



25 Young Drivers Entered for 2009 Formula BMW Americas Licensing Courses

Date July 23, 2008

Formula BMW Americas welcomes 25 young drivers as they prepare for the upcoming July 28-29 and August 4-5 2009 Licensing Courses. Held at the Formula BMW Racing Center at the Circuit de la Comunitat Valenciana Ricardo Tormo, in Valencia, Spain, the Licensing Course is the first step the worldwide Formula BMW program. Following two days of intensive instruction by the Formula BMW Racing Center staff, successful drivers will receive their international Class C license and, possibly, a chance to be invited back to compete in the September 29-30 Scholarship Qualifying to compete for a 2009 Formula BMW Junior scholarship.

This year, Formula BMW Americas awarded \$80,000 scholarships and automatic enrollment in Formula BMW's Education and Coaching program to Canadians Gianmarco Raimondo and Mikael Grenier, and Brazilian Alexandre Ruiz. They currently stand first, third and fourth in the Rookie point standings respectively.

Proving the global reach of Formula BMW, the 25 young drivers represent the most diverse group ever entered for the licensing courses in the five-year history of the Formula BMW Americas Championship. This year drivers from Australia, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Jamaica, South Africa, Venezuela, as well as Brazil, Canada and the United States will attend.

Among the talented participants is Daniel Vela, of the Dominican Republic, winner of the Florida Winter Tour promotion in January. Also attending is Spencer Pigot, of Windermere Florida, who took advantage of Formula BMW Americas' unique Stars of Karting Recruitment Day and got behind the wheel of an FB02 at Miller Motorsports Park in April.

Mid-season update:

With the completion of Rounds 8 and 9 at Lime Rock Park on July 12th, the 2008 Formula BMW Americas Championship has passed the mid-season mark. Alexander Rossi leads the Overall standings by 19 points over Formula BMW Junior Ricardo Favoretto. Gianmarco Raimondo, also a Formula BMW Junior, stands third and leads the Rookie standings. Rossi has scored four wins, Favoretto one, and Raimondo two. One more win was scored by Daniel Juncadella, a guest driver from the Formula BMW Europe series, in Round 8. Round 7 was cancelled.

With strong performances in the last three races, that include two podium finishes, Brazilian Giancarlo Vilarinho has moved to second in Rookie points. He is

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followed by Grenier and Ruiz. Ostella rounds out the top five in the Rookie standings.

Eurointernational teammates Rossi and Favoretto have kept the Indianapolis-based Formula BMW powerhouse at the top of the Team standings. Eurointernational won the Team title in both 2006 and 2007 while running Robert Wickens and Daniel Morad to the Driver Championships.

The Championship will hold two official test days at the 1.8-mile Putnam Park Road Course, in Mount Meridian, Indiana on July 29 – 30 before Rounds 10, 11 and 12 at Road America, in Elkhart, Wis., on August 7 - 10.

Overall points standings following 9 of 17 Rounds:

1. Rossi	122
2. Favoretto	103
3. Raimondo	87
4. Pelletier	67
5. Vilarinho	54
6. Grenier	53
7. Ruiz	50
8. Goncalvez	48
9. Ostella	29
10. Jovanovic	20

Rookie points:

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2. Vilarinho	54
3. Grenier	53
4. Ruiz	50
5. Ostella	29
6. Jovanovic	20

Team Points:

1. Eurointernational	244
2. Apex-HBR Racing Team	153
3. Autotecnica	86
4. Jensen Motorsport	20

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

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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.

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:

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