



FIA WTCC NEWSLETTER

44 - 15 December 2006

SEAT SPORT ITALIA MOVE TO WTCC

After a successful 2006 season, in which they clinched the Italian Superturismo crown with Roberto Colciago, the SEAT Sport Italia team announced their campaign in next year's World Touring Car Championship.

"After winning the Italian championship this was the logical step to take," team principal Tarcisio Bernasconi commented. *"For now we have one SEAT León confirmed for Roberto Colciago, however we are working to finalize the participation of a second car."*

WTCC PORTUGUESE EVENT PRESENTED

The 2007 FIA WTCC Race of Portugal was presented Tuesday in Porto. During an official ceremony at Palácio do Freixo, speeches were delivered by Laurentino Dias, Secretary of State for Youth and Sport, Rui Rio, President of Porto's Municipal Chamber, and Jacques Behar, President of KSO and Eurosport Events.

"I'm pleased to announce that we have signed a three-year agreement to run the championship in Portugal," Jacques Behar said. *"And for this I have to thank the Federação Portuguesa de Automobilismo e Karting and its President Luis Pinto de Freitas, with whom we have immediately found excellent cooperation. But I also wish to thank 'Talento' and the Municipal Chamber of Porto who will promote and support next year's event."*

The FIA WTCC meeting, that will take place on July 7th and 8th, will be the first World Championship racing event in Portugal since 1996, when the last Formula One Portuguese Grand Prix was held in Estoril. And it will also bring motor sport back to the city of Porto, nearly half-a-century after Formula One raced on the Boavista street circuit in 1958 and 1960.

MICHEL JOURDAIN TEST FOR SEAT SPORT

Mexican driver Michel Jourdain jr. tested last Tuesday in Calafat with SEAT Sport team. *"I was really impressed by the car, that requires very fine driving,"* he said.

32-years old from Mexico City, Jourdain built a solid experience racing in the USA from 1996; he spent nine seasons in Champ Car, and in 2003 he scored two race wins and was classified third in the championship. From 2005 he moved to Nascar, taking part in the Nextel Cup, the Craftsman Truck series and the Busch Cup.

"I believe that I have good chances to join SEAT Sport for their 2007 campaign in the FIA WTCC, and I am very motivated. However there are still some things to be defined and the final decision is up to SEAT Mexico," Jourdain explained.

ALAIN MENU IN THE SHOES OF SANTA CLAUS

Chevrolet driver Alain Menu put himself in Santa Claus' shoes on the Swiss Alps.

"I was asked by a Swiss TV station to be Father Christmas at a children's hospital in the Geneva area. The most difficult thing was being good enough an actor to convince them Santa Claus came all the way from Lapland driving a Chevrolet Captiva 4x4!" he said.

During his visit Menu presented the children with 1/43 model cars, Chevrolet WTCC caps and the limited edition of Race, the WTCC PC game.

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THOMPSON REPLACES BUTTON IN PARIS

SEAT Sport's James Thompson has been drafted in as Jenson Button's replacement at Team Autosport England for this weekend's Race of Champions at Paris-St. Denis Stade de France. Button has been forced out of the event because of the rib injury he picked up whilst karting recently.

Thompson is the third WTCC driver selected for the Race of Champions, joining World Touring Car champion Andy Priaulx and Yvan Muller; in the ROC Nations Cup he will drive alongside Priaulx for the English team.

Muller will team with Paris-Dakar ace Stéphane Peterhansel in the France 2 squad.

FARFUS WINS EUROTOURING TROPHY

Augusto Farfus said goodbye to Alfa Romeo on high note last Sunday, winning the Bomb Boogie Eurotouring Trophy at the Bologna Motor Show. The Brazilian youngster – who has signed to race next year's WTCC with BMW – drove his N.technology Alfa Romeo 156 car to victory after a number of close pursuit races in front of packed grandstands.

In the qualifying tournament Farfus emerged as the winner of the Yellow Group ahead of Roberto Colciago (SEAT León), freshly crowned Italian Superturismo champion; while Gabriele Tarquini (SEAT León) and Alessandro Zanardi (BMW 320si) were eliminated.

Moto GP ace Marco Melandri caused a surprise as he won the Green Group at the wheel of a DB Motorsport Alfa Romeo 156; Nicola Larini and his Chevrolet qualified second to proceed to the semi-finals, while Melandri's fellow Moto GP rider Luca Capirossi (SEAT León) and Jörg Müller (BMW 320si) remained out of the final phase.

In the first semi-final Larini prevailed over Farfus in the first run, but the Brazilian won the second and the access to the final as the sum of his times was only 0.02 seconds faster than his rivals. Same story in the second semi-final: Melandri and Colciago won one run apiece, but the SEAT driver qualified for the final with a 1.18 seconds margin.

Colciago won the first final run, beating Farfus by 0.67 seconds, but the Alfa Romeo man got his revenge in the second run by 1.83 and prevailed in the final classification by 1.16. Melandri beat Larini in the final for third place.

S2000 CARS SWITCH TO BIOETHANOL

Volvo is the first car manufacturer who committed to use bioethanol fuel on their Super 2000 racing cars. Polestar Racing team will run two Volvo S60s cars working with E85 environmental bioethanol fuel in the 2007 Swedish Touring Car Championship.

"Environment is a Volvo core value, and our motor sport history shows that we have always been on pole position in terms of environmental development. Among other things, Volvo was the first marque to use a catalytic converter in the British Touring Car Championship in 1994," said Alexander Murdzevski Schedvin, director of motor sport at Volvo Cars Sweden.

Another STCC team – Flash Engineering – is due to use bioethanol to feed their BMW 320si cars. Both, Polestar Racing and Flash Engineering, are evaluating the possibility of taking part in selected rounds of the 2007 FIA WTCC.

COUNTDOWN: - 86 DAYS



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