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Contact: Diane Swintal
dswintal@imsaracing.net
949.439.7871
www.imsachallenge.com



Facebook: [GT3CupChallenge](https://www.facebook.com/GT3CupChallenge) 
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IMSA GT3 CUP CHALLENGE BY YOKOHAMA DRIVERS REVEL IN THE FORMULA ONE EXPERIENCE

MONTRÉAL, Québec (June 6, 2011) – The teams and drivers of the IMSA GT3 Cup Challenge by Yokohama have eagerly anticipated the Grand Prix du Canada weekend since the event was first announced on the series schedule. The chance to share the Circuit Gilles-Villeneuve with some of the most famous names in motorsports and to compete in front of F1 fans from around the world promises to be a thrill.

And for Berthierville's Martin Harvey, the decision to join the US series field after running the first two events in the Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge Canada was an easy one. Not only will he enjoy being one of the few Québécois in the weekend line up, it's a chance to show his "colors," as Harvey switches from his usual McDonalds livery to a Ronald McDonald House paint scheme on his 08 Wingho Racing/McDonalds Porsche.

"I will be there racing for my two favorite charities," smiled Harvey. "One is Ronald McDonald House for families with children who are receiving treatment for cancer; the other is for the Musee Gilles Villeneuve in my home town of Berthierville. I will be very proud, no matter how I finish!"

Melanie Snow, driving the #56 Porsche 911 GT3 Cup car for Snow Racing, is one of the few drivers with experience on the famed F1 circuit, finishing third in both races the last time the GT3 series supported the Grand Prix in 2008. But this year, Snow has the added bonus of racing alongside her 15-year-old son Madison in the #62 entry, who squeaked into the series this year (FIA rules state that a driver must turn 16 in the year he or she races – Madison turns 16 on December 26.) Madison Snow is coming off a dream weekend at his home race in Utah, having won both races in the Gold Cup class for 2005½ - 2009 Porsches.

"Being on the podium here is an all-time dream," said Melanie Snow. "It's an unbelievable feeling, to be here with the F1 drivers, up on the same podium they use and driving on the same track that they're on. This year will be that much more special with Madison here – we weren't sure they would allow him to race this year because of his age. So it will be great to experience it again with him.

"It's a hard track to learn – not because there are a lot of corners, because there aren't, but because we don't have a lot of time on the track so we have to learn fast. The track flows really well; it's just 'straight-kink-straight-kink.' So for the drivers, it's just a matter of figuring out how fast you can go through those kinks. And it's kind of crazy but there's a big screen on one part of the track and it shows the cars coming through that section, so you can see yourself on the big screen. There are so many of those types of things that make the weekend so amazing - the atmosphere, the feeling downtown. It's really exciting."

Toronto native Marco Cirone brings his #88 6th Gear Racing Porsche 911 GT3 Cup car to Montréal for the first time and hopes some of his online preparation methods pay off when he sees the track in person.

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“Fortunately, I have PlayStation II and it’s got the Formula One track on it,” said Cirone. “Believe it or not, it’s helpful! I’ve also downloaded some F1 videos – I’m trying to get the lines down and absorb as much as I can. It’s going to be a completely different experience when I get there, but at least I’ll know which way the track goes – and that’s about the best thing I can do.

“We’re with the pinnacle of racing this weekend, so just being a part of that is going to be amazing. There will be thousands of people there for our race Sunday morning so I’ll be nervous about that, but really excited!”

Ottawa’s Perry Bortolotti, winner of the first three races contested in the inaugural Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge Canada, has already experienced the benefits of having the F1 event on the US series’ schedule.

“One thing that’s come out of being part of the F1 program is that I’ve been able to generate a lot of sponsorship because of the amount of exposure we’ll get,” said Bortolotti, driver of the #84 SpeedMerchants-Fiorano Racing entry. “I’ve been able to cover a significant portion of the race season because of this one event.

“My coach, JF Dumoulin, has many, many laps at Circuit Gilles Villeneuve, so he took me on a drive around/walk around last week that I videotaped. Hopefully, with his notes and the video, I’ll be able to figure out some of the nuances that are so hard to pick up quickly. And my team guys are all from Québec so I know we’ll be in good shape.”

Henrique Cisneros, leading the Platinum Cup standings and racing alongside brothers Eduardo and Andres for NGT Motorsport, also acknowledges the need to come up to speed quickly this weekend.

“What more could you want than opening for a Formula One race?” said Henrique Cisneros, driving the #26 NGT Motorsport Porsche 911 GT3 Cup car. “It’s every driver’s dream, to be among the world’s greatest. It’ll be tough with just one practice and one qualifying session before the race – it’s a tough track to learn. We know the track fairly well from watching the F1 races for years and I can’t wait to be driving on it – and to see all of the fans who will be there!”

The IMSA GT3 Cup Challenge by Yokohama features semi-professional drivers racing head to head in the largest single-make series in North America. Powered by one of the world’s most successful race cars, the Porsche 911 GT3 Cup car, the multi-class structure of the series teaches drivers essential skills for an eventual career in the American Le Mans Series presented by Tequila Patrón.

The series is divided into two classes; the Platinum Cup, featuring the more powerful 2011 and 2010 Porsche 911 GT3 Cup cars, and the Gold Cup, which includes 2005½ - 2009 Porsche 911 GT3 Cup cars. Both classes race on environmentally-focused Yokohama ADVAN ENV-R2 racing tires.

Round 5 of the IMSA GT3 Cup Challenge by Yokohama will take the green flag Sunday at 9:15am for a 45 minute race. Live timing, news and schedule information is at <http://www.imsachallenge.com/>.

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