

BMW SIGN FARFUS FOR 2007 WTCC

BMW signed Augusto Farfus as a works driver for the 2007 FIA WTCC. The 23-year-old Brazilian will contest the next season at the wheel of a Schnitzer Motorsport BMW 320si alongside Jörg Müller.

"I'm delighted that this up-and-coming touring car ace will line up for us in 2007," said BMW Motorsport Director Mario Theissen. "Since having made his debut in the 2004 European Touring Car Championship he has learned a lot and displayed a steep upward trend. In the 2006 WTCC season he was among the title contenders up to the very last round. To be able to stand up to the extremely competitive field in this hard-fought championship demonstrates his extraordinary skills."

Farfus, who finished the 2006 WTCC third in the Drivers' Championship behind Andy Priaulx and his new team-mate Jörg Müller, commented: *"I'm really happy to become a BMW works driver. It's an honour when a company like BMW give me the chance to compete for them. I'm confident to be in a competitive car and my goal is to become World Champion with BMW. The 2007 season opener will be held in my home town of Curitiba, which gives me additional motivation."*

Within the ranks of BMW, Farfus is going to replace Dirk Müller, who was a BMW works driver from 2002 to 2006.

ZANARDI'S FORMULA ONE COMEBACK

Last weekend Alessandro Zanardi made his Formula One comeback, driving a BMW Sauber F1 at Valencia, within the Formula BMW World Final.

"This was a special opportunity for me," said Zanardi. "Everybody was surprised that everything was working so smoothly. BMW always give me maximum support, especially in the WTCC. Driving the Formula One car is another step. I am very proud that I am doing this. The car was fantastic. I expected it to be much rougher, but it feels more like a beautiful BMW 7 Series than a F1 car."

BMW Motorsport Director Mario Theissen said: *"After just a few installation laps on Thursday, Zanardi had far more time to enjoy his Formula One comeback. I was impressed with how well the modifications on the car are working. Alessandro felt comfortable from the word go, which has also been proved by his lap times. He has not forgot how to drive a race car like this to the limit."*

Because Zanardi can generate more force with his right limb, the engineers moved the car's braking pedal from the left to the right side of the cockpit. The right prosthesis was fixed to the brake pedal via Velcro tape. In order to make the most effective use of the narrow space in the cockpit, Zanardi used specially made prostheses, smaller than the ones he uses normally. He shifted gears with a paddle on the right rear side of the steering wheel. On the left side there was another paddle to accelerate the car. *"In WTCC I find myself fighting against extremely strong drivers, who maybe didn't get to F1 just because of bad luck," Zanardi commented. "Many times I beat them and I say I would do respectably in GPs too."*

NEW HEADS OF MANAGEMENT FOR EUROSPORT

Eurosport – parent company of KSO, promoter of the FIA World Touring Car Championship – have appointed new heads of management.

Laurent-Eric Le Lay, 39-years old, is Eurosport's new Chairman and CEO. Le Lay joined the company in 1993 and launched the sports rights sales agency as well as the eurosport.com websites. In 2001 he also took on the responsibility for Eurosportnews, the sports information channel. Head of Sports Acquisitions for the TF1 Group, he was appointed Eurosport's Managing Director of Broadcasting in September 2003.

Eurosport's Board of Directors also appointed Jacques Raynaud as Vice-Chairman of Eurosport and Chairman and CEO of Eurosales, Eurosport's international advertising sales agency. Raynaud, 40-years old, joined Eurosport in 1994 as Area Manager responsible for the distribution of Eurosport in Central and Eastern Europe. Appointed Director of Distribution and Development in 2001, he was then promoted to Deputy Managing Director, responsible for the marketing and distribution of Eurosport and Eurosportnews. Managing Director since September 2003, he has overall responsibility for the Distribution, Advertising and Development of the Eurosport Group.

Jacques Behar, Managing Director and CFO, will be responsible for Eurosport's newly-developed activities in the organisation of sporting events on top of the FIA World Touring Car Championship. 51-years old he joined Eurosport in 1991 as Chief Financial Officer and became Deputy Managing Director in 2001. Since 2003, he has been Eurosport's Managing Director in charge of Finance and Administration and Chairman and CEO of KSO.

WTCC TO RACE AT PAU FOR THREE YEARS

The FIA World Touring Car Championship have added the famous street race of Pau to their 2007 calendar. The WTCC cars and drivers will race for 67th edition of the historical Grand Prix of Pau on June 3rd, 2007, and will be back for at least two more years.

The wedding between the A.S.A.C. Basco-Béarnais (promoter of the event) and KSO (promoter of WTCC) was sealed at Pau's Palais Beaumont by their respective presidents: Jean-Paul Pasquet and Jacques Béhar.

"I could not be happier. In 23 years of presidency, never ever I had contacts so smooth and fruitful like with KSO. Together with them we will find the solutions to any problems," said Mr Pasquet.

Mr Behar commented: *"In this choice we have been supported by all the manufacturers involved in the WTCC. The people of Pau have the history and experience, which will help the WTCC to grow up further. I knew from the beginning that Mr Pasquet and I were going to hit it off."*

Pau, located in the Pyrenees mountains and with approximately 85,000 inhabitants, is the capital of the Pyrénées-Atlantiques region. The Grand Prix has been raced since 1933 on a 2.7km street circuit, featuring Formula 1, Formula 2 and Formula 3000; however the FIA WTCC will be the first world championship hosted by the French city.

COUNTDOWN: - 100 DAYS



to the 2007 FIA WTCC Race of Brazil – 10th/11th March, in Curitiba