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GRAND-AM, IMSA, DTM Announce Technical License/Cooperation Agreement

- ***Organizations Aligned Toward Common Goal Of North American Version of DTM***
 - ***Manufacturer Commitments Key To New Series' Feasibility***
 - ***Earliest Possible Start Is 2015 Season***

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. (March 26, 2013) – Exploring an opportunity that could additionally change the face, and the future, of road racing, GRAND-AM Road Racing and the International Motor Sports Association (IMSA) tonight announced a license and cooperation agreement with the Internationale Tourenwagen-Rennen (ITR e.V.), which administers DTM racing.

The collective goal is a North American version of DTM, the popular German touring car series. Representatives from all three organizations gathered for the announcement during a press conference at the InterContinental New York Times Square Hotel's Gotham Ballroom, an event highlighted by GRAND-AM founder Jim France and ITR Chairman Hans Werner Aufrecht signing the agreement.

The earliest the new series would begin would be 2015, possibly running as part of United SportsCar Racing event weekends. United SportsCar Racing was announced March 14 as the name of the new series resulting from the merger of GRAND-AM and the American Le Mans Series presented by Tequila Patrón. IMSA will serve as the sanctioning body for United SportsCar Racing, which also was announced on March 14.

"On the heels of our United SportsCar Racing and IMSA announcements, reaching this agreement adds to the momentum we're experiencing right now," GRAND-AM President and CEO Ed Bennett said.

"The next steps in this process will involve further discussions with various automotive manufacturers, whose commitment to this concept is essential if a North American DTM-style series is to become reality."

If realized, a North American version of DTM would join the current Europe-based DTM and Japan-based SUPER GT platforms. DTM is administered by ITR e.V., SUPER GT by GT Association (GTA). ITR e.V. and SUPER GT agreed last October to a cooperation starting in 2014.

2-2-2-2

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“The new technical regulations and the formed partnerships represent – for the first time in the history of the sport – a global platform for the manufacturers involved,” said Aufrecht, “a platform offering them the opportunity to race – on the same technical basis and with the best global promoters as guarantee for a competitive and attractive platform – in the core markets of North America, Europe and Asia.

“In addition to the six German and Japanese manufacturers – Audi, BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Honda, Nissan and Toyota – which are already involved, the new cooperation quite obviously also offers a new and extraordinary field of activity for the American premium manufacturers such as Cadillac, Lincoln or Dodge SRT within the framework of future motorsport programs. Now, we have to inform and thrill them together with our new partner GRAND-AM/IMSA and encourage them to get involved.”

Said GTA Chairman Massaki Bandoh: “The new partnership between the parties will further increase the value of DTM, GRAND-AM, IMSA and SUPER GT. This would be the opening of the doors for globalization of GT/Touring car races. We have to take this opportunity to cooperate with each other.”

European automobile manufacturers responded optimistically to news of the agreement, acknowledging the importance of the U.S. market to their businesses and the direct link DTM-style racing would create with consumers.

“This offers the opportunity to use the Audi RS 5 DTM in a premium race series not only in Europe but in Asia and North America too, in the future,” said Wolfgang Dürheimer, Audi AG’s Board of Management member, technical development. “For Audi as a globally operating company, this development represents an exciting and interesting option.”

Jens Marquardt, BMW’s motorsport director, said his organization “welcomes the planned cooperation between DTM and GRAND-AM/IMSA. It represents another important step on the way to the internationalisation of DTM. We as BMW are extremely open-minded, regarding these plans. The North American market represents the biggest market area for BMW in general – and the biggest market area for BMW M vehicles, too. BMW has got a great motor-racing tradition in the USA and therefore, we are truly happy about the prospect to also see DTM vehicles racing in the USA, in the future.”

“For Mercedes-Benz, the U.S. represents the biggest market area worldwide,” said Toto Wolff, Head of Mercedes-Benz Motorsport. “We are particularly delighted about the long-term cooperation deal between DTM and GRAND-AM/IMSA. Thanks to the technical basis agreed upon, we will be offered the opportunity to use our DTM cars to also demonstrate the competitiveness of our brand on U.S./North American race tracks, in the future.”

Sports car racing legend Hans Stuck, now the president of Germany’s motorsports governing body, Deutscher Motor Sport Bund (DMSB), considers the current DTM competitive environment a template for success.

3-3-3-3

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"If you want to hold motor-racing events in car nations such as Germany or the U.S., your grid must feature cars that have what it takes to fascinate the crowds," Stuck said. "The technical DTM regulations that were developed by DMSB in close cooperation with the car manufacturers involved – Audi, BMW and Mercedes-Benz – combine this guideline with an extremely high safety level that also represents an international benchmark. We are delighted that these regulations will be used not only in Europe, in the future, but also in Japan and the U.S."

ABOUT GRAND-AM ROAD RACING:

GRAND-AM Road Racing operates and sanctions the GRAND-AM Rolex Sports Car Series and Continental Tire Sports Car Challenge. GRAND-AM also sanctions the Ferrari Challenge in North America. Owned by NASCAR Holdings Inc., GRAND-AM is located in Daytona Beach, Florida. With a racing schedule led by the prestigious season-opening Rolex 24 At Daytona, GRAND-AM delivers professional sports car racing to key markets throughout North America in addition to being televised in the United States and Canada on SPEED and distributed globally through ESPN International. For additional information, please visit www.grand-ammedia.com.

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL MOTOR SPORTS ASSOCIATION:

Since its establishment in 1969, the International Motor Sports Association (IMSA) has conducted hundreds of auto races on a variety of permanent and temporary racing circuits in the United States and Canada. IMSA organizes and officiates professional road racing competitions and is one of the seven member clubs of the Automobile Competition Committee of the United States (ACCUS), which is the FIA sporting association for the United States. As such, IMSA is one of just a few organizations in the U.S. authorized to stage competitions based in the International Sporting Code. Currently IMSA sanctions several professional auto racing series including the American Le Mans Series presented by Tequila Patrón, IMSA GT3 Cup Challenge by Yokohama, Cooper Tires Prototype Lites powered by Mazda, Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge Canada by Michelin and Lamborghini Super Trofeo. Starting in 2014, IMSA will be the sanctioning body of United SportsCar Racing – the new road-racing series resulting from the merger of ALMS with GRAND-AM Road Racing.

ABOUT DTM:

The magic three letters "DTM" once stood for "Deutsche Tourenwagen-Meisterschaft" (German Touring Car Championship). Today, they are the trademark of the most popular international touring car racing series, based in Wiesbaden, Germany. Its history began in the 1984 season with cars that were close to the production versions and culminated in a worldwide series for high-tech touring cars in 1996. After a three-season break the DTM, in 2000, celebrated its successful comeback with a trendsetting concept – fascinating technology at reasonable costs. In 2012 a new era started with new race cars running within the new technical regulations which are the basis for the cooperation with SUPER GT and GRAND-AM. Today, DTM is regarded as the "pinnacle" of touring car racing and in 2012 was named European Race Series of the Year. For additional information, please visit www.dtm.com.

ABOUT SUPER GT:

SUPER GT was born in 1993 and the next year, the series was held as the Japan GT championship (JGTC). Upon expansion into Malaysia, the event was essentially renamed the SUPER GT in order to reflect its international ambitions. This race is utterly unique due to it having two racing classes: GT500 and GT300. The GT500 is raced by leading Japanese automobile manufacturers such as Honda, Nissan and Lexus, while the GT300 is raced by leading aftermarket auto-accessories makers, who use machines such as the Ferrari 458, Lamborghini LP570, Aston Martin V12 Vantage, Audi R8 GT3, Chevrolet Corvette, and even mean green machines like the Toyota Prius and Honda CRZ, making it the most diverse race! The race originally started with 500 and 300 as the maximum brake horsepower (BHP) of the participating machines in their respective classes. Over the years, this output has increased significantly and the machines today are unrated as of yet, however the category names remain the same. The machines are masterpieces of exceptional technical engineering. All the race cars from both categories are fitted with low-cutting splitters and humongous GT wings, and then given a bright coat of colors ranging from orange to crimson red to Japanese white. In true Japanese fashion, some cars are even anime-themed! All ensure that the fans are entertained with a visual feast!