



US crown eases the pressure

MOTOR RACING
■ Neale Harvey

With a lucrative Mazda scholarship worth \$500,000 safely in his keeping, Goldfields-born motor racing star Anthony Martin had every reason to be jovial yesterday.

Less than a fortnight after being crowned America's 2016 Cooper Tires USF2000 champion, Martin was back in Perth reflecting on a dream season.

The importance of the win was not lost on Martin, who nearly did not return for a second season at the championships as he sweated over the financial barriers.

But with loyal backing, Martin, the 2015 Rookie of the Year, dominated the series.

And the money worries of the past year are now firmly behind him, with the scholarship going straight towards his 2017 move up to the Pro Mazda series.

"People probably don't realise just how much money is on the line," Martin said.

"You could pretty much buy a nice house with that type of money, so there was definitely a lot at stake going into the last two races. That (scholarship) money is essentially credit for my 2017 campaign.

"It's not like cash in a briefcase, although that would be cool.

"It's credit, but basically pays for pretty much everything for next year."

With the financial burden lifted, Martin said he would be more relaxed when he competed next season.

"It's a massive relief," he said.

"At the start of the year, I wasn't



Anthony Martin flies the flag.

sure if I was even going to be racing the USF2000.

"It was a last-minute decision but right now, it was well worth it because it has paid off.

"We're moving up to the next level and I can't wait for that."

Martin, however, understood that the move up in class would be challenging.

"It's going to be a lot more difficult and these cars have a lot more power, 260 or 270 horsepower at my right foot," said.

"They get up to some high speeds, maybe 160 miles an hour (256km/h), so that's going to be highly challenging.

"But like anything in motor sports, a new challenge is always a good thing and you always learn from it.

"I'm happy to take that challenge on and really push it."



Anthony Martin was crowned 2016 Cooper Tires USF2000 champion. Pictures: Chris Owens/IMS Photo 2016