

# Formula BMW Americas



Date November 13, 2008

Subject **Formula BMW Americas Announces 2009 Schedule**

Formula BMW Americas announced today five race weekends as part of the Championship's 2009 schedule. Confirmed are four events in North America with the American Le Mans Series to support the return of the BMW M3 to ALMS competition. For a second consecutive year, the season will end at the Brazilian Grand Prix.

Formula BMW Americas will join the ALMS at Miller Motorsports Park, in Tooele, Utah, on May 15 – 17; Lime Rock Park, in Lakeville, Conn., on July 17-18; Road America, in Elkhart Lake, Wis., on Aug. 14-16; and Mosport International Raceway, in Bowmanville, Ontario, Canada, on Aug. 28-30. The season will end at the Brazilian Grand Prix, on Oct. 16-18.

Broadening the scope of series and on the heels of the first North American Formula BMW World Final in Mexico City, two venues south of the border are being negotiated to get the sixth season of Formula BMW Americas competition started.

A comprehensive testing schedule is being arranged with dates already scheduled prior to Rounds at Miller Motorsports Park, Road America and Mosport International Raceway.

"Formula BMW Americas, as part of the international Formula BMW program, has become solidly established in its first five seasons," said Dr. Mario Theissen, BMW Motorsport Director. "The alignment with the Formula One World Championship is the foundation to the program and is unique among entry-level racing series. No other series offers the level of preparation that Formula BMW does with offerings such as our Education and Coaching program. Our Formula BMW Junior scholarship program gives drivers with talent, but limited funds, the ability to start their careers. Finally, Formula BMW has the commitment of one of the world's strongest brands. BMW is firmly behind the program and is pleased to see the level of interest in both new drivers and teams for the 2009 season."

With the conclusion of the 2008 season, Formula BMW Americas has given more than one hundred young drivers their start in open wheel racing. Alexander Rossi, of Nevada City, Calif., and Gianmarco Raimondo, of St. Catherine's, Ontario, won the Overall and Rookie titles respectively this year and will no doubt join the long list of successful Formula BMW alumni. Formula BMW Americas alumni include Graham Rahal, Tommy Milner, Brian Frisselle, Jonathan Summerton, James Hinchcliffe, Robert Wickens, David Garza and Daniel Morad.

In addition to the first international coverage of Formula BMW Americas race recaps during Formula 1 broadcasts in over 80 countries, a review of the 2008 Formula BMW Americas season is scheduled to be broadcast on SPEED channel on Sunday, December 28 at 6:00 p.m. ET.

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## 2009 Formula BMW Americas schedule:

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May 15-17 Miller Motorsports Park

July 17-18 Lime Rock Park

Aug. 14-16 Road America

Aug. 28-30 Mosport International Raceway

Oct. 16-18 Brazilian Grand Prix

## 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 5<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> 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 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.

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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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