**KIA RACING SCORES BACK-TO-BACK PODIUM FINISHES DURING ROUNDS NINE AND TEN OF THE PIRELLI WORLD CHALLENGE AT ROAD AMERICA**

*Tire management proves key as teammates Ben Clucas (No. 36 DonorsChoose.org Optima turbo) and Mark Wilkins (No. 38 B.R.A.K.E.S. Optima turbo) earn valuable championship points*

* Mark Wilkins’ dramatic last-lap pass in round nine on Saturday secured his third-place finish – his second podium of the year
* Ben Clucas’ opportunistic overtake in round ten put him in second place and earned him his third podium of the 2015 season

**IRVINE, Calif., June 30, 2015** – Reigning Pirelli World Challenge (PWC) Grand Touring Sport (GTS) class Manufacturer Champion, Kia Motors continued its title defense at Road America, earning hard-fought back-to-back podium finishes in rounds nine and ten in Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin. Mark Wilkins, pilot of the No. 38 B.R.A.K.E.S. Optima turbo, scored third and fourth place finishes during the doubleheader weekend, while teammate Ben Clucas, in the No. 36 DonorsChoose.org Optima turbo, scored a second-place finish in round ten. Both drivers struck the right balance between outright speed and tire conservation as their Optimas – the only front-wheel-drive cars in the field – kept pace with an onslaught of rear-wheel-drive sports cars and V8-powered muscle.

“We had some great battles with Andrew Aquilante in the Mustang, and I was pushing with all I had but also being very careful and deliberate to save some front tire for the end,” said Wilkins after scoring his second podium of the season on Saturday. “We diced back and forth a few times throughout the final laps, and in the process I was able to determine where I had the advantage. Ultimately, I was able to make it happen on the last lap going into turn three.”

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While Wilkins relied on experience behind the wheel of the Kia Racing Optima and extensive knowledge of the four-mile-long circuit known as America’s National Park of Speed to craft one of the most disciplined drives of his career, teammate Clucas took maximum advantage of an opportunity early on Sunday to move into the runner-up position and then wisely went into conservation mode for the remainder of the 50-minute contest.

 “I was running fourth early on and was prepared to settle into a groove to extend tire life when the two Mustangs ahead of me tangled, which gave me a chance to dive to the inside and use momentum to overtake them on the front straight,” said Clucas, who scored his third podium of the season in Sunday’s round ten of the 18-race series. “It’s a good points day for Kia in the Manufacturer Championship, and for Mark and me in the driver standings, and a great way to start the second half of the season.”

The Road America results bring Kia Racing’s total to five podium finishes on the year as the 2015 season hits the halfway point. Rounds 11-12 take place at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course in Lexington, Ohio, July 31 – August 2. Kia currently sits third in the GTS Manufacturer Championship behind Ford and Aston Martin, but ahead of Porsche, Chevrolet and Nissan. Televised coverage of the GTS doubleheader weekend will air on the CBS Sports Network Wednesday, July 8, at 9 p.m. ET. 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.

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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, 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)