**KIA RACING AND HOMETOWN STAR MARK WILKINS RETURN TO CANADIAN TIRE MOTORSPORTS PARK FOR PIRELLI WORLD CHALLENGE DOUBLEHEADER**

*Thanks to a pair of podium finishes in rounds five and six at Barber Motorsports Park, defending GTS-Class Manufacturer Champion Kia carries momentum north to Canada for rounds seven and eight of the Pirelli World Challenge*

* Toronto native Mark Wilkins drove the Kia Racing No. 38 B.R.A.K.E.S. Optima turbo to its first Pirelli World Challenge victory in 2012 at Canadian Tire Motorsports Park and won on the Streets of Toronto in 2014
* Ben Clucas, pilot of the No. 36 DonorsChoose.org Optima turbo, prepares for his first race on Canadian soil

**IRVINE, Calif., May 13, 2015** – Coming off back-to-back podium finishes in rounds five and six at Barber Motorsports Park in Birmingham, Alabama, the Kia Racing team heads north to Canadian Tire Motorsports Park (CTMP) in Bowmanville, Ontario, Canada, for rounds seven and eight of the Pirelli World Challenge (PWC). Canadian citizen and hometown hero, Mark Wilkins, pilot of the No. 38 B.R.A.K.E.S. Optima turbo, is returning to the scene of his first PWC race victory, which was half of a remarkable doubleheader sweep for Kia during 2012, the brand’s rookie season in the series.

 “I have fond memories of Canadian Tire Motorsports Park, from spectating as a kid to competing there early in my racing career, and eventually returning with Kia Racing. The cars, drivers, and series are much different since our last outing here in 2012,” said Wilkins. “But two things that never change are the Canadian fans and their passion for motorsports. I love racing in front of them, and it’s a tremendous honor to do so. I look forward to getting out there and proving what the Optima can do on a very demanding track.”

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 Although this is the first time in two years that Kia Racing has raced at CTMP (nee Mosport) – a very fast permanent road course located northeast of Toronto – the PWC series has been a fixture on the Canadian racing scene as part of the Indy event run annually on Toronto’s downtown streets. In 2014, Wilkins captured a very memorable win in Toronto behind the wheel of the No. 38 B.R.A.K.E.S. Optima turbo in front of family and friends. The win helped Kia go on to win the Grand Touring Sport (GTS) class Manufacturer Championship.

 Contrary to Wilkins’ robust Canadian racing background, Ben Clucas, in the No. 36 DonorsChoose.org Optima turbo, is preparing to make his first-career start at CTMP this weekend. Clucas’ vast racing experience has put him in the driver’s seat all around the world, but he has yet to race in Canada. Like his teammate, Clucas is coming off a podium finish at Barber Motorsports Park and looks to keep the drive going north of the border.

 “We had our challenges at Barber, but Mark and I were able to come home with a pair of podium finishes. The series has done a good job with the balance of performance in the GTS class, but we have our work cut out for us the rest of the season,” said Clucas. “I’ve been hearing from Mark and others about how racing in Canada is a fantastic experience with the amount of support and turnout you get from fans. I’m looking forward to getting there and putting on a good show.”

Joining the factory-backed GTS Optimas at CTMP are Kinetic Motorsports’ privately entered Kia Forte Koups for rounds four, five and six of the PWC’s Touring Car A (TCA) class. All three Koups will compete for the first time since the season-opening weekend at the Circuit of the Americas in Austin, Texas. Defending driver champion and 2014 rookie-of-the-year Jason Wolfe, in the No. 36 Richard Wolfe Trucking Kia Forte Koup, currently sits second in the driver standings. Meanwhile, rookies Kris Wright, in the No. 34 Wright Automotive Kia Forte Koup, and Samantha Tan of Gormley, Ontario, Canada, in the No. 38 Gum Products International, Kia Forte Koup look to gain points and valuable seat time.

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GTS round seven of the PWC at CTMP takes place Saturday, May 16, at 10:20 a.m. ET. Round eight begins Sunday, May 17, at 9:40 a.m. ET. Tape-delayed televised coverage of the GTS doubleheader weekend will air on the CBS Sports Network Sunday, May 24, at 5 p.m. ET.

TCA round four takes place Friday, May 15, at 12:50 p.m. ET; round five on Saturday, May 16, at 8:50 a.m. ET; and round six Sunday, May 17, at 8 a.m. ET. Televised coverage of the TCA tripleheader will air on Wednesday, May 27, at 7 p.m. ET. Live-streamed coverage of all PWC races is available online at www.world-challengetv.com, and race fans can keep up-to-date with the Kia Racing team via the Kia Motors America Facebook and Instagram pages, and on Twitter @Kia.

**About Kia Motors America**

Kia Motors America (KMA) is the marketing and distribution arm of Kia Motors Corporation based in Seoul, South Korea, and in 2014 was the #1 ranked mainstream brand according to Strategic Vision’s Total Quality Index. KMA proudly serves as the "Official Automotive Partner" of the NBA and LPGA and set an all-time annual sales record in 2014, surpassing the 500,000 unit mark for the third consecutive year. KMA offers a complete line of vehicles, including the rear-drive K900[[1]](#endnote-1) flagship sedan, Cadenza premium sedan, Sorento CUV, Soul urban passenger vehicle, Soul Electric Vehicle2, Sportage compact CUV, Optima midsize sedan, Optima Hybrid, the Forte compact sedan, Forte5 and Forte Koup, Rio and Rio 5-door subcompacts 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. For media information, including photography, visit www.kiamedia.com. To receive custom email notifications for press releases the moment they are published, subscribe at www.kiamedia.com/us/en/newsalert.

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**\* 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**

1. 2015 K900 V8 available in select trims and in select markets with limited availability.

2 2015 Soul EV in select markets with limited availability.

 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)