**RACING OFF THE LINE: KIA RACING OPTIMAS RETURN TO BIRTHPLACE FOR ROUNDS FIVE AND SIX OF PIRELLI WORLD CHALLENGE AT BARBER MOTORSPORTS PARK**

*Defending Grand Touring Sport (GTS) Race Champions Return to Birmingham, Alabama, in Pursuit of Repeat Victory on Home Track*

* Kia Racing pilot, Mark Wilkins in the No. 38 B.R.A.K.E.S. Optima turbo, hopes to repeat performance from last season’s win at Barber Motorsports Park
* As reigning GTS Manufacturer Champion, Kia looks to add points in defense of title following a pair of top-10 finishes on the Streets of St. Petersburg

**IRVINE, Calif., April 22, 2015** – Proudly assembled on the state-of-the-art production line at nearby Kia Motors Manufacturing Georgia (KMMG) in West Point, Georgia\*, Kia Racing’s No. 36 DonorsChoose.org and No. 38 B.R.A.K.E.S. Optima turbos return to Barber Motorsports Park in Birmingham, Alabama, just 120 miles from where they were originally built. As defending race winners from last season – and reigning GTS Class Manufacturer Champion – Kia has a proven record of success at Barber, and racing partner Kinetic Motorsports, based in Buford, Georgia, is optimistic that the homecoming for rounds five and six of the 2015 Pirelli World Challenge (PWC) will not disappoint.

 “We always enjoy racing at Barber Motorsports Park because of its proximity to KMMG, where these two Optimas started life just like all of the other Optimas bound for Kia dealerships across the country. We literally picked them up from the plant, took them a short distance north to our shop and began prepping them for race duty,” said Russell Smith, owner, Kinetic Motorsports. “There’s no doubt the competition will be fierce this weekend, but we’ve won here in the past and the team feels really positive about the package we’re bringing to the track.”

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Mark Wilkins, driver of the No. 38 B.R.A.K.E.S. Optima turbo, scored a victory last season at the scenic 2.4-mile, 15-turn, permanent road course set among the rolling hills outside Birmingham. The win was one of five checkered flags for Kia Racing in 2014, which helped Kia become the first Korean car company to win the PWC GTS Manufacturer Championship, besting rivals Ford, Chevrolet, Porsche, Aston Martin and Nissan.

Ahead of this year’s race at Barber, Kia Motors America (KMA) pulled the silk off the all-new 2016 Optima midsize sedan earlier this month at the New York International Auto Show (NYIAS). Like the current racecars, the all-new Optima will be built at KMMG when production begins later this year, and the team is anxious to begin developing the next next-generation of Kia Racing’s success. And they have reason to be excited; the all-new Optima sits on a chassis that is lighter, stiffer and wider than the current car, offering the Kia Racing engineers a more robust platform to build upon.

Round five of the PWC at Barber Motorsports Park takes place Friday, April 24, at 5:55 p.m. ET. Round six begins Saturday, April 25, at 2:40 p.m. ET. Tape-delayed televised coverage of the doubleheader weekend will air on the CBS Sports Network Sunday, May 3, at 2 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.

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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.

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