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GP2 Asia Series – Season Preview



Going global

Formula 1's budding future stars head east for the start of the new GP2 Asia Series

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Get set for a thriller

There are major changes for the GP2 Series in 2008 as it builds on the success of the last three years and moves into Asia and the Middle East

Welcome to 2008 and a big year for the GP2 Series. Over the last three seasons, Formula 1's feeder championship has had plenty of success in helping motorsport's next wave of stars reach the top level. A total of 16 GP2 drivers have worked with F1 teams, while champions Nico Rosberg, Lewis Hamilton and Timo Glock all sealed top F1 race seats the year after their title success. In 2008, six former GP2 drivers – more than ever before – will race in F1, with two team line-ups made up solely of ex-GP2 stars.

Moving on up, and east

In fact, GP2 has been a great hit around the world, with huge and enthusiastic response from the fans who watch the action-packed GP2 races at European grands prix, and television audiences in excess of 13 million people who follow every moment of the title battle in numerous countries

around the globe. This year, GP2 will expand that reach even further with the addition of the new GP2 Asia series, which will visit four venues in the Middle East and Asia, with the aim of helping expose emerging driving talent outside of Europe.

Looking further ahead

There are also big things ahead for the start of the European-based GP2 Series when it gets underway in late April. Teams and drivers have the intrigue of a new car to look forward to, as well as a new street race in Valencia, Spain. Finally, there's the introduction of this – the GP2 Series e-zine. Every month, we'll take you right into the heart of the GP2 world, with an inside view of the highs and lows for the teams and drivers, post-race news and reaction, exclusive features and behind-the-scenes analysis. All that's left to say is – enjoy the new season!

14
drivers signed to race in GP2 Asia from outside of the EU



For all the latest news log on to:

WWW.GP2ASIA.COM

FAST NEWS

THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND GP2 ASIA

Bruno Michel Q&A

Q What prompted the creation of the GP2 Asia Series?

A The philosophy of GP2 Asia is to expand GP2's successful concept around the world – particularly to emerging motorsport nations. Asia and the Middle East are having increased influence in motorsport, but the drivers from this part of the world are often not prepared enough to get into F1. We're trying to fill this gap. By using the outgoing GP2 cars, these high-potential regions benefit from the incredible racing which GP2 has as its hallmark, at reduced cost.



support event as we strive to promote emerging talents from these regions. To follow F1 for 18 to 20 weekends is too difficult and expensive for one series, but with two series, with different drivers, the budget can be split. The aim is to extend the number of races with F1 in the future, but to be part of every grand prix weekend is a further step we have not yet considered.

Q The same teams that contested the GP2 Series for the last three years will continue in GP2 and GP2

Asia, with Meritus joining for Asia. That level of continuation must be very pleasing...

A We received many requests from teams around the world to join GP2 Asia, but we gave priority to the existing teams to reward them for their hard work and loyalty. It was a logical move for them to expand into GP2 Asia. They owned the cars, they know how they work and it's a way for them to cover their fixed costs over the whole year. It's an opportunity to build on their European success and spread their influence and knowledge into Asia, tapping into new streams of talent, know-how and exciting revenue sources. Since Racing Engineering decided not to do GP2 Asia, we decided to give the last entry to a team from the region. We thought Meritus was the most experienced one and would be capable of being immediately competitive.

Q How useful has it been for Bridgestone to continue as a partner in GP2 Asia?

A Renault and Bridgestone have been long-time supporters of GP2. We're particularly happy about Bridgestone's involvement considering the experience it gives to young drivers before F1. They'll be offering a special prize of US\$50,000 to the GP2 Asia champion. With chassis supplier Dallara and engine builder Mecachrome, we don't want to change a strong team. Their knowledge of the car and teams will be the firm foundation on which this new championship is built.

Q You'll also be supporting overseas Formula 1 races in Malaysia and Bahrain for the first time...

A Absolutely. As F1 expands further into Asia and the Middle East, GP2 Asia is ideally placed to be a

GP2 ASIA What is it all about?

● New pan-Asian and Middle East series, building on the success of the European-based GP2 Series that has launched the careers of Lewis Hamilton, Nico Rosberg and many others over the past three years.

● GP2 Asia will use the outgoing GP2 car, which includes a Dallara-built chassis, a Mecachrome engine and Bridgestone tyres.

● 12 teams from GP2 will contest the Asian series, with Meritus replacing Racing Engineering for Asia.

● Bridgestone will award the eventual winner of the GP2 Asia drivers' title with a US\$50,000 prize as part of its involvement in the series this year.

2008 GP2 ASIA SCHEDULE

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| Test | Dubai | Jan 19-20 |
| Test | Dubai | Jan 22-23 |
| Race 1/2 | Dubai | Jan 25-26* |
| Race 3/4 | Indonesia | Feb 16-17* |
| Race 5/6 | Malaysia | Mar 22-23** |
| Race 7/8 | Bahrain | Apr 5-6** |
| Race 9/10 | Dubai | Apr 11-12* |

* Grand Racing Event with Speedcar Series ** Formula 1 support event

FAST NEWS

THE LOGISTICS OF GP2 ASIA

Eric Boullier Q&A

Q How excited are you about prospect of GP2 going outside of Europe for the first time this year?

A We are very excited, and we're looking forward to seeing how the new GP2 Asia Series will turn out. Going to the Middle East and Asia is a natural extension of what we've been doing very successfully so far in GP2 in Europe in terms of helping discover future racing stars. We know from all the talk in the paddock that the emerging motorsport opportunities are in the Middle East and South East Asia. At the minute

the aims of GP2 was to reduce costs and, by working together and using the same suppliers, that makes the logistics so much easier for us all. We only need to transport human resources, so we'll be using all of our European staff, flying from Europe to each race. My long-term plan is to recruit part of the team locally. Firstly that will be in marketing, using the promotion of the series to promote ourselves, and then eventually to use local mechanics so that – as a team – we can develop a second base in the region for the GP2 Asia series.



80

tonnes of race equipment flown to each round of GP2 Asia

they haven't got established racing infrastructures or clear ways for drivers to reach Formula 1, but this is coming and we want to be involved as early as possible. F1 is becoming more prominent in the region, and this is a way to be clarifying the route for drivers to get to F1.

Q As the majority of the GP2 teams are based in Europe, how will the logistics work?

A This year, because we're using the outgoing GP2 Series car for the GP2 Asia series, and there are only five rounds – with no clashes with the European season – we'll base all our equipment with the rest of the GP2 teams in Dubai and then the series organisers will be taking this together to each of the races. One of

Q You're an international team with experience in a wide variety of sportscar and single-seater categories, but do you have much experience racing in Asia?

A Because we've been involved in international motorsport for 20 years, we have raced at tracks across Asia and America, so we have some experience in this part of the world. We've competed at all of the GP2 Asia circuits, so we have a bit of experience there, but we haven't been there with our GP2 car. The benefit for all the teams when going out to these new circuits is that we have strong experience of the car from using it for the past three years in Europe, and we have fine-tuned simulation software. That will allow everyone to get up to speed quickly.



Glock, Nakajima and Piquet get set for 2008 F1 season

Reigning GP2 Series champion Timo Glock (pictured above), 2007 Rookie of the Year Kazuki Nakajima and 2006 runner-up Nelson Piquet Jr are currently getting ready to make their full-time graduation into Formula 1 at the Australian Grand Prix on March 16.

Glock will partner Jarno Trulli at Toyota, while Nakajima will drive alongside 2005 GP2 champion Nico Rosberg at Williams. Nelson Piquet Jr will step up from his role as test driver to be a full-time race driver at Renault.

Glock is the third GP2 champion to make the step up to F1 the year after winning the crown, following the lead of inaugural title winner Rosberg, who joined Williams in 2006, and 2006 champion Lewis Hamilton, who fought for the F1 title with McLaren in 2007.

GP2 SERIES BLOG

"Most of us had barely taken down the Christmas decorations and finished off the leftover turkey before we were packing our bags for the flight to the United Arab Emirates for the launch of the GP2 Asia Series. Ahead of us was the prospect of a week in one of the most scenic spots in the Middle East, but the scene that greeted us on landing was more akin to 'The Day After Tomorrow' than a sumptuous desert paradise."

For the latest GP2 blog, as well as news, photos, videos and post-race audio, head to www.gp2asia.com

GP2 A TEAM-BY-TEAM GUIDE

There are 14 teams competing in GP2 this year, with Meritus taking the place of Racing Engineering for GP2 Asia. Here's the lowdown on who's who in the paddock

iSport International

Although a relatively new team, iSport has a successful heritage – most notably team boss Paul Jackson, who helped establish Bruno Junquiera's career. As a result, the outfit pipped ART Grand Prix to the 2007 GP2 titles with German Timo Glock.

The boss: Paul Jackson
Based: Norwich, England
2007 GP2 standings: **1st (118 points)**
www.isportinternational.com

ART Grand Prix

Created for GP2 by melding Frederic Vasseur's F3-dominating ASM team and the marketing mind of Nicolas Todt. The team won back-to-back GP2 titles with Nico Rosberg and Lewis Hamilton, just missing a hat-trick with Brazilian Lucas Di Grassi in 2007.

The boss: Frederic Vasseur / Nicolas Todt
Based: Fontainebleau, France
2007 GP2 standings: **2nd (87 points)**
www.art-gp2.com

Barwa International Campos Grand Prix

After two difficult seasons, the Spanish-based Campos team – founded by ex-F1 driver Adrian Campos – leapt to the front of the GP2 pack in 2007, with Italian ace Giorgio Pantano winning races in France and Italy. They'll be hunting for more glory in 2008.

The boss: Adrian Campos
Based: Spain
2007 GP2 standings: **3rd (80 points)**
www.camposgrandprix.com

Super Nova Racing

Former racer-turned team boss David Sears and his Super Nova outfit are stalwarts of junior single-seaters, having won numerous Formula 3000 titles as well as launching the careers of a wealth of top level racers in the 1990s. They're equally pace-setting in GP2.

The boss: David Sears
Based: Norfolk, England
2007 GP2 standings: **4th (78 points)**
www.supernova-racing.com

Dams

Founded by Jean-Paul Driot and French racer Rene Arnoux in 1988, Dams won a multitude of Formula 3000 titles in the 1990s and has a solid record in other single-seater and sportscar formulae. It has continued to be a pace-setter in GP2.

The boss: Jean-Paul Driot
Based: Ruaudin, France
2007 GP2 standings: **5th (67 points)**
www.dams.fr

Racing Engineering

After establishing a dominant record in the Spanish Formula 3 championship, the step up to GP2 has been logical and highly successful for Racing Engineering. It has become a regular frontrunner in the series and is keen to do even better this year

The boss: Alfonso de Orleans-Borbon
Based: Jerez, Spain
2007 GP2 standings: **6th (51 points)**
www.racing-engineering.com

Trust Team Arden

From its creation in 1997, Arden quickly became a dominant force in Formula 3000, taking three teams' titles between 2002 and 2004, and the drivers' title with Bjorn Wirdheim and Vitantonio Liuzzi. Best GP2 finish of second in 2005, with Heikki Kovalainen.

The boss: Christian Horner
Based: Banbury, England
2007 GP2 standings: **7th (44 points)**
www.arden-motorsport.com

Durango

Another GP2 outfit with a highly successful background in junior single-seater and sportscar racing, Durango prides itself on its vibrant Italian family vibe. The team scored its best finish in the GP2 teams' standings in 2007 and is keen for more in 2008.

The boss: Ivone Piaton / Enrico Magro
Based: Mellaredo, Italy
2007 GP2 standings: **8th (44 points)**
www.durango.it

Fisichella Motor Sport International

Founded by combining the successful heritage of the long-standing Coloni team and the high-profile and strategic savvy of Italian F1 star Giancarlo Fisichella, the outfit has proved a big hit in GP2 in its first two years, finishing fifth in 2006 and ninth in 2007.

The boss: Paolo Coloni / Enrico Zanarini
Based: Passignano sul Trasimeno, Italy
2007 GP2 standings: **9th (37 points)**
www.fisichellamotorsport.com

Trident Racing

Despite being one of the newest teams on the GP2 grid, Trident Racing has quickly made its mark as an ambitious newcomer. In its first two seasons it has established itself as a solid midfield contender, with the promise of more to come in 2008.

The boss: Maurizio Salvadori / Tommaso Rocca
Based: S. Pietro Mosezzo, Italy
2007 GP2 standings: **10th (35 points)**
www.tridentracing.it

Piquet Sports

After finishing sixth in the GP2 teams' points in 2005, with driver Nelson Piquet Jr eighth in the drivers' table, the Italian-based outfit had its best season in 2006, Piquet Jr narrowly missing the drivers' title, but helping his team to second in the standings.

The boss: Felipe Vargas
Based: Veggiano, Italy
2007 GP2 standings: **11th (22 points)**
www.gpracingcars.com

DPR

Founded in 1976, DPR – like Dams – is a bastion of modern-day junior single-seaters thanks to the sage racing brain of successful boss David Price. Although the team has yet to reach the front of the GP2 pack on a consistent basis, it's only a matter of time.

The boss: David Price
Based: Cobham, England
2007 GP2 standings: **12th (15 points)**
www.davidpriceracing.com

BCN Competicion

Founded in 2002, BCN finished second in Formula 3000 in its second year. Joined the rest of the F3000 fraternity by moving to the GP2 Series in 2005. Although it has struggled through a lack of consistency in its drivers, the team clearly has solid potential.

The boss: Enrique Scalabrini
Based: Barcelona, Spain
2007 GP2 standings: **13th (4 points)**
www.bcncompeticion.com

Qi-Meritus.Mahara

The newest addition to GP2 racing's ranks, thanks to its inclusion in the GP2 Asia field in place of Racing Engineering. The Meritus team has an incredibly successful heritage of junior single-seater competition in Asian F2000 and Formula BMW Asia.

The boss: Peter Thompson
Based: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2007 GP2 standings: **n/a**
www.meritusracing.com

FAST NEWS



From left: Karun Chandhok, Arran Ebrahim, Fairuz Fauzy, Kamui Kobayashi, Hiroki Yoshimoto and Ho-Pin Tung are among the Asian drivers lining up on the inaugural GP2 Asia grid

Asian drivers line up for new series

A host of budding Formula 1 stars from the Asian region have signed up to race in the inaugural GP2 Asia series, proving the success of the championship's concept and its goal in helping to expose new racing talent from outside motorsport's traditional European and American proving grounds.

Indian Karun Chandhok – who secured the Asian Formula Renault V6 title before stepping up to the European-based GP2 Series last year – has moved from the Durango team to join Bruno Senna at reigning champion team iSport International.

Arran Ebrahim – also from India – joins DPR after racing in the Formula Renault V6 Series and A1GP, while Malaysian racer Fairuz Fauzy will return to the GP2 fold with Super Nova after spending a year racing in the World Series by Renault.

Japanese drivers once again feature strongly following the graduation of Kazuki Nakajima to F1, with Toyota's current F1 test driver Kamui Kobayashi joining Dams after two years in the Formula 3 Euroseries and Hiroki Yoshimoto returning to GP2 with Meritus after spending 2007 in Asian Formula Renault V6.

Chinese driver Ho-Pin Tung moves from BCN Competicion to Trident Racing after his rookie GP2 season, while Campos Grand Prix's Russian Vitaly Petrov, BCN Competicion's Turkish driver Jason Tahinci and Trust Team Arden's new signing from Pakistan, Adam Kahn, bring the total of Asian drivers to nine.

Yugoslavian Milos Pavlovic, Latvian Harald Schlegelmilch and Brazilians Bruno Senna, Diego Nunes, Alberto Valerio complete the globe-spanning feel for the GP2 Asia grid.



Times are tight in first GP2 Asia test

The fight for inaugural GP2 Asia title looks to follow the lead of the main GP2 Series by being incredibly closely contested. Three different drivers shared the top of the timesheets in the opening test of the season at Dubai.

Fisichella Motor Sport International's Adrian Valles topped Friday morning's session, with ART Grand Prix's Romain Grosjean quickest in the afternoon. Qi-Meritus Mahara's Luca Filippi (pictured above) led the way on Saturday morning, while Grosjean was quickest in the afternoon. The Frenchman couldn't beat Filippi's 1m21.562s lap, though, making Filippi the fastest man of the two-day test.

2008 GP2 ASIA SERIES – DRIVER LINE-UP

| CAR NO. | DRIVER | LICENSE | TEAM NAME |
|---------|----------------------|---------|---------------------------------------|
| 01 | Karun Chandhok | IND | iSport International |
| 02 | Bruno Senna | BRA | iSport International |
| 03 | Stephen Jelley | GBR | ART Grand Prix |
| 04 | Romain Grosjean | FRA | ART Grand Prix |
| 05 | Vitaly Petrov | RUS | Barwa International Campos Grand Prix |
| 06 | Diego Nunes | BRA | Barwa International Campos Grand Prix |
| 07 | Christian Bakkerud | DEN | Super Nova Racing |
| 08 | Fairuz Fauzy | MAL | Super Nova Racing |
| 09 | Jerome D'Ambrosio | BEL | Dams |
| 10 | Kamui Kobayashi | JPN | Dams |
| 11 | Sebastien Buemi | SUI | Trust Team Arden |
| 12 | Adam Kahn | PAK | Trust Team Arden |
| 14 | Davide Valsecchi | ITA | Durango |
| 15 | Alberto Valerio | BRA | Durango |
| 16 | Adrian Valles | ESP | Fisichella Motor Sport International |
| 17 | Michael Herck | MC | Fisichella Motor Sport International |
| 18 | Harald Schlegelmilch | LV | Trident Racing |
| 19 | Ho-Pin Tung | CHN | Trident Racing |
| 20 | Marcello Puglisi | ITA | Piquet Sports |
| 21 | Marco Bonanomi | ITA | Piquet Sports |
| 22 | Armaan Ebrahim | IND | DPR |
| 23 | Andy Soucek | ESP | DPR |
| 24 | Milos Pavlovic | YU | BCN Competicion |
| 25 | Jason Tahinci | TUR | BCN Competicion |
| 26 | Hiroki Yoshimoto | JPN | Qi-Meritus Mahara |
| 27 | Luca Filippi | ITA | Qi-Meritus Mahara |

GP2 ASIA RACE PREVIEW DUBAI/INDONESIA



DUBAI

To most of the GP2 teams and drivers, Dubai will be familiar territory after having spent the last week testing here. But, for anyone arriving for the race, it will be a culture shock to step out of the airport into one of the fastest-growing and most internationally outward-looking of the United Arab Emirates.

"Dubai is an amazing place," says DPR's Armaan Ebrahim, one of the few GP2 drivers to have raced at the track before. "It's incredibly multi-cultural, with people from all around the world coming to the country to work here. Plus, every time you step out of the airport, the skyline seems to change. There's always construction work going on as they build newer and bigger hotels and apartments."

If you're worried that Dubai's über-rich reputation will dip your balance into the red, fear not. Bargain hunters can find cheap duty-free goods aplenty in either the souks or the ultra-modern malls that have sprung up around the hotels and apartments. Equally, eating and drinking can be done on a budget – and with a more local feel – if you combine the seven-star hospitality with back-street exploration.



| | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Dubai | |
| Dates | Jan 25-26 |
| Track length | 5.394km (3.356 miles) |
| Race One | 42 laps (Jan 25 15:30pm) |
| Race Two | 28 laps (Jan 26 13:00pm) |
| Website | www.dubaiautodrome.com |

Stay

For the ultimate in luxury, the Burj Al Arab (burj-al-arab.com) and its iconic seven-star service are your best pick. Alternatively, the Fusion (fusionhotels.com) has a discrete boutique feel.

Eat

Get superb ocean views at Legends Steakhouse in the Dubai Creek Golf Club (dubaigolf.com), while Tagine in the Royal Mirage (oneandonlyresorts.com) offers great traditional Moroccan fare in superbly sumptuous surroundings.

See

Generally, people don't take skis or snowboards to Dubai. Answer strange looks by saying you're off to the Dubai Ski Centre (skidubai.com), the world's biggest indoor slope. The adjacent Kempinski Hotel and Mall has rooms and dining with an Alpine feel. Surreal...

SENTUL, INDONESIA

Stay

Although Sentul is just 50km south of Jakarta, it's worth staying local. "At night it's an hour's drive," Chandok says. "In rush hour, it's four." Bogor's Novotel resort (novotel.com) makes for classy common sense.

Eat

If you can make it to Jakarta, Café Batavia (cafebatavia.com) in the upmarket Kota district is stylish, as is the VOC Galangan in the converted Dutch East Indies trading HQ.

Drink

Jakarta's Blok M district (jakartablokm.com) has a lively local vibe, but there are also lots of cool hotel bars, including the JW Marriott (marriott.com).



| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Sentul, Indonesia | |
| Dates | Feb 15-16 |
| Track length | 3.965km (2.463 miles) |
| Race One | laps tbc (Feb 15 15:30pm) |
| Race Two | laps tbc (Feb 16 13:00pm) |
| Website | |



