

Contact:

GRAND-AM Communications

(386) 310-6050

grand-amcommunications@nascar.com



Kansas Speedway Road Circuit Passes Opening Test

Three GRAND-AM Drivers Turn First Laps On Track's New Infield Road Course

KANSAS CITY, Kan. (Sept. 12, 2012) – Three GRAND-AM Road Racing teams gave the new Kansas Speedway road course high marks following Wednesday's first test of the new 2.36-mile circuit, preparing for a prospective race event in 2013.

"The layout is quite simple, but it's going to create a lot of racing opportunities," said Joao Barbosa, who tested the No. 5 Action Express Racing Corvette Daytona Prototype that competes in the Rolex Series DP class. "This is going to be an interesting place to come and race. With so many things to do very close by, this has everything it takes to be a great race track."

Joining Barbosa at the three-hour compatibility test were Bill Auberlen, driving the No. 94 Turner Motorsport BMW M3 from the Rolex Series GT class, and Ryan Ellis, in the No. 30 i-MOTO Mazda Speed 3 that competes in the Street Tuner class of the Continental Tire Sports Car Challenge.

"This is a great place to race," said Mark Raffauf, GRAND-AM managing director of racing operations. "Having looked at a road course at Kansas Speedway for several years, we found it very nicely done. It's fast and also has a lot of room."

The circuit includes six turns in the infield in addition to most of the 1.5-mile progressively banked oval.

"It's way tougher than it looks," Auberlen said. "You're going to have to fight for every pass. There will be a lot of bumping and banging. Having 70-plus cars in the Continental Tire Sports Car Challenge is going to be crazy."

Despite running on a "green" race track – with the infield portion used for the first time – all three GRAND-AM drivers said the track "rubbered in" very nicely.

"I was able to run consistently fast times the whole time I was out there," Ellis said. "I was going just as fast – if not a little faster – at the end of my longest run as I was at the beginning. I think this will be one of the most exciting races to watch."

Peter Carlino, chairman and CEO of Penn National Gaming which partners with Kansas Speedway/International Speedway Corporation in the Hollywood Casino at the speedway, took the first laps around the circuit in the Extreme Speed Motorsports-prepared Ferrari 458 that he races in the Ferrari Challenge.

“This is something I’ve been looking forward to for a long time,” Carlino said. “This is a beautiful course. I think it’s going to be a racer’s course. It’s very, very fast, with very wide turns. There’s a lot of room not to get in trouble.”

Prior to Carlino’s run, he participated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony for members of the Kansas City media. Joining him were Lesa France Kennedy, NASCAR vice chairwoman and executive vice president; Pat Warren, Kansas Speedway president; and Jeff Boerger, president of the Kansas Speedway Development Corporation.