



For Immediate Release:

Hildebrand Set to Drive Force India Formula One Car in Jerez Test Next Week

Rancho Santa Margarita, Calif. (November 24, 2009) – For many auto racing aficionados, the FIA Formula One World Championship represents the pinnacle of the sport. Next week, reigning Firestone Indy Lights Champion and 2005 Team USA Scholarship winner J.R. Hildebrand will join that elite level when he drives a Mercedes-Benz-powered Force India VJM02 Formula One car in a test session December 1-3 at the Circuito de Jerez in southern Spain.

Hildebrand, 21, from Sausalito, Calif., will be joined in the rookies-only test by highly rated Scotsman Paul di Resta, whose cousin, Dario Franchitti, won the 2009 IndyCar Series Championship.

“I’m ecstatic about being given the chance to drive a Formula One car for the Force India F1 Team,” says Hildebrand. “I know it will be a challenge but I’m ready to take it on, and look forward to getting as much as I can out of the whole experience. It’s an incredible way to cap off an already very special year and I’m very grateful for the opportunity.”

Hildebrand’s test-drive follows an impressive showing in Force India’s F1 simulator in England last month.

“We are delighted to have Paul and J.R. join us for the young driver test,” says Dr. Vijay Mallya, chairman and team principal of Force India. “Both of their showings in the simulator were excellent and we had no hesitations in offering them some valuable testing. We will be looking at their performance on track very closely and should they perform well, as we are confident they will, we will look at a permanent role for one within the team in 2010, potentially as a test and reserve driver. As a young team we are looking for drivers who can grow with us. As we’ve always said, nationality isn’t the primary selection criteria – it’s talent and dedication to the cause and we have seen enough to know that these two have both.”

Hildebrand, who played varsity baseball while maintaining over a 4.0 GPA in high school – and deferred acceptance to MIT to pursue his racing career – had been introduced to Dr. Mallya several years ago. Earlier in the fall, Hildebrand was invited to try out the team’s F1 test simulator. At that stage he had no inkling the outing would lead to a full-blown F1 test.

“I thought I did quite well,” he says. “I knew there was room to improve but I felt I accomplished my goal, which was to learn and improve throughout the day. It took a while for the team to analyze the data but when I got the call to say I was going to have a chance to drive the car I was ecstatic. It couldn’t have come at a better time.”

In comparison to many drivers in the top echelon these days, Hildebrand started his racing career relatively late, at age 14. Since then he has won the Jim Russell Racing Drivers School Graduate Runoffs; the 2004 Russell Championship Series; Rookie of the Year honors in the 2005 Pacific F2000 Championship; the 2005 Team USA Scholarship; the 2006 Cooper Tires Formula Ford 2000 Championship (winning a record 12 out of 14 races); and the 2009 Firestone Indy Lights Championship (claiming a series-high four wins and six poles while driving for AFS-Andretti Green Racing).

The Team USA Scholarship, now in its 20th year, is supported by Doug Mockett & Company, Road Racing Drivers Club, Cooper Tire & Rubber Company, Robo-Pong, Highcroft Racing, Firestone Indy Lights, American Honda, Silicon Salvage, McMurry Inc., Dyson Racing, Metalore, The Gorsline Company, Integrated Performance Technology, PitFit Training, Sparco USA, Cruden America, iRacing.com, OnCars.com, eFormulaCarNews.com, Speedstar Management and Manifest Group. Past Team USA Scholarship winners include Jimmy Vasser, Bryan Herta, Memo Gidley, Buddy Rice, Andy Lally, Paul Edwards and A.J. Allmendinger.

For more information, please visit www.TeamUSAScholarship.org.