

Martin takes a victory at Elkhart Lake

MOTOR RACING

■ Neil Watkinson

Kalgoorlie-Boulder product Anthony Martin had his hands full with the searing pace of Brazilian driver Victor Franzoni, but he achieved victory against his fierce rival in the latest round of the Cooper Tires Pro Mazda Championship in the US.

Rounds five and six of the championship took place at the Road America circuit at Elkhart Lake in the state of Wisconsin last weekend.

Round 5 on June 23 saw Juncos Racing's Franzoni leave Cape Motorsports' Martin in his wake to record an almost 12-second victory.

Franzoni had started on pole, but Martin got in front of him on the opening lap, only for Franzoni to "sweep effortlessly" past him and drive "off into the distance", according to the race report on the championship's website.

In race six — the midway point of the season — on June 24, Franzoni had to start from the back of the field after failing to record a qualifying time because of "some unfortunately timed red-flag stoppages".

Martin started on pole, but Franzoni screamed through the field, and was up into third place after only four laps.

Franzoni then got into second and put immense pressure on Martin, but the Kalgoorlie-Boulder-born 22-year-old held on to win by a tiny margin of 0.179sec.

Speaking after the race, Martin was quoted in the race report as saying: "I got a really good start and I kept that gap for a good while until the safety car came



Kalgoorlie-Boulder-born Anthony Martin after a winning round at the Cooper Tires Pro in Wisconsin.

Picture: Indianapolis Motor Speedway

out and bunched everyone up.

"And at that point, I saw the standard white-and-purple car in third place and thought, 'OK, he's definitely got pace'," he said.

"I just had to put my head down and my bum up and really focus on the road ahead of me and not behind me.

"It's hard, because you have that car in your mirrors but you can't let it affect you."

The Pro Mazda Championship is being decided across 12 rounds, with drivers vying for a \$US790,000 (\$1.066 million) scholarship and a move up to the Indy Lights.

Martin had started the championship in St Petersburg, Florida, in March with two wins to grab outright first place.

But he played second fiddle to Franzoni at the famous Indianapolis Motor Speedway in May, when the Brazilian swept both races and assumed top spot.

One win each at Road America kept Franzoni in the lead in the championship, with 174 points to Martin's 167.

Rounds seven, eight and nine take place at the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course in Lexington, Ohio from July 28-30.