M-SPORT BENTLEY READY TO RACE AROUND THE CLOCK

Monday 21 July, 2014

- 24-hour marathon awaits Bentley at Spa-Francorchamps
- New Continental GT3 ready for toughest challenge yet
- Championship-leading drivers prepare for ultimate endurance test

Following successive victories in the Blancpain Endurance Series, M-Sport Bentley is setting up at the world-famous Spa-Francorchamps track in Belgium for the Total 24 Hours of Spa – the headline race of the season, starting at 16:30 local time on Saturday 26th July. The team is looking for both of its cars to finish in the points, and aiming to strengthen the championship lead of the Bentley Boys of the #7 Continental GT3 (Guy Smith, Andy Meyrick and Steven Kane).

Through seamless teamwork and consistent pace, the narrow victories scored at Silverstone and Paul Ricard have put the team in to a strong position going in to the fourth and most important round of the championship at Spa. Three sets of points are awarded over the course of the race, with teams scoring at the six- and twelve-hour marks before the final finishing order completes the points allocation.

The team is targeting a top-ten finish for both Bentley machines. This task has been made more difficult due to a new Balance of Performance for the Continental GT3 which both increases weight and reduces engine performance. Despite this, Bentley's Director of Motorsport, Brian Gush, is still hopeful of a strong result:

"We come to Spa with a great deal of excitement. Bentley's motorsport heritage is built on 24-hour racing, and the last time we took part in a race of this length was our victory at Le Mans in 2003. The nature of racing over so many hours means that we not only need a reliable car with great performance, but a good deal of luck. We think the Continental GT3 will suit Spa, but our pace has been dealt a blow with a new Balance of Performance that will certainly restrict us. The thrill of 24-hour racing is that it could be anyone's race, and we'll be racing to give the British fans something to cheer about."

Bentley Boy Steven Kane has taken the chequered flag in his Continental GT3 at the last two races, and comments:

"Spa will be a race like no other this season, as the only 24-hour marathon on the calendar. The first test race for the Bentley was the Gulf 12 Hours in Abu Dhabi, and we've done a 24-hour test too, so we know we have the reliability. Hopefully we can complement that with the speed needed to compete for major points. We also know that there'll be a lot of Bentley fans watching the race and we don't want to let them down!"

Belgian former F1 driver Jérôme D'Ambrosio knows the Spa-Francorchamps circuit better than most, and is very aware of the challenge it presents. Jérôme will be racing with Duncan Tappy and Antoine Leclerc in the second Continental GT, and he comments:

"I'm thrilled to be racing with Bentley at Spa. It's an historic track, including some of the best corners in the world, and to be racing in front of my home fans again will be fantastic. It's a really tricky circuit, and while I've raced here in series from Formula Renault to F1, I've never driven it in the dark – that's a really exciting new challenge. Duncan, Antoine and I will be looking for our best result of the season so far and I'm confident we can have a great race."

M-Sport Bentley's progress over the weekend can be followed at @BentleyComms, where live updates will be posted from the track, while Eurosport and Motors TV will provide live television coverage.

- ENDS -

Notes to editors

- The Continental GT3 is built by the Bentley motorsport team in conjunction with M-Sport. The Bentley GT3 team is led by Bentley Director of Motorsport, Brian Gush and M-Sport's Chief Engineer, Christian Loriaux. M-Sport was originally formed in 1979, and in 1994 M-Sport won national rally titles in Italy, Portugal, the Middle East and Britain, the latter with founder Malcolm Wilson himself behind the wheel. Since 1996, M-Sport has run Ford's WRC campaigns, including

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winning two FIA World Rally Championships in 2006 and 2007.

- The Continental GT3 project is proud to be working with ExxonMobil, who have joined the team as a key sponsor. Using ExxonMobil's proven success in motorsports and a track record of helping bring home championships, Bentley's V8 race engine will be filled with Mobil 1™ synthetic motor oil, to ensure maximum engine protection and performance in the gruelling environment of endurance racing.
- In 2002, Bentley launched the Continental GT, then the most powerful Bentley ever built. Breitling lent the revolutionary new luxury car an extra personal touch, by participating in the design of the technical instruments and, importantly, creating the onboard clock. Following a successful collaboration during Bentley's renowned Le Mans campaign from 2001 to 2003, Breitling has returned as a key sponsor of the Continental GT3 project.
- The Continental GT3 programme is also sponsored by premium British audio experts Naim. For both Bentley and Naim, an enduring relationship with customers is core to the philosophy. Both are proud of their British heritage and reputation for offering their customers the very best products in their respective industries. Naim's highly specialised team of world-class engineers and designers have a passion and commitment to music that enables them to deliver what is considered by many audio enthusiasts – and their loyal customer base – to be the finest range of audio equipment available in the world today
- Bentley Motors employs around 3,700 people in Crewe which is home to all its operations including design, R&D, engineering and production. The combination of fine craftsmanship, using skills that have been handed down through generations, alongside engineering expertise and cutting-edge technology is unique to UK luxury vehicle manufacturers such as Bentley. It is also an example of high-value British manufacturing at its best. Bentley exports over £1bn worth of goods in 2012. The company is the third largest R&D investor in the UK's automotive sector and the 18th largest nationally.

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