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FIA FR WORLD CUP

RISING STARS IN BRAND-NEW CARS FACE OFF IN MACAU

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RENATO MARQUES

FIA FR WORLD CUP

Reigning champions and F3 contend field showdown in Macau

RENATO MARQUES

REIGNING champions, F3 contenders, and rising stars from Formula 1 junior programs will converge at the Guia Circuit, where a full 26-car grid will compete for one of junior motorsport's most prestigious titles.

The stage is set for a contested FIA Formula Regional (FR) World Cup featuring an interesting lineup of emerging international talent.

This year's entry list includes 26 drivers from 13 teams, featuring champions from several of the world's leading junior single-seater championships, experienced FIA F3 competitors, and very promising drivers backed by several Formula 1 academy teams.

Among the leading contenders is Enzo Deligny, who returns to Macau with defending champion Pinnacle Motorsport after finishing third in last year's race.

The Frenchman, who competed in the FIA F3 Championship this season, will partner Japanese driver Hiyu Yamakoshi as the team seeks to repeat its commanding one-two finish in 2025, achieved by Théophile Naël and Mari Boya.

However, Pinnacle faces opposition from R-ace GP, which has fielded one of the strongest pairings on the grid.

Newly crowned FIA FR European Championship champion Emanuele Olivieri will lead the French team's challenge alongside Mercedes-AMG junior Rashid Al Dhaheri.

Olivieri returns to Macau after finishing as runner-up in last year's inaugural FIA F4 World Cup. Meanwhile, Al Dhaheri brings valuable experience at the Guia Circuit and three victories from his 2026 European campaign.

R-ace GP also has a winning pedigree in Macau, having won the inaugural FIA FR World Cup in 2024 with Ugo Ugochukwu.

ART Grand Prix will field another Japanese-French pairing, with Taito Kato and Evan Giltaire returning after their good 2025 performances.

Kato, who finished fifth last year, arrives after a strong rookie FIA Formula 3 campaign, finishing fourth in the championship. Giltaire, meanwhile, returns as the newly crowned Super Formula Lights champion, adding another major title winner to the highly competitive field.

The pair's previous experience at Guia's Circuit could prove particularly valuable in a race where precision, confidence, and traffic management often matter more than outright speed.

Another driver expected to attract attention is Sebastian Wheldon, the runner-up in this year's FIA FR European Championship. The American will race for MP Motorsport

RENATO MARQUES


Evan Giltaire


Enzo Deligny


Rashid Al Dhaheri


Taito Kato

FIA GT WORLD CUP

Three former winners battle to regain Macau crown

RENATO MARQUES

THE FIA GT World Cup is set to deliver another thrilling contest on Macau's streets. This year's edition features 18 cars, including some of the biggest names in international GT racing and a record eight manufacturers.

This year's ninth edition of the GT World Cup will bring together established champions, factory drivers, and rising talent.

The entry list features representatives from Aston Martin, Audi, BMW, Ferrari, Lamborghini, McLaren, Mercedes-AMG, and Porsche, underscoring the competition's continued appeal as the GT3 category marks its 20th anniversary.


Maro Engel


Augusto Farfus


Raffaele Marciello

Among the headline names are three former title winners, including Maro Engel, Raffaele Marciello and Augusto Farfus, all aiming to add another victory to their Macau records.

Winner in 2015 and 2024, and absent last year due to Mercedes--AMG's complete absence from the event, Engel returns behind the wheel of a Mercedes-AMG entered by Craft-Bamboo Racing.

The German will aim for a third World Cup crown, a feat also within reach of Marciello, who won in 2019 and 2023 with Mercedes-AMG but now represents its German arch-rival, BMW.

Marciello will drive one of two Team WRT BMW M4 entries alongside Kelvin van der Linde, while Farfus, the 2018 winner, completes BMW's three-car challenge with Team KRC.

The Bavarian manufacturer therefore arrives with a particularly strong lineup combining extensive experience and proven Macau success.

Absent from the 2025 edition, Mercedes-AMG returns with three cars. Alongside Engel, Hong Kong's Adderly Fong will also represent Craft-Bamboo Racing, and Austrian Lucas Auer will compete for Tigani Motorsport.

With five victories from the previous eight FIA GT World Cups, Mercedes-AMG remains the most successful manufacturer in the competition's history—a title they will surely want to keep and extend.

Still in the German manufacturers' field, Porsche will have the largest representation on the grid, with four 911 GT3 R entries. Newly crowned DTM champion Thomas Preining will lead the charge, alongside Laurin Heinrich, Dorian Boccolacci and Alessio Picariello.

Heinrich returns to Macau after his podium finish in 2025 and will reunite with AO by Absolute Racing, bringing the distinctive 'Rexy' Porsche to the Guia Circuit.

Despite its extensive international GT racing

lers





alongside Red Bull junior Mattia Colnaghi, who finished fourth last year.

Wheldon, who has pedigree, Porsche is still seeking its first FIA GT World Cup victory, making its four-car assault one of the weekend's most intriguing storylines.

Last year's winner, Ferrari, will aim to build on its breakthrough in 2025, when Antonio Fuoco secured the Italian manufacturer's first victory.

Unfortunately, Fuoco will miss this year's grid, with Ferrari represented by Yifei Ye and Alessio Rovera.

Competing for Winhere Harmony Racing, Ye could be the stronger racer in the Ferrari camp after his strong performance last year. Rovera will challenge in 33R HAR Racing.

ASTON MARTIN RETURNS

Another notable addition to this year's event is Aston Martin's return. Comtoyou Racing is fielding two Vantage cars for factory driver Marco Sørensen and young talent Jamie Day.

For now, it is impossible to predict what Aston Martin's performance could look like, but their presence surely adds depth and variety to a World Cup dominated by German manufacturers.

Speaking of Germans, Audi will also have two representatives, with former FIA World Endurance Championship and IMSA champion Earl Bamber making a notable appearance in an Audi R8 LMS GT3 entered by Audi Sport Asia Team Absolute. He will be joined on the manufacturer's roster by Joel Eriksson, who will drive for Phantom Global Racing.

Completing the eight-manufacturer field are Lamborghini and McLaren, represented by Luca Engstler with Absolute Corse and Benjamin Goethe with Optimum Motorsport.

Although their machinery may be a few points behind the frontrunners, both drivers have valuable experience on the Guia circuit. They will look to challenge the larger manufacturer contingents.

claimed four European championship victories this season, will seek redemption after showing an impressive pace in last year's F4 World Cup, where he started the Qualification Race from pole position.

THEODORE RACING TARGETS HOME GLORY

Local interest will center on the return of the iconic SJM Theodore Racing outfit, which has recruited two highly rated championship-winning drivers for its latest GP campaign.

Williams Racing Driver Academy member Kean Nakamura-Berta, the reigning FR Middle East champion and a third-place finisher in the European championship, will join American James Egozi, who won the 2026 Eurocup-3 title.

Theodore Racing's association with Macau stretches back half a century, with its most celebrated success coming in 1983, when Ayrton Senna won the first-ever F3 race in Macau.

With two proven winners behind the wheel, the historic team hopes to add another memorable chapter to its Macau legacy.

Elsewhere, the also very successful Prema Racing has entered Alex Powell and Salim Hanna.

Japanese outfit TOM'S Racing will field Yuki Sano and Kiyoshi Umegaki, while Van Amersfoort Racing has named Ernesto Rivera and Jules Roussel.

The depth of the field underscores the growing importance of the FIA FR World Cup as a showcase for young drivers seeking to progress through the international single-seater ladder.

NEW-GENERATION MACHINERY ADDS ANOTHER CHALLENGE

As the Times previously reported, this year's event will also mark a significant technical milestone with the debut of the second-generation Tatuus T-326 FR car.

Introduced in the FIA FR European Championship this season, the new machine features revised aerodynamics to promote closer racing, enhanced safety measures, and a push-to-pass Race Mode system that delivers additional engine power, similar to Formula 1's well-known DRS.

These changes could shape new tactical strategies at the circuit, where overtaking is known to be limited and difficult. On paper, the extra boost system could facilitate overtaking on the long straights, not just at the braking point into Lisboa, as it did in the past.

SILVER CUP ADDS INTEREST

Beyond the battle for overall victory, the 2026 edition will also introduce a dedicated Silver Cup classification, with Adderly Fong and Jamie Day among the drivers competing for honors in the new category.

The initiative adds another dimension to an already competitive field, with more to gain or lose if you're running in the middle of the pack.

However, regardless of experience, reputation, or machinery, the circuit itself will once again pose the greatest challenge.

The 6.120-kilometer Guia Circuit remains one of the world's most challenging venues, combining long, high-speed sections with narrow mountain roads, tight corners, and barriers that leave virtually no margin for error.

For GT3 machinery, qualifying position, precision in traffic, and the ability to avoid mistakes will be crucial in a race where even the smallest misjudgment can end a driver's ambitions.

INTERVIEW

Local team to approach GP with 'humility and realistic expectations'

RENATO MARQUES

THE local team, Asia Racing Team (ART)-RNF, is taking part in this year's FIA F4 World Cup. To the Times, team manager and former Grand Prix racer Rodolfo Ávila said preparations are ongoing, and the team will approach it with humility and realism.

"We only received the cars this month, cars that competed in the Middle East at the beginning of the year and then in the Formula Trophy Malaysia opening round, and we have been preparing them in Zhuhai for the FIA F4 World Cup. We are approaching this weekend with humility and realistic expectations," Ávila told the Times.

"We are grateful for the confidence placed in us by the FIA, AAMC and MGPOC, and extremely proud to be taking part in our first FIA F4 World Cup. Motivation is high, and everyone in the team is approaching the challenge with respect and a determination to perform to the best of our abilities," he added.

The ART-RNF team manager added that being part of the F4 elite is a privilege, and the team is fully aware they will face competitors who are much more familiar with the new Tatuus chassis and Pirelli tires.

"We see this as an opportunity to continue learning and improving. Both our drivers understand the challenge ahead, and we will focus on executing our plans, doing our job, and making the most of this valuable experience."

Ávila remarked on the team's 23-year history of developing young drivers from Asia and overseas, noting that this was always the goal. Among those who have passed through the team over the years are former Formula 1 drivers Kamui Kobayashi, Kazuki Nakajima and Rio Haryanto, as well as recently promoted F1 driver Ryo Hirakawa.

"Many Macau drivers have also come through our doors, including Charles Leong, Marcus Cheong, Tiago Rodrigues, and, more recently, Vernice Lao, to name just a few," he said, adding, "Macau has a strong motorsport culture, but everyone is realistic about how difficult it has become to secure the budgets required for single-seater racing nowadays. I believe AAMC is doing a great job developing the sport's grassroots and creating opportunities for local talent to progress. F4 is an excellent platform for young drivers transitioning from karting to single-seater racing. We should continue exploring synergies among these initiatives and identify ways to build on them in the future. Macau definitely has talent that deserves a chance."

LOCAL RACER SHARES GP AMBITION

Local racer Vernice Lao will race in an ART-RNF car. The 16-year-old told the Times that competing in the Macau Grand Prix is an unforgettable experience.

"I feel incredibly excited and honored to race here on my home track. This serves as great motivation for me, pushing me to keep working hard to pursue my racing career," she said.

Commenting on her expectations for the race, Lao said, "As this is my first time racing in Macau, my top priority is to finish safely. I expect to push hard on track and learn from other drivers. I will focus on consistent speed and clean laps to have a solid weekend and bring the car home safely."

Before the World Cup, Lao has joined ART-RNF for two F4 weekends, both in the F4 Chinese Championship. Her best result was a 9th-place finish at Chengdu.



Rodolfo Avila



Vernice Lao

RENATO MARQUES



Peter Hickman



Rob Hodson

MOTORCYCLE GP

Hickman poised to capitalize on Todd's absence

RENATO MARQUES

THIS year's Motorcycle GP is shaping up to be one of the less interesting editions in a while. With defending champion Davey Todd absent, four-time champion Peter Hickman is the favorite, and no obvious contenders stand out.

The stage is set for Hickman to extend his tally, as the entry list also lost another current front-runner, Finn Erno Kostamo, who suffered serious injuries at this year's Isle of Man TT.

That said, only Hickman returns from last year's podium, with major opposition potentially coming from Rob Hodson, who finished fourth last year, and the Italian Mauricio Bottalico, who debuted at the Guia Circuit last year and finished sixth overall.

Todd's exclusion from this year's GP has been one of the biggest talking points around the race. The British rider missed both major road racing events earlier this season (Northwest 200 and Isle of Man TT) due to injury, leaving him unable to meet the organizers' participation requirements.

Still, for Hickman, the circumstances present a golden opportunity to return to the top step of the podium. Hickman has also had a few painful spills lately and might not be at 100% physically.

OPPORTUNITY FOR THE CHALLENGERS

Still, the absence of many top runners and winners from previous editions gives challengers an extra chance to deliver their best work and try to upset the favorite, which could lead to interesting battles for the top five positions.

As mentioned, all eyes are on Hodson for a podium finish. He returns with SMT Racing aboard a well-prepared Honda CBR1000RR. Hodson narrowly missed the podium last year, and he returns to Macau with added encouragement, not only because some favorites are absent but also because his road-racing campaign this year included success at the Isle of Man TT.

Another contender to watch is fellow Honda rider Paul Jordan. Jordan brings valuable experience and the confidence of a TT victory earlier this year.

Jordan will surely try to make amends after last year's DNF.

Also looking to improve on previous results is Austrian rider Julian Trummer, who will team up with Bottalico at RVS Motorsport this year. The team, co-owned by Kostamo, will make two always-very-competitive BMW M1000RRs available to its riders this year.

SIX NEWCOMERS BRING FRESH INTRIGUE

With some big names removed from the entry list, space has opened for a few newcomers to prove themselves.

Among them are Northern Ireland riders Aaron Spence, Mark Hewitt, and Dean McMaster, who will make their first appearances, along with Ireland's Kevin Keyes, Belgium's Fedrik Matthys, and Austria's Florian Astner.

Matthys arrives with a notable achievement: securing the inaugural European Series Road Racing championship in 2026. He will compete for Hoffmann by MRP on a BMW.

As for Astner, he joins the experienced Penz13 Racing Team, partnering with Isle of Man rider Marcus Simpson.

BMWs and Hondas dominate the entry list this year, accounting for 17 of the 20 motorcycles in the paddock.

Other than these, Yamaha will be represented by Swiss rider Olivier Lupberger and France's Timothée Monot, while Kawasaki's sole representative is newcomer Dean McMaster.

SCHEDULE

73RD GRAND PRIX MACAU

NOVEMBER 19 (THURSDAY)

07:45 ~ 08:15
Motorcycle Grand Prix - Free Practice 1

08:25 ~ 08:55
Motorcycle Grand Prix - Qualifying 1

09:25 ~ 10:05
FIA FR World Cup - Free Practice 1

10:20 ~ 11:00
FIA F4 World Cup - Free Practice 1

11:15 ~ 11:45
FIA TCR World Tour Event of Macau - Free Practice 1

12:15 ~ 12:45
FIA GT World Cup - Free Practice 1

13:00 ~ 13:30
Macau Roadsport Challenge - Free Practice

13:45 ~ 14:15
GBA GT Cup - Free Practice

14:30 ~ 15:00
FIA TCR World Tour Event of MAcau - Free Practice 2

15:15 ~ 15:45
FIA GT World Cup - Free Practice 2

16:00 ~ 16:40
FIA GT World Cup - Qualifying 1

16:55 ~ 17:25
Macau Roadsport Challenge - Qualifying

NOVEMBER 20 (FRIDAY)

07:45 ~ 08:15
Motorcycle Grand Prix - Free Practice 2

08:25 ~ 08:55
Motorcycle Grand Prix - Qualifying 2

09:25 ~ 10:05
FIA FR World Cup - Free Practice 2

10:25 ~ 11:05
FIA F4 World Cup - Free Practice 2

11:20 ~ 11:50
GBA GT Cup - Qualifying

12:20 ~ 12:50
FIA GT World Tour Event of Macau - Qualifying 1

13:05 ~ 13:20
FIA GT World Tour Event of Macau - Qualifying 2

13:40 ~ 14:20
FIA F4 World Cup - Qualifying

14:40 ~ 15:20
FIA FR World Cup - Qualifying 2

15:50 ~ 16:20
FIA GT World Cup - Qualifying 1

16:40 ~ 17:05
FIA GT World Cup - Qualifying 2

NOVEMBER 21 (SATURDAY)

07:10 ~ 07:30
Motorcycle Grand Prix - Warm up

09:10 ~ 10:00
Motorcycle Grand Prix - Race (12 laps)

10:25 ~ 11:05
Macau Roadsport Challenge - Race (9 laps)

11:40 ~ 12:45
FIA F4 World Cup - Qualification Race (8 laps)

13:20 ~ 14:00
FIA TCR World Tour Event of Macau - Race 1 (10 laps)

14:35 ~ 15:40
FIA GT World Cup - Qualification Race (12 laps)

16:15 ~ 17:20
FIA FR World Cup - Qualifying Race (10 laps)

NOVEMBER 22 (SUNDAY)

08:00 ~ 08:40
GBA GT Cup - Race (9 laps)

09:15 ~ 10:20
FIA F4 World Cup - Main Race (10 laps)

11:00 ~ 11:40
FIA TCR World Tour Event of Macau - Race 2 (10 laps)

12:35 ~ 13:50
FIA GT World Cup)16 laps)

14:00 ~ 14:25
Special Event

15:15 ~ 15:20
Lion Dance

15:30 ~ 16:35
FIA FR World Cup (15 laps)

ROADSPORT CHALLENGE

Defending champion to face fierce competition

RENATO MARQUES

THE Macau Roadsport Challenge returns to the Guia Circuit, with defending champion Leung Tsz Wa leading the field in one of the tightest categories.

Reserved exclusively for Toyota GR86 (ZN8) and Subaru BRZ (ZD8) models, the competition brings together drivers from across Greater China for a nine-lap battle around Macau's street circuit.

With similar machinery across the field, the Roadsport Challenge places particular emphasis on driver skill, qualifying performance, and the ability to negotiate the circuit's many "traps" without costly mistakes.

Representing Hong Kong's Auto Wonderland team, Leung enters this year's race as the man to beat after winning the 2025 edition.

However, results from qualifying events earlier this year at the Zhuhai International Circuit suggest that his title defense could face considerable resistance.

Among the higher performers was Wong Chuck Pan, who dominated the opening Group A race in May after securing pole position and controlling the race from start to finish.

Wong followed that performance with a second-place finish in the subsequent race, establishing himself as one of the leading contenders during the early stages of qualification.

Another name to watch is Damon Chan, who continues to show the strong form he displayed last year, earning pole position for the 2025 race, which he unfortunately did not finish.

Among the Macau contestants, we cannot overlook Jerónimo Badaraco, who has always been a strong competitor at the Guia Circuit, regardless of how the qualifying races went.

Other local names to watch include Leong Keng Hei, Leung Chi Ho, Cheang Kin Sang, and Carson Tang.

Notably, veteran Rui Valente will be absent this year.