

Formula BMW Americas



Preview – Rounds 1 & 2, Mazda Laguna Seca Raceway, May 16-18

Date May 13, 2008

Formula BMW Americas will begin the race for the 2008 Championship with Rounds 1 & 2 at Mazda Laguna Seca Raceway at this weekend's Monterey Festival of Speed.

Nine drivers completed the most recent test on May 8 – 9 at Thunderhill Raceway Park, in Willows, Calif., with 16-year old Californian Alexander Rossi topping the time sheets. Rossi, with three wins, finished third overall in the 2007 Formula BMW USA Championship. Driving for the 2006 and 2007 Formula BMW USA Team Champion Eurointernational this season, Rossi was the quickest at both Virginia International Raceway, in Alton, Vir., and Miller Motorsports Park, in Tooele, Utah, in April.

Eurointernational teammate Ricardo Favoretto, 19, from Sao Paulo, Brazil, has been only tenths-of-a-second behind Rossi and the two are clearly favorites for the title. Runner-up in the 2007 Formula BMW USA Rookie chase, Favoretto has earned a BMW Junior scholarship for this season and has his eyes on moving up the podium from a career-best third place finish in Round 10 last year.

This season's Rookie class includes the other three BMW Junior drivers, Brazilian Alexandre Ruiz (Apex-HBR Racing Team), 16, and Canadians Mikael Grenier (Apex-HBR Racing Team), 15, and Gianmarco Raimondo (Autotecnica), 17. Canadian David Ostella (Eurointernational), 16; Giancarlo Vilarinho (Eurointernational), 16, of Brazil; and Velibor Jovanovic (Jensen Motorsport), 17, of Serbia, round out this year's Rookie hopefuls.

Completing the field is returning driver Maxime Pelletier (Apex-HBR Racing Team), 17 of Canada and Jorge Goncalvez (Apex-HBR Racing Team), 16, of Venezuela.

Formula BMW has visited Laguna Seca twice before. The inaugural 2004 season ended there with Andreas Wirth becoming the first Formula BMW USA Champion. In 2005, Richard Philippe, who ultimately became that year's Overall and Rookie Champion, showed his strength with both poles and one win in Rounds 1 and 2.

Licensing courses for the 2009 season are scheduled for July 28-29 and August 4-5. They will be held at the Formula BMW Racing Center at the Circuit de la Comunitat Valenciana Ricardo Tormo, in Valencia, Spain. Applications are now available at www.formulabmwamericas.com.

Background:

Formula BMW is the world's leading entry-level class in Formula racing. In 2008 the

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Titel **Preview, Rounds 1 & 2**
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Page 2

series will be held across Europe, Asia Pacific and the USA. Up-and-coming drivers are given the opportunity of entering motor racing with the high-tech, standard FB02 race car.

This racing car has been seen on the grid since 2002 and has set standards particularly on the safety technology front. The single-seater is propelled by a 140 bhp BMW engine up to 230km/h and exceeds the FIA safety requirements for its class. BMW Motorsport has developed the FORS Formula Rescue Race Seat especially for Formula BMW. The HANS safety system is also mandatory.

BMW Motorsport Director, Mario Theissen: "Formula BMW offers talented young drivers more than just a car. In the Education and Coaching Program we have designed especially for them, they learn everything they need to know to hold their own in the big wide world of motor racing. Formula BMW has shot out of the blocks to become the top entry-level class for Formula racing worldwide."

Note to editors:

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