**TORONTO-NATIVE MARK WILKINS SCORES THRILLING VICTORY FOR KIA RACING ON HOME TURF IN ROUND 10 OF THE PIRELLI WORLD CHALLENGE**

*Wilkins Pilots the No. 38 B.R.A.K.E.S. Optima Turbo to Back-To-Back Top-Five Finishes in Toronto to Extend Kia’s Lead in Grand Touring Sport (GTS) Manufacturer Championship*

* Canadian Wilkins currently leads GTS Driver Championship standings
* Nic Jönsson, driver of the No. 36 DonorsChoose.org Optima turbo, is third in the GTS Driver Championship standings

**Irvine, Calif., July 21, 2014** – Toronto, Ontario, native and Kia Racing pilot Mark Wilkins showed championship-caliber grit and tenacity this weekend as he scored two top-five finishes in the No. 38 B.R.A.K.E.S. Optima turbo, including his second win of the 2014 Pirelli World Challenge (PWC) season. Wilkins’ ability to overcome on-track adversity and keep a cool head in the midst of fierce battles during the doubleheader weekend landed him a fourth-place finish in Saturday’s round nine and the top step of the podium for round 10 on Sunday. Kia’s lead in the Manufacturer’s Championship increased to seven points, ahead of Ford, Porsche, Chevrolet, Nissan and Aston Martin. The victory marked Wilkins’ first-career win at his home track and put him back atop the Driver Championship standing.

 “It means so much to me personally to win at this track. I’ve come so close before, but this is an amazing feeling to win here where I have so many friends and family cheering me on. It was good clean racing with my fellow GTS competitors, but the Kia came out on top today,” said Wilkins, who held on to beat Mustang driver Alec Udell by a mere 0.039 seconds, setting a new PWC class record for closest margin of victory. “I’m just really proud to work with Kia Racing and Kinetic Motorsports and race this awesome Kia Optima.”

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Wilkins’ success north of the border didn’t come easily. After initially winning the pole position during Friday’s qualifying session, Wilkins’ car was found to have a boost-control issue. As a result, he was moved to the back of the GTS field for round nine on Saturday. After avoiding several on-track incidents during the 50-minute race, Wilkins wheeled his way up to fourth place when the checkered flag waved. In the process, he set the fastest lap of the race, earning the pole position for round 10 on Sunday – a position he would not relinquish.

Sunday’s round was shortened due to weather-related adjustments to the Indy Car schedule, but what the race lacked in duration it more than made up for in wheel-to-wheel action. The top five GTS cars all ran within one second of each other for the entire contest with Wilkins’ red No. 38 B.R.A.K.E.S. Optima turbo leading the pack. As the race clock ticked down and Wilkins’ tires started to lose grip due to hard use, the Optima came under increasing pressure with Udell’s Mustang nipping at its heels. Udell would make a final-lap attempt to pass, but Wilkins was able to hold him off and take the win by finest of margins.

The action-packed rounds nine and 10 of the PWC at The Streets of Toronto will air on the NBC Sports Network on Sunday, August 10 at 1:30 p.m. ET. Live web-streaming of all PWC competition is viewable online at www.world-challengetv.com, and race fans can keep up-to-date with the team via the Kia Racing Facebook page at www.facebook.com/kiaracing and by following along on Twitter: @KiaRacing. The next event, comprising rounds 11 and 12 of the 16-race season, takes place at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course August 1-3.

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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 midsize multi-purpose vehicle, 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, SX & Limited and certain LX Trims only) are assembled in the United States from U.S. and globally sourced parts.**

 2015 K900 V8 available in select trims and in select markets with limited availability. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)