

Formula BMW Americas



Date September 22, 2008

Subject **Preview – Rounds 13 & 14, Thunderbolt Raceway**

Formula BMW Americas will hold Rounds 13 and 14 at Thunderbolt Raceway, in Millville, NJ, on September 27 – 28 in conjunction with the ARCA Loud Energy Drink 150. This is the first time that Formula BMW has supported a NASCAR-sanctioned series event.

With a 32 point lead in the point standings, Californian Alexander Rossi (Eurointernational) could lock up the title at Thunderbolt. Rossi only needs to net 11 more points over his closest rival, Ricardo Favoretto (Autotecnica), to clinch the title with an unbeatable 43 point lead. With 12 Rounds of the 2008 Formula BMW Americas Championship now completed, Rossi has scored six poles, six wins and 8 fastest laps. The second-year driver tops the record books with nine career Formula BMW Americas victories.

Favoretto, who switched from Eurointernational to Autotecnica after Round 9 and had the fourth fastest time in the Thunderbolt test, has one win and five runner up finishes this season. His goal at Thunderbolt is simple. He must finish in the points – and ahead of Rossi – if he is to carry the Championship chase to his home, Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Rossi set the fastest times of the Eurointernational team and the rest of the field during the Sept. 2 – 3 Thunderbolt Official Test so he knows the 2.25-mile, 10-turn circuit as well as anyone. The exit curbing was still unfinished at the test and the track's edge took its toll on the undersides of most everyone's FBO2 racing car, but all the drivers had favourable comments about the challenging circuit.

The Rookie Championship has tightened up considerably with Formula BMW Junior drivers, Gianmarco Raimondo (Autotecnica), Apex HBR Racing teammates Mikael Grenier and Alexandre Ruiz within only six points of each other. Grenier and Ruiz have come on strong of late. Each driver scored two podium finishes at Road America. Raimondo, the surprise double-winner at Laguna Seca, has had a run of bad luck in recent races. Grenier did not participate in the Sept. 2 – 3 Official Test at Thunderbolt so will at a disadvantage, but the youngest driver in this year's field (15 years, 11 months) is still sure to be a factor.

On Saturday, Sept. 27 practice will be held at 8:00 a.m., followed by qualifying for Rounds 13 and 14 at 10:45 a.m. The Round 13 race begins at 4:40 p.m. The Round 14 race is scheduled to begin at 9:15 a.m. Sunday. Round 15, previously scheduled for the same weekend, has been cancelled to allow teams adequate time to prepare their cars before they are containerized for shipment to Brazil. The series will conclude along with the Formula One World Championship at the Brazilian Grand Prix on Nov. 2.

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Overall points standings following 12 of 17 Rounds:

1. Rossi	165
2. Favoretto	133
3. Raimondo	98
4. Grenier	93
5. Ruiz	92
6. Pelletier	77
7. Vilarinho	77
8. Goncalvez	74
9. Ostella	43
10. Jovanovic	20
11. Dalenberg	4

Rookie points:

1. Raimondo	98
2. Grenier	93
3. Ruiz	92
4. Vilarinho	77
5. Ostella	43
6. Jovanovic	20

Team Points:

1. Eurointernational	316
2. Apex-HBR Racing Team	240
3. Autotecnica	127
4. Jensen Motorsport	24

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, this time at Mexico City's "Autódromo Hermanos Rodríguez" from the 5th to the 7th December. 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

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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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