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Times

SUPPLEMENT

WED 15.11.2017



GT FIAT GT
WORLD CUP

**FIRST ALL-PRO
FIELD EVER**



Daniel Juncadella



Edoardo Mortara



PREVIEW

Macau GT World Cup with five



Maro Engel



Renger Van der Zande



Renato Marques

S EVEN official car manufacturing teams will race the challenging Guia Circuit in this year's edition of the Macau GT World Cup, which is one of the most anticipated races included in the program of the Macau Grand Prix.

The teams are representing well-known manufacturers such as Audi, BMW, Ferrari, Honda, Lamborghini, Mercedes-Benz and Porsche, and have battled to secure the best line-up of drivers for a race that will follow the new rule of "professional-racers" only.

Consequently, the races held in Macau will involve a large number of famous dri-

vers from around the world, including some of the most famous ones from the history of the Guia Circuit.

Marking his presence once more is two-time Macau F3 winner Felix Rosenqvist. The Swede will be attempting to become the second driver after "Mr Macau" Edoardo Mortara to win both the F3 and GT races at the 6.2km street circuit.

Rosenqvist will be making his Macau GT racing debut behind the driving wheel of the only Ferrari listed, a 488 GT3 entered by American-based team Scuderia Corsa.

For Rosenqvist, the opportunity to take part in one of GT racing's biggest events is an exciting one.

"Competing at Macau is so-

meting very special," said Rosenqvist during the announcement of the team entry to Macau race. "It's one of my absolute favorite events in the world and I've always had great experiences at the circuit in the past. To take part in the GT race is something that will be extremely challenging. Scuderia Corsa has an incredible reputation for preparing some of the best Ferraris in the GT world, and I appreciate the opportunity from everyone," he said.

But the task for the Swede will be not an easy one as strong competition is in the next garage. The winners of the Macau GT Cup in 2014 and first edition of the FIA Macau World Cup 2015 in Mortara and ano-

ther former Guia Winner, the Spaniard Daniel Juncadella, will be representing AMG-Mercedes and promise to put all their winning experience into the two Mercedes-AMG GT3 vehicles from the AMG Racing Academy.

The two-time winner in 2014 and 2015 with Mercedes, Maro Engel, will be back this year in the Mercedes camp but will be switching to the Asian-based Gruppe M Racing team which has claimed both drivers and team victory in the Blancpain Asia GT championship. Engel's teammate is the former F3 European Champion Raffaele Marciello, who has been scoring several podium finishes in the Blancpain GT Sprint and Endurance series

for Mercedes-Benz.

Making the Porsche team stronger are two previous winners of the Cup, with reigning champion Laurens Vanthoor driving the Porsche 911 GT3R from Hong-Kong based Craft Bamboo Racing. He promised to try to repeat last year's victory (keeping the four wheels on the ground, if possible). The other driver for Porsche is Hong Kong's Darryl O'Young, winner of the first GT race back in 2008.

Brazilian Lucas di Grassi, who is the current reigning FIA Formula E Champion, will also be returning to Macau after a five year absence from the Guia Circuit. di Grassi last raced in Macau in 2012 in an AF

Renato Marques

MOTORCYCLE GRAND PRIX | PREVIEW

Hickman chasing a Macau hat-trick

A LWAYS one of the most anticipated moments of the Grand Prix (GP) event, the 51st Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix promises to keep emotions running high and adrenaline pumping during the 12-lap race around the Guia circuit.

Even if some of the usual suspects are noticeably absent from the starting list this year, the action promises to be just as thrilling. Many veteran riders will be trying to demonstrate their expertise and experience, while another group of hopefuls will be jostling to prove their mettle in

their debut on the notoriously difficult and death-defying circuit.

Stalwarts like John McGuinness, who has not missed a Macau GP since 1998, and Ian Hutchinson, another long-time racer in Macau and the 2013 GP winner, are missing from the lineup. Both are recovering from serious injuries sustained during major races on the Road Racing calendar this year; namely, the North West 200 and the TT at the Isle of Man, respectively.

The only American left in a competition of mostly UK riders, Mark Miller – who started in 1998 and described Macau as a crucial race – is also absent this year.

This leaves three serious candidates for the laurel wreath: the trio that stormed the 2016 podium – Peter Hickman, Michael Rutter and Martin Jessopp.

For Hickman, who has won the last two editions, this year will be his chance to join an exclusive group of racers who

have won three consecutive times. He has had an amazing season this year in the British Superbike Championship (BSB) with a podium finish at the Isle of Man TT.

All three will be riding similar bikes to last year's, with Hickman and Rutter being reunited on a pair of SMT/Bathams BMWs.

On a third S1000RR BMW, wearing the colors of Riders Motorcycles, will be Jessopp, a five-time podium finisher and Macau regular who is

still chasing the gold medal.

The 45-year-old Rutter, eight-time winner and record-holder nicknamed "The Blade," is expected to thrash the youngsters in the paddock once more.

Twenty years have passed since Rutter claimed his first podium finish at the Guia Circuit. His subsequent winning streak has earned him yet another moniker: the "Peter Pan of British road racing."

Beyond the best bets for

the podium, – the dark horse of this race – is a man who made his Macau debut last year, and who would have clinched a spot on the podium himself had his Ducati not encountered an electrical failure in the penultimate lap. Glenn Irwin, whose impressive performance last year saw him battling shoulder to shoulder at the front, is already said to be hungry for more this year.

Another one to watch is Dean Harrison, returning to Macau after



First all-pro field ever

Corse-run Ferrari 458 GT3. To recall, di Grassi has raced and won Macau's Queen Race Formula 3 back in 2005, winning the competition ahead of Rubert Kubica and Sebastian Vettel.

This time di Grassi will race one of the Audi R8 LMS from the HCB-Rutronik-Racing team, aiming to put his name into the very exclusive Hall of Fame, winners in Macau in both the F3 and GT categories.

Racing for Italy's FFF Racing Team, which will only have a single car this year due to the serious accident putting Macau's Andre Couto on the sidelines under a long recovery plan, will be Italian Mirko Bortolotti. The joint winner of the 2017

Blancpain GT series in Europe will drive the only Lamborghini Huracan GT3 from the grid.

And because the GT World Cup does not only consist of returning racers, there are some strong newcomers such as two-time DTM champion Marco Wittman, who will pair with Bathurst 1000 winner Chaz Mostert at the wheels of two BMW M6 cars, signed in by FIST Team AAI. The third car will be driven by Tom Blomqvist who has raced in Macau back in 2010 in the extinct Formula BMW Pacific (making 3rd place overall and fastest lap) and has raced three years in a row from 2012 to 2014 in the F3 series before joining the BMW DTM field in 2015.

Honda to race new NSX in FIA GT World Cup

JAPANESE manufacturer Honda will race the new NSX in the 3rd edition of FIA GT World Cup at the Guia Circuit.

This will be the official debut for the twin-turbo V6 in Honda badges, as the racing car was only previously used during the IMSA SportsCar Championship and the Pirelli World Challenge, in the USA, at that time racing under Honda's sister brand Acura.

The car to be driven by Dutchman Renger Van der Zande moves from Mercedes-AMG to Honda and will be operated during the GT World Cup by the Italian JAS Motorsport team.

Another special appearance is reserved for the BMW M6 entries. One distinct BMW is taking to the track under the guidance of Augusto Farfus. The "M6 Art Car" is the latest in a long line of iconically decorated BMW machines and this time the German manufacturer is counting on the work of Chinese artist Cao Fei,

who said her work is to be "a reflection on the speed of change in China, on tradition and future."

The Art Car, number 18 so far, has the uniqueness of being viewed only through an augmented reality app, as it looks unfinished to the naked eye. Without the app, it has only a "natural" carbon black base, giving the idea that someone forgot to wrap the car.



four years away. Harrison has been known as the "world's fastest road racer" since clocking an impressive record speed of approximately 217kph at the Ulster Grand Prix in August. For his second run in Macau, he will ride the Silicone Engineer Racing Kawasaki ZX10RR.

British and Irish riders dominate the Macau line-up for this year's race, which yet again will have only one local team on the grid: the CF32 Racing Team.

The CF32 team is partnering the Lekka Racing Team this year, and will again feature South African rider Allann-Jon Venter, riding a

RENATO MARQUES



Hickman



Dean Harrison



Michael Rutter



Martin Jessopp



Glenn Irwin



Michael Rutter

F3 racers say circuit remains a challenge

Lynzy Valles

THE SJM Theodore Racing Team presented its line-up of four young drivers who will be racing in its ninth Macau GP Title campaign yesterday at Grand Lisboa.

The partnership between SJM and Theodore Racing will continue this year at the 64th running of the Macau Grand Prix, and the team will feature Maximilian Günther, Callum Ilott, Zhou Guan Yu, and Mick Schumacher.

Speaking to the press, the racers were all in agreement that the Grand Prix circuit in Macau remains a challenge compared to tracks in Europe, citing the city's narrow roads as a reason for this.

The German racer, Maximilian Günther, spoke about his return to the Macau Grand Prix, expressing his high hopes.

"I have had a good season in the FIA European F3 championship, finishing third overall and my aim is to continue this form here in Macau," he told the press in an interview after the press conference.

According to the 20-year old driver, winning the city's Grand Prix involves a "bit of luck."

"Especially here in Macau with the whole track which is very dangerous and tricky [...] but for sure I want to win it."

Explaining his concerns regarding the track, he claimed that most challenging track segment for the young driver is the second part of the track, as the road gets tighter.

"You can never ever relax on this track because it's important to be focused because as soon as you make just a tiny mistake, you will damage your car or crush it. It's just amazing to drive here," the German racer articulated.

Echoing those sentiments, Britain's Callum Ilott, who took six wins in this year's European Formula 3, remarked "Macau is the highlight of the season and I have been looking forward to this for months. I am determined to get onto the rostrum and hopefully even win this event."

Ilott, who is in the city for the third time, recalled that his first year in the Grand Prix in 2015 was a struggle, as he was unfamiliar with the city's track, yet he noted that his results last year where he finished fifth in the F3 race, are a cause for optimism.

Questioned on his aim for the



From left: Drivers Mick Schumacher, Callum Ilott, Zhou Guan Yu and Maximilian Günther

week, the 19-year old racer said, "In Macau you have to win [...] but Macau is always a lottery."

"This circuit is really special to drive. The feeling is amazing. As they say, if you're fast in Macau, you're fast anywhere," he said.

According to him, Günther remains a strong opponent, along with Lando Norris who won the F3 Championships in Europe.

Meanwhile Zhou Guan Yu, the

first Chinese driver admitted to the Ferrari Driver Academy has shown his excitement for the upcoming tournament, which he considers his favourite event.

Hailing from Shanghai, Zhou took eighth place in the F1 Formula European Championship last year.

Finally, Macau Grand Prix rookie Mick Schumacher, son of seven-time Formula 1 World

Champion Michael Schumacher, only spoke during the press conference noting, "Following last year's success in Formula 4, I graduated to Formula 3 with the team and it has been an enjoyable season."

"Being a rookie at this high level of motorsport is clearly a steep learning curve but we have had some brilliant results in Europe," he concluded.

AD

NOVEMBER 16 - 19

16th of November (Thursday)

06:00 Circuit Closed
06:30 - 07:00 Circuit Inspection
07:30 - 08:30 Suncity Group Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix - 51 st Edition - Practice
08:50 - 09:20 Suncity Group Chinese Racing Cup - Practice
09:35 - 10:15 Suncity Group Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix - FIA F3 World Cup - Free Practice 1
10:35 - 11:05 CTM Macau Touring Car Cup 1600cc Turbo - Practice
11:20 - 11:50 SJM Macau GT Cup - FIA GT World Cup - Free Practice 1
12:25 - 12:55 CTM Macau Touring Car Cup over 1950cc - Practice
13:10 - 13:55 Suncity Group Macau Guia Race - FIA WTCC - Free Practice 1
14:10 - 14:50 Suncity Group Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix - FIA F3 World Cup - Qualifying 1
15:40 - 16:25 Suncity Group Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix - 51 st Edition - Qualifying
18:00 - 18:00 Circuit Opened

17th of November (Friday)

06:00 Circuit Closed
06:30 - 07:00 Circuit Inspection
07:30 - 08:15 Suncity Group Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix - 51 st Edition - Qualifying
08:25 - 08:55 Suncity Group Chinese Racing Cup - Qualifying
09:15 - 10:00 Suncity Group Macau Guia Race - FIA WTCC - Free Practice 2
10:15 - 10:40 CTM Macau Touring Car Cup 1600cc Turbo - Qualifying
11:00 - 11:30 SJM Macau GT Cup - FIA GT World Cup - Free Practice 2
11:45 - 12:25 Suncity Group Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix - FIA F3 World Cup - Free Practice 2
12:40 - 13:05 CTM Macau Touring Car Cup over 1950cc - Qualifying
13:25 - 14:40 Suncity Group Macau Guia Race - FIA WTCC - Qualifying
14:50 - 15:10 Suncity Group Macau Guia Race - FIA WTCC - MAC 3
15:25 - 16:05 Suncity Group Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix - FIA F3 World Cup - Qualifying 2
16:25 - 16:55 SJM Macau GT Cup - FIA GT World Cup - Qualifying
18:30 - 18:30 Circuit Opened

18th of November (Saturday)

06:00 Circuit Closed
06:30 - 07:00 Circuit Inspection
07:30 - 08:30 Safety, Rescue and Extrication Cars - Testing laps
09:00 - 10:00 Suncity Group Chinese Racing Cup - 10 laps
10:20 - 11:10 Suncity Group Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix - FIA F3 World Cup - Qualification Race - 10 laps
11:30 - 11:50 Suncity Group Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix - 51 st Edition - Warm Up
12:25 - 13:30 SJM Macau GT Cup - FIA GT World Cup - Qualification Race - 12 laps
14:10 - 15:10 Suncity Group Macau Guia Race - FIA WTCC - Opening Race - 8 laps
15:40 - 16:40 Suncity Group Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix - 51 st Edition - 12 laps
18:00 - 18:00 Circuit Opened

19th of November (Sunday)

06:00 Circuit Closed
06:30 - 07:00 Circuit Inspection
07:00 - 07:50 Safety, Rescue and Extrication Cars - Testing laps
08:00 - 08:30 Special Event
09:00 - 10:00 CTM Macau Touring Car Cup 1600cc Turbo and over 1950cc - 12 laps
10:40 - 11:40 Suncity Group Macau Guia Race - FIA WTCC - Main Race - 11 laps
12:10 - 13:40 SJM Macau GT Cup - FIA GT World Cup - 18 laps
15:10 - 15:20 Lion Dance
15:30 - 16:30 Suncity Group Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix - FIA F3 World Cup - 15 laps
18:00 - 18:00 Circuit Opened