



Press Information
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F1 and America's Cup find common ground. Technology transfers in both directions.

Valencia, Spain. In terms of speed and horsepower, an F1 race car is more than 10 times faster than an America's Cup yacht, but in terms of technology they have much in common. The two worlds came together in Valencia this week when BMW Sauber F1 Team driver Nick Heidfeld and BMW Motorsport Director Mario Theissen sailed with the BMW ORACLE Racing team.

The sailing team was competing in the Valencia Louis Vuitton Act 10, as part of the build-up to the America's Cup in 2007 and the BMW Sauber F1 Team had just finished in the points at the Spanish Grand Prix. BMW ORACLE Racing, which went on to win the regatta, is the sole US challenger for the America's Cup and had just launched USA 87, its first of two new yachts for 2007.

F1 engineers, in common with America's Cup designers, are constantly seeking to build the stiffest and lightest possible carbon-fibre structures. BMW engineers have worked closely with the BMW ORACLE Racing team on the structural engineering of USA 87. Prof. Dr Raymond Freymann, head of BMW's Research and Technology Division, said he believed USA 87 was the lightest America's Cup yacht ever built. "And," he added, "our goal is to make the second boat even lighter."

The technology has transferred in both directions. Professor Theissen, BMW Motorsport Director, said: "It was a surprise to me that the first contact between BMW ORACLE Racing and the BMW Sauber F1 team was not to ask for support, but to offer something.

"The BMW engineers in the BMW ORACLE Racing design team developed a simulation software to optimize carbon fibre structures. This software is being used now in the design of the F1 chassis as well," said Mr Theissen. Both sports also deal in very high level aerodynamics, the yachts to generate maximum power with the least drag, F1 cars to generate maximum downforce.



In both cases, sophisticated computational fluid dynamics are applied, along with wind tunnel testing. After racing with the team, Heidfeld noted that even though he was used to speeds of more than 300km/hr, America's Cup racing was exciting. "I could see that you have to have very fast reactions, but the difference is that you are not alone. Everybody has to work together as a team and that is a big challenge."

Tomorrow BMW ORACLE Racing is shifting gears from match racing to three days of fleet racing in the Valencia Louis Vuitton Act 11.

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