

Formula BMW Americas



Preview – Rounds 7, 8 & 9, Lime Rock Park, July 11 -12

Date July 3, 2008

Formula BMW America drivers will be among the first to compete on the newly-revised Lime Rock Park racetrack when they arrive for the Northeast Grand Prix and Rounds 7, 8 and 9 of the 2008 Formula BMW Americas Championship on July 11 - 12.

The classic 1.53-mile, 7-turn Lime Rock Park circuit has been repaved and the Uphill and West Bend corners have been modified so that the new track measures 1.51-miles, now incorporating 10 turns.

Learning a new track is one of the skills Formula BMW Americas drivers must develop, but Lime Rock Park will offer a challenge no Formula BMW Americas driver has ever seen. For the first time, there will be three Rounds on one weekend. In this case, from the time they first take to the track on Friday morning to the end of Round 9 Saturday afternoon, the clock will have shown that only 27 hours have passed.

The young drivers must manage their composure and equipment in every session as the penalty for a mistake can be costly. The fastest lap in the single qualifying session will set the grid for Round 7 and the second fastest lap will lineup Round 9. The Round 8 grid will be set by a driver's finishing position in Round 7.

American Alexander Rossi (Eurointernational) has won the last three races, including a clean sweep at Mid-Ohio, and leads the Driver Championship over teammate Ricardo Favoretto. Brazilian Favoretto, a BMW Junior, won Round 3 and was runner-up to Rossi in both races at Mid-Ohio. Both have experience at Lime Rock from last season. Canadian BMW Junior Gianmarco Raimondo (Autotecnica), with wins in Rounds 1 and 2 and a second in Round 3, stands third and leads the Rookie Championship.

Brazilian Giancarlo Vilarinho (Eurointernational) has charged to second in Rookie points following two podium finishes in the last three Rounds. BMW Junior Alexandre Ruiz (Apex-HBR Racing Team), also from Brazil, is third.

Practice is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. Friday, with qualifying set for 1:35 p.m. Round 7 will start at 5:15 p.m. On Saturday, Round 8 will start at 9:10 a.m. and Round 9 at 12:20 p.m.

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Overall points standings following Round 6: Rossi (91), Favoretto (67), Raimondo (63), Vilarinho (48), Pelletier (46), Ruiz (44), Goncalvez (44), Grenier (37), Jovanovic (20), Ostella (13). Rookie points: Raimondo (63), Vilarinho (48), Ruiz (44), Grenier (37), Jovanovic (20), Ostella (13) Team Points: Eurointernational (179), Apex-HBR Racing Team (116), Autotecnica (62), Jensen Motorsport (20)

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 series in formula racing. In 2008 the three Formula BMW series – Formula BMW Europe, Formula BMW Pacific and Formula BMW Americas – will be held in the key motor sport markets of Europe, pan-Asia and North and South America. The end of the year will see the Formula BMW World Final staged for the fourth time. The winner will be granted the opportunity of a test drive with the BMW Sauber F1 Team. Formula BMW will be held on the undercard of Formula One on 12 occasions. The series gives young racing talents the chance to enter professional motor sport in a safe racing car – the Formula BMW FB02.

The FB02 has been in use since season 2002. It is powered by a 140 hp BMW engine that takes it to a top speed of up to 230 km/h. It ranks among the safest vehicles in its category and exceeds the FIA safety regulations that govern this class of car. Innovations such as the FORS (Formula Rescue Seat) were developed by BMW Motorsport specifically for Formula BMW. Following Formula One, Formula BMW was the first single-seater series outside the US in which the HANS system was made mandatory.

Formula BMW drivers have the opportunity to take part in an Education and Coaching Program that runs parallel with the racing season. The program includes driver coaching at the races by professional race drivers, attending a Formula One test, fitness courses, tuition in driving technique and strategy, as well as seminars on sponsoring and sport management.

Among the 20 team drivers in this season's Formula One, there are now four Formula BMW graduates: Nico Rosberg, Adrian Sutil, Sebastian Vettel and Timo Glock. The test and reserve drivers add three more to the tally, namely Christian Klien, Sebastien Buemi and Nicolas Hülkenberg.

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In the words of BMW Motorsport Director Mario Theissen: “With our worldwide Formula BMW concept, we offer drivers and teams a platform which, in this format, is unprecedented in a junior series and which allows them to benefit from our Formula One involvement. Through Formula BMW the drivers are equipped with the tools they need to assert themselves successfully in the world of professional motor racing.”

Note to editors:

Information and copyright free Formula BMW images for press purposes will be available at the BMW Motorsport Press Club, www.press.bmw-motorsport.com (no registration is required).

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