who placed fifth in the F2000 series, stepped into a CRG shifter kart owned by Bob Pinson of Clearwater Beach, Fla.

While all that was going on the team owners, Dan and John Andersen, and the team and track manager, Michelle Kish, visited with the open house attendees who dropped by to extend their best wishes and see the facility first-hand. F2000 team manager Mike Foschi was in attendance, as were engineers Dominic and Nicholas Cape and even engineer Mike Reggio, who got married 24 hours earlier. Some members of the team will work out of beautiful offices on the second floor of the main building that provide a bird's eye view of the shop activity below them.

The team's two Indy Pro Series cars are currently in Indianapolis awaiting series-mandated safety updates, but they'll be on their way to Florida as soon as those changes are made. The team's Star Mazda cars and the bulk of its equipment are still at the team's shop in Fairfield, N.J., awaiting pending shipment south.

The karters used just half of the road course on Saturday, concentrating on a configuration that uses the portion of the track lying in front of pit road and the garages. The course is also a favorite test track of various formula car teams, who usually use the entire 1-mile configuration. The back portion of the course features a hairpin turn around a picturesque cypress tree dripping with Spanish moss that is similar to VIRginia International Raceway's famous Oak Tree turn. Unlike VIR, Andersen RacePark also sports a lake trackside that is home to a non-rent-paying alligator.

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The team would like to thank all who attended the open house. Its members extended a special "thank you" to the Coca-Cola Bottling Company of Tampa and Brass Bell Catering of Bradenton, Fla., for their assistance with refreshments.

Andersen Racing is the official development team of IndyCar and American Le Mans Series team Rahal Letterman Racing. It strives to provide the best training possible for rising stars, and fields multiple entries in the F2000 Championship Series, the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear and the Indy Pro Series. Its Web site is at [andersenracingteam.com](http://andersenracingteam.com). Additional information on Andersen RacePark is available at [andersenracepark.com](http://andersenracepark.com).