

### **ALEX ZANARDI OPENS PARALYMPIC GAMES**

Alessandro Zanardi was the guest star at the Opening Ceremony of the IX Paralympic Winter Games that took place today at Turin's Olympic Stadium.

After already being involved in the Turin 2006 Olympic Winter Games as one of the olympic torch bearers, Zanardi was invited on the stage after the Italian celebrated climber Reinhold Meissner. Dressed in a white racing overall he delivered an emotional speech before the 30,000 spectators who had gathered in the stadium: "I'm a racing driver despite the fate had tried to change the course of my life. With huge efforts I have managed to get back to winning races. For me it was more difficult than for my fellow colleagues, as my handicap may have slowed me down. But actually did not stop me!"

The Paralympic Winter Games will start on Saturday March 11, to go on until March 19.

### **SEAT LAUNCH FIA WTCC CAMPAIGN IN PARIS**

Yesterday evening in Paris, SEAT Sport launched their 6-car campaign in the 2006 FIA WTCC. During a crowded press conference at the exclusive Club de l'Etoile the President of SEAT Sport Winfried Burgert declared: "*We are making this huge effort with a clear goal in mind: the World Championship titles.*"

And Jaime Puig, Director of SEAT Sport echoed: "*We have six winning drivers and the León is a very good car. The championship appears to be very open, as all the Manufacturers involved have top-level teams and drivers. I think we have everything needed to fight for both the Drivers' and Manufacturers' titles.*"

Five of the six works drivers attended the event in Paris, all but Rickard Rydell. Jordi Gené, Peter Terting, Gabriele Tarquini and James Thompson followed each other on the stage, while the home boy Yvan Muller was the last one to be called. "*I'm quite happy to be with SEAT Sport, because I feel part of a great team which is also like a family. I want to do my best to bring SEAT to the front,*" said the Frenchman.

### **N.TECHNOLOGY TO RACE THREE ALFAS**

N.technology have entered three Alfa Romeo 156 cars in the 2006 FIA WTCC. The team directed by Mauro and Monica Sipsz will represent the Italian car maker who will also compete in the Manufacturers' Championship.

The 22-year old Brazilian Augusto Farfus is facing his third consecutive season with the team; last year he was classified fourth in the FIA WTCC, also scoring his first victory in Macau's Race 1. Farfus' team-mates are Gianni Morbidelli and Salvatore Tavano, both from Italy. Morbidelli (36) boasts an impressive racing CV, including Formula One (67 Grand Prix starts) and Touring Car as a works driver for BMW, Alfa Romeo and Volvo. Tavano (26) has been a regular competitor in the FIA Touring Cars since 2001 and the winner of the 2004 Italian Super Production title.

### **PIERRE-YVES CORTHALS TO RACE FOR JAS**

JAS Motorsport announced today their campaign in the 2006 FIA WTCC. They will compete as an Independent team with a couple of Honda Accord Euro R cars.

The first one, supported by Monroe shock absorbers, will be driven by Pierre-Yves Corthals, the 30 year-old Renault Clio Cup European Champion from Liège, Belgium.

*"I'm delighted to be driving in the WTCC as part of the JAS Motorsport team," said Corthals. "Although modern Super 2000 cars are new to me, I'm confident that my extensive experience with front wheel drive cars will be a great advantage."*

On the second car Alessandro Mariani, Director of JAS Motorsport, said: *"Negotiations are underway and we hope to confirm a second driver in the coming days."*

### **SELECTED WTCC EVENTS FOR CZECH DRIVER**

Jiří Janák, winner of the 2005 Czech Škoda Octavia Cup, will contest some selected rounds of the 2006 FIA WTCC at the wheel of an Alfa Romeo 156 Gta run by Československý Motorsport.

*"Our team will provide technical and organisational assistance. We are taking advantage of the experience we made last year, when we were the first Czech team to participate in selected WTCC events,"* team principal Stanislav Matějovský explained.

The 22-year old driver stated: *"This is going to be my greatest racing experience so far. I am looking forward to it very much. Our goal is the best possible result, but I know very well that it will be tough."*

### **SEAT, CHEVROLET AND ALFA IN MAGNY-COURS**

The French track of Magny-Cours hosted four days of testing, from Tuesday to Friday.

SEAT Sport tested on the first two days. *"The weather was mostly rainy, but we managed to have some good runs in the dry on the first day. And in any case it was also very important to test in the wet,"* SEAT Sport director Jaime Puig commented.

When SEAT left, N.technology arrived with all their three drivers: Farfus, Morbidelli and Tavano. They took turns at the wheel of one Alfa Romeo 156.

The Chevrolet team stayed in Magny-Cours for all four days.

*"Fortunately we had booked four days of track time, just to be sure to have some dry time, as the weather hadn't been on our side at the earlier tests in Brands Hatch and Albacete,"* Team Manager, Mark Busfield said. *"Two cars were set up with different suspension settings and weight distribution, and all three drivers swapped between both cars to get back-to-back impression."*

### **MEDIA ACCREDITATION FOR THE FIRST MEETING**

The 2006 FIA World Touring Car Championship will start at Monza, Italy, on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> 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](http://www.fia.com) and [www.fiawtcc.com](http://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](mailto:media@fiawtcc.com)
- **Italian Press** must send applications to:  
Gianni Cattaneo – ACI Milano  
Tel +39 02 7745239, fax: +39 02 7745201, email: [stampa@acimi.it](mailto:stampa@acimi.it)
- **TV and Radio** must send applications to:  
Julien Boinet – Eurosport  
Tel +33 1 40938213, Fax +33 1 40938169; email: [jboinet@eurosport.com](mailto:jboinet@eurosport.com)

**COUNTDOWN: - 11 DAYS**

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