

Formula BMW Americas



Date October 14, 2008

Subject **Formula BMW Americas Name Three 2009 Junior Scholarship Winners**

Formula BMW Americas announced today that Canadian Alexander Ellis, 17, of St. Catherines, Ontario; Cuban-American Roberto Garcia, 17, of Houston, Texas, and Dominican Daniel Vela, 14, of Miami, Florida, have been named as the first three recipients of a 2009 Formula BMW Americas Junior Scholarship. A fourth Formula BMW Junior scholarship will be awarded to the winner of this season's Rookie Champion.

The Formula BMW Americas Junior scholarship awards \$80,000 and automatic enrollment in Formula BMW's Education and Coaching program.

Chosen from 11 participants invited to the September 29 - 30 qualifying shoot-out held at the Formula BMW Racing Center at the Circuit de la Comunitat Valenciana Ricardo Tormo, in Valencia, Spain these young men join an exclusive group of Formula BMW Americas Juniors. Since its inaugural 2004 season, Formula BMW Americas has awarded 24 Formula BMW Junior scholarships and in each year a Formula BMW Junior has figured at the top of the results. 2004 – Rookie Champion – James Hinchcliffe; 2005 – Overall and Rookie Champion – Richard Phillippe; 2006 – Overall Champion – Robert Wickens; 2007 Overall Champion – Daniel Morad.

The 2008 Formula BMW Americas Championship will conclude along with the Formula One World Championship at the Brazilian Grand Prix on Nov. 2. Alexander Rossi wrapped up the Overall Championship with a win in Round 14. The final two Rounds will determine the winner of this year's Rookie championship and recipient of the remaining Junior scholarship. The battle is a close one with four drivers, Gianmarco Raimondo, Mikael Grenier, Alexandre Ruiz (all three Formula BMW Juniors) and Giancarlo Vilarinho separated by only 12 points.

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 of car. Innovations such as the FORS (Formula Rescue Seat) were developed by

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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, Sébastien 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:

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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