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MACAU GP **BACK TO
INTERNATIONAL**

SANDS CHINA FORMULA 4: LEONG AIMING 'HAT-TRICK' ON HOME TURF

RENATO MARQUES

WITH the hard task of replacing the most emblematic race of Macau – the Formula 3 – the Formula 4 (F4) race is making its third consecutive appearance in the Grand Prix program this year.

In the two previous editions, Macau's Charles Leong has shown complete dominance with two wins in two races.

This year, Leong returns once more to the Guia circuit and to the F4 single-seater, aiming for nothing less than a "hat-trick" and a chance to cast a longer shadow in the gallery of the champions at the local GP.

To the Times Leong admitted exactly this, noting that although he has not raced at the 2022 Chinese F4 Championship he thinks that his experience and knowledge of both the car and the circuit will continue to give him the upper hand.

Like Leong, another local racer, Andy Chang, is also returning to the race. Chang, who was runner up to Leong in both editions of the F4 race, will certainly aim to do the same or better this year if an opportunity presents itself.

The same goes for third place finisher back in 2020 and 2021, Li Si Seng, who is also returning to the streets of Macau with the aim of continuing his podium finishing-stint.

While the line-up, at least in

theory, seems to be fitting perfectly into place, other names might turn the tables if they are given a chance to do so. All eyes are out for car number 32, driven by Cheong Chi Hou. Although it is Cheong's debut at the Guia circuit, his long background as a local karting master surely suggests that Cheong has enough talent to battle with more experienced racers if all goes well during the Free Practice sessions 1 and 2 that are taking place today.

Another name which might surprise in Guia is Gerrard Xie, the Hong Kong racer who has also had a long and fruitful career in karting and has so far scored seven wins in eight races in the Chinese F4 Championship. Comfortably leading this championship, Xie will not want to waste this opportunity to follow the Guia masters. He will aim to learn as much as possible in the opening days of the event to have a chance of contending for a potential podium on Race 1 (8 laps) on Saturday afternoon and the main race (12 laps) on Sunday, in the last race of this year's GP.

China's Jing Ze Feng, who last year stood just outside the podium and who has since been gaining valuable experience, is also returning to Macau with the hope of improving his position.

The Sands China F4 Grand Prix will be out on the track every day of the four-day event, promising to thrill spectators hoping to see a Macau flag on the top level of the podium.



Charles Leong



Li Si Seng



Andy Chang

Wynn Macau Guia Race: First-ever TCR Asia Challenge goes national



Lo Sze Ho (right) and Filipe de Souza

RENATO MARQUES

ONE of the most emblematic events of the local Grand Prix each year is the Guia Race of Macau for touring cars.

The race has been the stage of grand finales of the worldwide touring car championships such as the World Touring Car Cup (WTCC), and subsequently, its successor WTCR. This year, and like the last edition, its status will be significantly downgraded, running under the new badge of TCR Asia Challenge.

Contrary to past events when it featured all the world-famous names of touring car racing, this year the race will feature only

mainland, Macau, and Hong Kong racers.

Still, among the entry list for this race are some well-known names from the local and regional automobile racing scene.

Among the most featured is Hong Kong's Lo Sze Ho, who finished third in 2020 and second last year, although a post-race decision from the race stewards eventually stripped him of the podium result.

He is back once again with the Hyundai i30 N TCR, a very successful model in TCR International Series in previous years.

Certain to be battling with Lo to the top posts will be local driver Filipe de Souza. A grand connoisseur of the Guia circuit and with an always well-prepared Audi RS3 LMS TCR, Souza will not want to waste this opportunity to stand on the highest spot of the podium and take the Macau flag to the tallest mast.

He is one of seven local racers joining the 25-strong field that also features other well-known names such as Eurico de Jesus and Billy Lo, the last, who this year, stepped back from the GT cars and returned to the smaller touring cars. Making a similar attempt is the local racer Cheong Chi On who traded his Porsche 911 GT3 Cup for an Audi RS3, aiming to reach a better result this year.

Following two 25-minute free practice sessions today, Friday's qualifying round will see the fastest 12 cars in the 20-minute qualifying 1 proceed to an extra 10-minute qualifying 2. The grid for Saturday's race 1 will follow the qualifying order while Sunday's race 2 will see a grid top 10 of qualifying 2 reversed from P1 to P10, a delight for local revivalist fans of the old days Macau-Hong Kong Interport race.

RENATO MARQUES

Motorcycle GP: Macau will see a new two-wheel king this year

IN a much-anticipated return to the local Grand Prix (GP) program, the Macau Motorcycle GP is finally back after a two-year absence caused by the restrictions imposed on the entry of foreign nationals due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The most international of all races from the Guia circuit program is being held for the 54th time this year with opportunities for those who dared to spend seven days in quarantine upon their arrival in Macau.

With the major names from road racing and the Macau GP ruled out from the entry list, the Motorcycle GP has a special attraction this year with the possibility of lesser-known protagonists taking the limelight.

One thing is certain, Macau will see this year a new Motorcycle GP winner as none of the previous champions is returning.

Indeed, we will miss seeing many big names on the track: such as the record-holder Michael Rutter or the most recent multiple-winner Peter Hickman, but this does not mean that the Motorcycle GP will be less interesting.

The first highlight has to be the South African of Portuguese ascendancy Sheridan Morais who is making his debut in Macau and he might make it a golden one as he will aim straight for the higher

spot on the podium.

The 37-year-old Morais has such wide experience and success in the many categories of the motorcycle racing world that is impossible not to consider him among the main favorites for ultimate victory. Still, it is his first time at Macau and that factor might leave the way clear for other names far more experienced on the Guia circuit to rise. Among these, we find Finn Erno Kostamo, who placed ninth in 2019 and is the best-classified racer among those who have raced before in Macau. Kostamo will bring once again the very well-prepared BMW S1000RR, a motorcycle that has proven its success on the Guia.

Also in this group, we have the Portuguese André Pires, racing for the eighth time in Macau, and the Brit, Robert Hodson. Also returning to Guia is Spanish rider Raul Torras who appears this year, like Morais, in a very carefully prepared Honda CBR1000RR SP.

More surprises are likely to come for other newbies, such as the Swiss Lukas Maurer, the German David Datzer, and the Belgian Laurent Ho-

ffmann. The trio comes directly from the International Road Racing Championship (IRRC) with Datzer and Maurer finishing the championship this year in second and third places, respectively.

The final mention is for the Dutch Nadieh Schoots, the first woman to race in the Guia circuit in the main category. Schoots' participation this year in an all-female team is also another attraction of this year's race, proving that motorcycle racing is for anyone with the determination and the courage to join the Armco rollercoaster of Guia.

The motorcycle race also has several changes to the program this year. The original three free practice sessions on Thursday and Friday morning will be replaced with a single 45-minute FP1 session today. Following today's session, there will also be two 30-minute qualifying sessions tomorrow that will set the grid for the first of the two races to take place on Saturday.

Following an early-morning warm-up session, Race 1 (8 laps) will set the grid for a final race, of the same length, that will close Saturday's program.



Sheridan Morais



Erno Kostamo



André Pires



Nadieh Schoots

RENATO MARQUES

RENATO MARQUES

GALAXY ENTERTAINMENT MACAU GT CUP: THE RETURN OF THE CHAMPIONS

RENATO MARQUES

ONE of the biggest surprises yet of this year's edition of the Macau Grand Prix (GP) is the return of several GT cars' former winners to the Macau GT Cup.

While it was already expected that reigning champion and two-time winner, Hong Kong racer Darryl O'Young, would wish to return to defend his title, it was a pleasant surprise to realize that several other GT race champions are among those listed to race this year, including the four-time winner Edoardo Mortara, two-time winner Maro Engel and 2019 winner Raffaele Marciello.

As the most successful driver of the Guia Circuit, Mortara – also known as “Mr. Macau” – is returning once again this year to the local Grand Prix to attempt another record-breaking performance.

The 35-year-old racer, who is of Swiss, Italian, and French heritage, is returning this year to compete in the Macau GT Cup behind the wheel of an Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo II from Absolute Racing. The last time Mortara won in Macau was back in 2017.

O'Young will return at the wheel of the same Mercedes-AMG run by Hong Kong-based Craft-Bamboo Racing and will team up with Maro Engel in a similar machine to make a bid for the podium.

Marciello, at the wheel of another Mercedes-AMG GT3 but from the Chinese Toro Racing Team, will have the same goal in mind. His team also includes Min Heng and Alexandre Imperatori, who will, however, be driving Porsches GT3 R.

The only Ferrari in the field will be driven by Chen Wei An, who is returning in the only 488 GT3 EVO on the grid.

The 16-car field is split across six manufacturers, with the two most successful brands of GT cars at Guia predominating. Audi and Mercedes-AMG will have a five-car field each, followed by Lamborghini and Porsche with two each.

GT cars will drive out onto the track today for the free practice sessions, returning tomorrow for two qualifying sessions and again on Saturday for the 8-lap Race 1.

The final 12-lap Race 2 will start on Sunday at 1:05 p.m.



RENATO MARQUES

Raffaele Marciello



Edoardo Mortara (left) and Maro Engel



Darryl O'Young

AD

November 17 (Thursday)

- 06:30 ~ 07:00 Circuit Inspection
- 07:30 ~ 08:15 Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix - 54th Edition - Free Practice
- 08:30 ~ 08:55 SJM Macau Roadsport Challenge - Free Practice 1
- 09:10 ~ 09:35 Melco Greater Bay Area GT Cup - Free Practice 1
- 09:55 ~ 10:20 Sands China Formula 4 Macau Grand Prix - Free Practice 1
- 10:35 ~ 11:00 MGM Macau Touring Car Cup - China Touring Car Championship - Free Practice 1
- 11:30 ~ 11:55 Wynn Macau Guia Race - TCR Asia Challenge - Free Practice 1
- 12:10 ~ 12:35 Galaxy Entertainment Macau GT Cup - Free Practice 1
- 12:50 ~ 13:15 SJM Macau Roadsport Challenge - Free Practice 2
- 13:30 ~ 13:55 Melco Greater Bay Area GT Cup - Free Practice 2
- 14:15 ~ 14:40 Sands China Formula 4 Macau Grand Prix - Free Practice 2
- 14:55 ~ 15:20 MGM Macau Touring Car Cup - China Touring Car Championship - Free Practice 2
- 15:35 ~ 16:00 Wynn Macau Guia Race - TCR Asia Challenge - Free Practice 2
- 16:15 ~ 16:40 Galaxy Entertainment Macau GT Cup - Free Practice 2

November 18 (Friday)

- 06:30 ~ 07:00 Circuit Inspection
- 07:30 ~ 08:00 Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix - 54th Edition - Qualifying 1
- 08:20 ~ 08:45 SJM Macau Roadsport Challenge - Qualifying 1
- 09:05 ~ 09:30 Melco Greater Bay Area GT Cup - Qualifying 1
- 09:50 ~ 10:15 Sands China Formula 4 Macau Grand Prix - Qualifying 1
- 10:35 ~ 11:00 Galaxy Entertainment Macau GT Cup - Qualifying 1
- 11:30 ~ 11:50 MGM Macau Touring Car Cup - China Touring Car Championship - Qualifying 1
- 12:00 ~ 12:10 MGM Macau Touring Car Cup - China Touring Car Championship - Qualifying 2
- 12:30 ~ 13:00 Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix - 54th Edition - Qualifying 2
- 13:20 ~ 13:40 Wynn Macau Guia Race - TCR Asia Challenge - Qualifying 1
- 13:50 ~ 14:00 Wynn Macau Guia Race - TCR Asia Challenge - Qualifying 2
- 14:20 ~ 14:40 Sands China Formula 4 Macau Grand Prix - Qualifying 2
- 15:00 ~ 15:25 SJM Macau Roadsport Challenge - Qualifying 2
- 15:45 ~ 16:10 Melco Greater Bay Area GT Cup - Qualifying 2
- 16:30 ~ 16:55 Galaxy Entertainment Macau GT Cup - Qualifying 2

November 19 (Saturday)

- 06:30 ~ 07:00 Circuit Inspection
- 07:30 ~ 07:50 Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix - 54th Edition - warm up
- 08:25 ~ 08:55 SJM Macau Roadsport Challenge - Race 1 (8 laps)
- 09:30 ~ 10:00 Melco Greater Bay Area GT Cup - Race 1 (8 laps)
- 10:35 ~ 11:05 Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix - 54th Edition - Race 1 (8 laps)
- 11:45 ~ 12:20 MGM Macau Touring Car Cup - China Touring Car Championship - Race 1 (9 laps)
- 12:55 ~ 13:30 Wynn Macau Guia Race - TCR Asia Challenge - Race 1 (9 laps)
- 14:05 ~ 14:35 Sands China Formula 4 Macau Grand Prix - Race 1 (8 laps)
- 15:10 ~ 15:40 Galaxy Entertainment Macau GT Cup - Race 1 (8 laps)
- 16:10 ~ 16:40 Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix - 54th Edition - Race 2 (8 laps)

November 20 (Sunday)

- 06:30 ~ 07:00 Circuit Inspection
- 08:00 ~ 08:45 SJM Macau Roadsport Challenge - Race 2 (12 laps)
- 09:15 ~ 10:00 Melco Greater Bay Area GT Cup - Race 2 (12 laps)
- 10:30 ~ 11:05 MGM Macau Touring Car Cup - China Touring Car Championship - Race 2 (9 laps)
- 11:55 ~ 12:30 Wynn Macau Guia Race - TCR Asia Challenge - Race 2 (9 laps)
- 13:05 ~ 13:50 Galaxy Entertainment Macau GT Cup - Race 2 (12 laps)
- 14:00 ~ 14:45 Special Event
- 15:15 ~ 15:20 Lion Dance
- 15:30 ~ 16:10 Sands China Formula 4 Macau Grand Prix - Race 2 (12 laps)