**KIA RACING PREPARES FOR 2015 PIRELLI WORLD CHALLENGE SEASON FINALE AT MAZDA RACEWAY LAGUNA SECA**

*Factory-backed Grand Touring Sport (GTS) Optima program and Kinetic Motorsports’ privateer Touring Car A (TCA) Forte Koup effort both end their seasons on the Monterey Peninsula*

* Defending GTS class Manufacturer Champions make first visit to Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca (MRLS) since 2012
* Defending TCA class Driver Champion Jason Wolfe, pilot of the No. 36 Richard Wolfe Trucking Kia Forte Koup, leads the points with three races to go at MRLS

**IRVINE, Calif., September 10, 2015** – Kia, reigning Grand Touring Sport (GTS) Manufacturer Champion, concludes its 2015 Pirelli World Challenge (PWC) campaign this weekend with round 17 at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca (MRLS) in Monterey, California. Kia Racing’s Optimas last visited the picturesque track in 2012, recording two top-10 finishes in the team’s rookie PWC season with then pilots Michael Galati and Mark Wilkins. In fact, that 2012 event was Wilkins’ Kia Racing debut in the No. 38 B.R.A.K.E.S. Optima turbo. Since then, the Canadian has proven his mettle by finishing third in the GTS Driver Championship in two of the past three seasons, helping Kia earn the 2014 GTS Manufacturer Championship – one of three national titles claimed by the Korean brand last year.

“Having driven the Optima for as long as I have, there aren’t many tracks on the PWC schedule that I haven’t experienced. I always look forward to Laguna, but this year is interesting because we haven’t raced here since 2012 and the Optimas have been developed into true contenders thanks to the efforts of the entire Kia Racing organization over the last three years,” said Wilkins. “This program has come a long way since my first race here four seasons ago, and I’m excited to get out there and showcase what this awesome racecar can do this weekend. Even though we are out of the championship hunt this year, it’s important to end the season on a high note.”

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Kia Racing teammate Ben Clucas, in the No. 36 DonorsChoose.org Optima turbo, raced at MRLS in 2011 with Kinetic Motorsports in a BMW M3, but 2015 marks his first start in the Optima at the 11-turn, 2.2-mile permanent road course. Teammates Clucas and Wilkins have combined for seven podium finishes, including one win this season but find themselves mathematically out of the running for the 2015 championship.

“It’s been a challenging year to say the least with the new GTS-only race format, which has highlighted the challenges of being the only front-wheel-drive car in the field,” said Clucas. “The Kia Racing Optimas are still very fast and we can hold our own against the likes of Porsche, Ford, Chevy and Aston, but tire wear has been a factor in the closing stages of every race this season. What I love about this team, though, is we never quit. We’ll keep digging and working hard toward finishing the season strong – perhaps getting another win – and positioning ourselves for a better 2016.”

In addition to the factory-backed GTS Optimas, Kinetic Motorsports’ privately entered TCA Forte Koups will conclude their season with three final rounds at MRLS. Current points leader Jason Wolfe, in the No. 36 Richard Wolfe Trucking Forte Koup, is coming off a weekend sweep at Miller Motorsports Park in Tooele, Utah, where he won all three races and extended his lead heading into the season finale by 129 points. With 451 points to be claimed in the final three rounds, however, it’s still anyone’s championship.

GTS round 17 at MRLS takes place Sunday, September 13, at 1:35 p.m. ET.  Tape-delayed televised coverage of the GTS race will air on the CBS Sports Network on Wednesday, September 23, at 9:00 p.m. ET.

TCA round 16 takes place Friday, September 11, at 5:25 p.m. ET, followed by round 17 on Saturday, September 12, at 4:45 p.m. ET and round 18 on Sunday, September 13, at 11:45 a.m. ET. Tape-delayed television coverage of the TCA races can be seen on the CBS Sports Network on Wednesday, September 23, at 10:00 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. 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 15,000 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 Soul EV in select markets with limited availability.

   [↑](#endnote-ref-1)