

27 FULL-SEASON ENTRIES FOR THE 2006 FIA WTCC

The deadline for entering in the 2006 FIA World Touring Car Championship expired last Tuesday, 28 February.

27 cars, representing six different car Manufacturers have been entered.

The official entry list will be released on the occasion of the Media Day, which will take place at Monza on Tuesday, 21 March.

A field of 35/38 cars is expected to take part in the season's first race meeting at Monza, on 2 April, with the addition of the Italian Superturismo Championship competitors and other drivers who will take part only in selected FIA WTCC rounds, including the Peugeot 407 run by the Peugeot Sport Denmark team.

BMW UNVEIL 2006 FIA WTCC CAMPAIGN

Three teams and five drivers will defend BMW's colours in the 2006 FIA WTCC.

"In 2005, we won everything there was to win in WTCC," said BMW Motorsport Director Mario Theissen. *"Obviously it's our goal to repeat these achievements with our BMW 320si, which is a newly developed car. With our driver line-up and the new car we should be well-prepared for the tasks ahead of us. Furthermore, I'm convinced that in 2006 the series is going to consolidate its position as the most significant touring car championship."*

In 2006 the BMW national teams will race the new BMW 320si.

Andy Priaulx, the reigning champion, enters the 2006 season as the man to beat, following his back-to-back titles in the 2004 ETCC and 2005 WTCC. However, his BMW rivals are keen to prevent Priaulx and his BMW Team UK from winning a third consecutive title. BMW Team Germany once again, relies on Dirk Müller and Jörg Müller. BMW Team Italy-Spain driver Alessandro Zanardi who claimed his maiden WTCC win at Oschersleben last year, is to have a new team-mate: Marcel Costa.

"I'm really looking forward to supporting the BMW effort to defend the Manufacturers Championship," said the 27-year-old winner of the 2002 Spanish F3 Championship. *"The WTCC is a fantastic series and the races are truly hard-fought. It will be vital for me to learn as fast as possible."*

SEAT BETWEEN GENEVA AND ALBACETE

SEAT Sport continue the preparation in view of the 2006 FIA World Touring Car Championship working on both, promotion and technical development. While the team was testing at Albacete, the racing car was exhibited at the Geneva Auto Show.

At Albacete, the six drivers took turns at the wheel for two days, in changeable weather conditions. On the first day Rickard Rydell, Peter Terting and James Thompson worked on the car's settings as the track gradually dried. On the second day Jordi Gené, Yvan Müller and Gabriele Tarquini focused on different components that had been previously tested. Thompson said: *"I'm quite satisfied with the progress we're making on the car, both in terms of mechanics and familiarisation. I'm feeling more and more comfortable at the wheel of the León and I am looking forward to the start of the championship to prove our potential."*

The SEAT Sport team will test again at Magny-Cours on 7 and 8 March.

CHEVROLET TESTED FOR TWO DAYS AT ALBACETE

RML and Chevrolet continued their winter test programme at Albacete in Spain. All three drivers attend two days of development tests, mainly focusing on setting up chassis and suspensions.

"We spent both days doing short runs with all three cars," Team Manager Mark Busfield explained. "This was our first opportunity to use the Yokohama Advan tyres on a dry track, although it was cool and windy on the first day. On the second day it was warmer outside, so that gave us a first real opportunity to try and understand the tyres in the dry and in normal temperatures."

Next week, a four-day test at Magny-Cours is scheduled.

ARRIVAL OF THE FIRST LADA WTCC CAR FROM RUSSIA

The first car built by LADA Motorsport for the FIA WTCC campaign has been delivered to MTEC's factory at Waldsolms in Germany. The long procedures for clearing the Russian custom prevented the car from being exhibited at the Geneva Auto Show as it was planned.

The LADA 21106 racing car is now undergoing the homologation formalities and immediately afterwards it will be prepared for its first rollout.

WIECHERS-SPORT SIGN O'BRIEN AND ROMANINI

Germany-based Wiechers-Sport launched a new campaign in the FIA World Touring Car Championship in which they won the 2005 Independents' Trophy with Marc Hennerici. For the new season the team double their efforts, lining-up two BMW cars compared to the one they raced last year, for Diego Romanini and Emmet O'Brien.

Romanini, a 27-year old Italian from Camaione has already raced for the team in the 2004 German Production Car Championship. O'Brien, 24-year old from Dublin, emerged in one-make trophies, classifying 7th in the 2004 British SEAT Cupra Cup and 10th in the 2005 European Alfa Challenge.

The team will compete in Monza with two BMW 320i E46, but they have planned to switch to a couple of new BMW 320si E90 cars sometime during the season.

MEDIA ACCREDITATION FOR THE FIRST MEETING

The 2006 FIA World Touring Car Championship will start at Monza, Italy, on 1st and 2nd April.

The deadline to apply for media credentials is Monday, 20 March.

Accreditations Procedure and Accreditation Form may be downloaded from the websites www.fia.com and www.fiawtcc.com.

- **International Press** must send applications to:
Fabio Ravaioli – FIA WTCC Media Delegate
tel +39 06 39729497, fax +39 06 39729470, email: media@fiawtcc.com
- **Italian Press** must send applications to:
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Tel +39 02 7745239, fax: +39 02 7745201, email: stampa@acimi.it
- **TV and Radio** must send applications to:
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Tel +33 1 5774564, Fax +33 1 95772623; email: jboinet@eurosport.com

COUNTDOWN: - 18 DAYS

to the 2006 FIA WTCC test and media days – 21st/22nd March, in Monza