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NASCAR 05

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LEAVE NEXTEL CUP
WIDE OPEN

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THE YEAR
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YOUR VOTE?

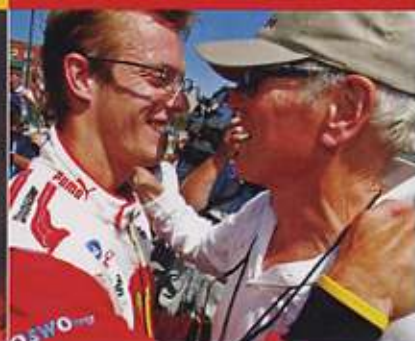


EXTRA!

CHAMP CAR HOT BOURDAIS

SPORTS CARS GM'S DOUBLE GT ATTACK

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RED CALF John Edwards, 13, the new addition to Red Bull's U.S. Junior Team, will compete in the Italian karting championship with the factory CRG team, which helped launch the careers of Alex Zanardi and Michael Schumacher. The precocious Edwards will keep up with his schoolwork back home in Arkansas via the Internet.



The large crowd at Fontana responded warmly to the JGTC's unique riff on sports car racing—even if they weren't sure who was ahead.

JGTC IN AMERICA

Bridging the Pacific Rim

"GT LIVE," the first appearance of Japanese GT cars on U.S. soil, provided a thought-provoking look at new possibilities in the promotion of sports car racing. While the drama may have been undercut when Tsugio Matsuda and Andre Lotterer's win with their Honda NSX Turbo was taken away by a postrace penalty (handing victory to the G'Zax/SSR/Hasemi Nissan 350Z Turbo of Toshihiro Kaneishi and Frenchman Erik Comas), the result itself was less significant than the buzz the whole meeting generated.

Promoter Randy Grube, who put together



Aggressive style was plentiful both on and off the track.

the event at California Speedway that mated the JGTC race with an accompanying drifting festival (see page B3), claimed a race day crowd of 30,000, with 10,000 tickets sold in advance. Grube said the event's pre-sale came from video gamers, JGTC fans, road racing fans and Sport Compact people who are interested in the lifestyle/look of a JGTC-based weekend, as well as the racing.

"If you look at the cars and their body modifications, they look a lot like the cars people wish they had," noted Grube.

However, Grube stressed that the event is

designed to be complementary to the existing order in U.S. racing. The SCCA stepped up to sanction GT Live, and maintained a prominent presence throughout the weekend, as did the NASA road racing group.

"We work well with the SCCA, the ALMS and other people because we bring in a new audience," Grube said. "We bring in the young customer and, because we're a once-a-year type thing, we can get them energized in realizing road racing's fun, too. And, hopefully, they'll go see an SCCA or ALMS race." **BILL WOOD**

Technical knockout on the horizon?

ADAPT OR DIE. That was the message from FIA President Max Mosley to the Society of Automotive Engineers at the Motorsports Engineering Conference in Detroit.

The longstanding goals of speed at any cost and safety as can best be practically accommodated have always driven engineering advances in racing. Mosley told the gathered engineers. But now, the competition threatens to bankrupt its participants, or at least prove too costly for

them to continue—as evidenced by Ford's withdrawal from Formula 1 and GM's pending withdrawal from the IRL. The solution is to find ways to reign in costs while improving the value racing returns to participants. Car manufacturers need to find relevance in their participation in motorsports, whether that is through clear identification of the race cars with their production counterparts, through the training of engineers who can contribute to future production programs or through



research that can help address concerns of everyday drivers. Keeping manufacturers interested is dependent on making new rules that make motorsport more "road relevant," Mosley asserted.

Former GM executive director of motorsports Herb Fishel has made similar calls for relevance and cost control since his 1994 *RACER* column on the topic, and as the Honorary General Chairperson of the 2004 SAE conference, expressed his relief that other industry leaders have reached the same conclusion. **DAN CARNEY**