**KIA RACING ANNOUNCES DRIVER LINE-UP FOR 2014**

**PIRELLI WORLD CHALLENGE SEASON**

*Nic Jönsson and Mark Wilkins To Pilot Grand Touring Sport (GTS) Class No. 36 and No. 38 Turbocharged Optimas In Kia’s Third Season of Pirelli World Challenge Competition*

* Nic Jönsson, multi-race winner and series champion with Kia’s Grand-Am Forte Koup program, returns for his second-consecutive season driving the No. 36 DonorsChoose.org Optima turbo
* Mark Wilkins returns in the No. 38 B.R.A.K.E.S. Optima turbo having contributed two wins and six podium finishes to Kia Racing’s strong sophomore effort in the 2013 Pirelli World Challenge

**irvine, Calif., March 19, 2014** – Coming off an impressive sophomore season in which Kia finished second in the Manufacturer’s Championship and Kia Racing pilot Mark Wilkins took third in the Driver standings, Kia Motors America (KMA) and its racing partner Kinetic Motorsports today announced their driver line-up for the 2014 Pirelli World Challenge (PWC) season. Veteran Nic Jönsson, who scored Kia’s first professional road racing championship in the 2011 Grand-Am Continental Tire Sports Car Challenge, returns to pilot the No. 36 DonorsChoose.org Optima turbo, while Canadian Wilkins retains his seat in the No. 38 B.R.A.K.E.S. Optima turbo after a phenomenal season in 2013 in which he claimed six podiums, including two victories, for Kia Racing. After narrowly missing the Driver championship in 2013, Wilkins, Jönsson, and the Kia Racing team are eager to get back on track March 29 in St. Petersburg, Fla.

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“The Kia Racing team has exceeded our expectations in the Pirelli World Challenge after two solid seasons of intense competition, posting four wins and 12 podiums in that time,” said Michael Sprague, executive vice president of sales and marketing, KMA. “We had a promising run last year and came close to winning the championship in the season finale. Nic, Mark and the entire Kia Racing team are outstanding brand ambassadors, helping us to demonstrate the quality, reliability and performance of our U.S.-built Optimas. We’re very glad to have both drivers back with us again and anxious to build on our strong results and have another shot at the title in 2014.”

The Kia Racing drivers followed two very different paths during the 2013 season. Wilkins catapulted to the top of the standings, scoring six podiums, including wins at Detroit and Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course. He also enjoyed 100 percent reliability, suffering zero DNFs during the 14-race season. That consistent performance for Wilkins’ No. 38 B.R.A.K.E.S. Optima turbo nearly captured the young Kia Racing program its second professional motorsports championship. But Wilkins’ late-race charge on a wet-but-drying street circuit at the season finale in Houston last fall came up just short. Jönsson, meanwhile, struggled with tough racing luck throughout the demanding schedule. Nevertheless, the quick Swede managed to set fast laps and gain much-needed manufacturer points in the No. 36 DonorsChoose.org Optima turbo.

“After the success we had in our first two seasons, I’m thrilled to be back behind of the wheel of the turbocharged Optima for 2014,” said Wilkins. “We’ve shown improvement each year in the Pirelli World Challenge, and the development of the Optima turbo by Kinetic Motorsports has proven to be impressive; our car is ultra-competitive at all tracks we visit. Having missed the championship last year by only a few points, I can’t wait to get back on track and start racing again.”

Kia Racing kicks off the 2014 PWC with a doubleheader weekend for rounds 1-2 in St. Petersburg, Fla., on March 29-30. Race fans can watch live coverage of the races online at www.world-challengetv.com and catch the latest news and updates from the Kia Racing Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/kiaracing](http://www.facebook.com/kiaracing) or follow the team on Twitter: @KiaRacing.

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**About Kia Motors America**

Kia Motors America (KMA) is the marketing and distribution arm of Kia Motors Corporation based in Seoul, South Korea. KMA proudly serves as the "Official Automotive Partner" of the NBA and LPGA and surpassed the 500,000 annual sales mark for the second consecutive year in 2013 following the launch of seven all-new or significantly redesigned vehicles. KMA offers a complete line of vehicles, including the rear-drive K900 flagship sedan[[1]](#endnote-1), Cadenza premium sedan, Sorento CUV, Soul urban passenger vehicle, Sportage compact CUV, Optima midsize sedan, Optima Hybrid, the Forte compact sedan, Forte5 and Forte Koup, Rio and Rio 5-door sub-compacts and the Sedona minivan, through a network of more than 765 dealers across the United States. Kia’s U.S. manufacturing plant in West Point, Georgia, builds the Optima\* and Sorento\* and is responsible for the creation of more than 14,000 plant and supplier jobs.

Information about KMA and its full vehicle line-up is available at [www.kia.com](http://www.kia.com). For media information, including photography, visit [www.kiamedia.com](http://www.kiamedia.com). To receive custom email notifications for press releases the moment they are published, subscribe at [www.kiamedia.com/us/en/newsalert](http://www.kiamedia.com/us/en/newsalert).

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1. **\* The Sorento and Optima GDI (EX Trims and certain LX Trims only) and GDI Turbo are built in the United States from U.S. and globally sourced parts.**

 K900 V6 expected Summer 2014. Initially available in certain markets with limited availability. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)