

# MEDIA GUIDE 2017



**FINDING  
NEW ZEALAND'S NEXT  
WORLD CHAMPION**

## CATEGORY MANAGEMENT

THE CASTROL TOYOTA RACING SERIES IS AN INDEPENDENTLY ORGANISED MOTORSPORT NEW ZEALAND SANCTIONED CHAMPIONSHIP THAT IS PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY TOYOTA NEW ZEALAND (TNZ).

The category is managed by husband and wife team Barrie and Louise Thomlinson who are contracted by TNZ under the entity of Toyota Racing Management (TRM).

TRM employs a team of qualified technicians responsible for all facets of car preparation including chassis and engine maintenance, carbon fibre manufacture, repair and on track support to the TRS teams and competitors.

In addition to an events coordinator who oversees the hospitality, bookings and logistics, individual contractors are available on site providing specialist services, growing the TRM team to more than 20 staff during the race season.

The category's Auckland base is a unique facility in New Zealand and one the team is very proud of.

## CONTACT

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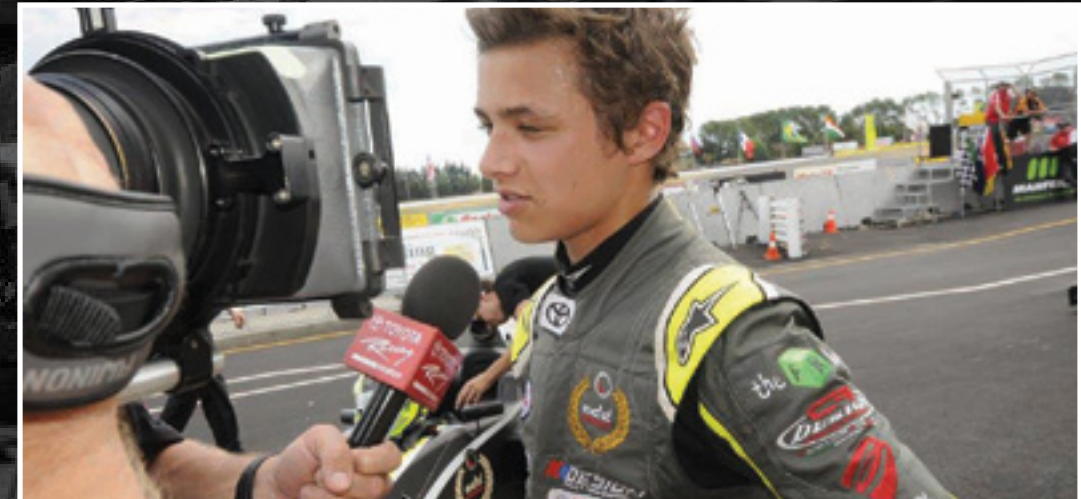
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# MEDIA RESOURCES



2016 Toyota Racing Series Grand Champion, Lando Norris (UK)

Toyota Racing New Zealand and the media team are available to assist with any media requests, including requests for driver interviews. Media are also encouraged to utilise the following resources:



## FACEBOOK

Features live discussion, up-to-the-minute news and race day galleries  
[facebook.com/ToyotaRacingNZ](https://facebook.com/ToyotaRacingNZ)



## TWITTER

@ToyotaRacingNZ  
Features live score updates every race day



## YOUTUBE

Features highlights from the race days  
[youtube.com/user/ToyotaRacingSeries](https://youtube.com/user/ToyotaRacingSeries)

## TRNZ MOTORSPORT MEDIA LIST

For all media releases, qualifying updates and official results; to check that you're on the list or to update your details, please email:  
[press@toyota.co.nz](mailto:press@toyota.co.nz)

## TOYOTA RACING WEBSITE

For standings, driver profiles, live lap-timings and all the latest news

## TRNZ APP - RACE MONITOR

Available on both Android and iPhone; includes live lap times and results



## ABOUT THE SERIES

Proudly supported by Toyota New Zealand, the Castrol Toyota Racing Series is the only class in New Zealand motorsport that offers aspiring racers vital experience with wings, slicks and composite technologies designed to develop and nurture the next generation of world class drivers.

In 2016, Castrol New Zealand became the naming rights sponsor of the Toyota Racing Series, once more establishing a link between Toyota and Castrol that has endured since the beginning of Toyota's proud motorsport history.

Toyota New Zealand's long term commitment to developing the next generation of racers is unrivalled by any other motor manufacturer in New Zealand. Drivers in TRS compete for every major title and trophy in the sport attracting Premier Gold Star status and the New Zealand Grand Prix title, which along with Macau and Pau are the only FIA-sanctioned Grand Prix race events outside of Formula One.

TRS trackside pit and hospitality facilities are unmatched in New Zealand. The paddock presence supports race teams, drivers, sponsors and their fans.

International drivers are provided with an opportunity to refine their craft during the northern hemisphere winter, while New Zealand's young talent gain invaluable experience on home soil training and competing against world class talent.

The identical specification of the Toyota Racing Series FT 50 cars makes for the closest possible racing, placing an emphasis on the drivers' ability under all conditions. Most of the outright lap records on New Zealand's racetracks are held by TRS.

## THE CAR: TOYOTA FT 50

CHASSIS:	Carbon fibre monocoque supplied by Italian manufacturer, Tatuus, and constructed to FIA Formula 3 safety standards
BODYWORK:	Carbon fibre
ENGINE:	Toyota 2ZZ-GE 1800cc engine, 163kW/215hp
GEARBOX:	Sadev 6-speed transaxle with sequential paddle gearshift, Limited Slip Differential (LSD)
SAFETY:	Carbon lift out with belts, rear crash box, and high cockpit side helmet protection
FRONT and REAR SUSPENSION:	Push rod, twin dampers
SHOCK ABSORBERS:	Orams 2 Way adjustable
CALIPERS and BRAKE DISCS:	Brembo Formula 3 package
WHEEL RIMS:	Aluminium, centre bolt fixing, front 9 x 13, rear 10.5 x 13
TYRES:	Michelin Formula 3-size tyres provide a consistent high quality package
WEIGHT:	550kg approx. (with driver)
FUEL:	E85 ethanol bio fuel. TRS was the first "one make formula" in the world to use E85

Now entering its third season, the new TRS FT 50 supersedes the former FT 40 which served the championship for more than a decade.

Featuring a purpose-built carbon fibre chassis and powered by a proven race tuned version of Toyota's 2ZZ-GE engine, the aerodynamic design makes use of Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD) and generates down force levels relevant to similar categories around the world.

The FT 50 uses Michelin slicks and wet weather tyres identical in size to those used in Formula 3 and its key chassis dimensions are similar to categories the drivers will enter after TRS.

All engines are built and maintained by the series' official engine builder and are tested on the series engine dynamometer to certify them for equality of power before being sealed by the series' scrutineers, as are the engine control units.

This package provides young talented drivers with a state-of-the-art single seater race car which allows them to learn their trade in a highly competitive and professional environment.





# TROPHY CABINET

PRESTIGIOUS TROPHIES REPRESENTING MORE THAN 80 YEARS' OF MOTOR RACING HISTORY.

## Chris Amon Trophy

Awarded to the driver gaining the highest aggregate points overall from all five rounds constituting the championship, the Chris Amon Trophy is a step towards Formula One.

Rated as one of the world's finest drivers ever to have lined up on the grid, Chris Amon was recently ranked number 33 in the prestigious *F1 Racing* magazine's list of the *100 Greatest Formula One Drivers of all time*.

After finishing an illustrious career which included 96 Formula 1 starts and a famous win alongside his fellow kiwi Bruce McLaren in the 1966 24 hours of Le Mans, Amon began a long and successful association with Toyota, playing a key role in the testing and development of New Zealand's most popular production cars.

## International Drivers Champion

The international driver with the highest overall aggregate points from all five TRS rounds will be awarded the title of International Drivers Champion.

## Butcher Cup

Awarded to the highest overall points scorer, this trophy is presented at the MotorSport New Zealand (MNZ) annual awards function along with the MNZ Race Gold Star (for single seaters).

## Bruce McLaren Trophy - First New Zealander

Presented to the highest placed New Zealand passport holder at the MotorSport New Zealand annual awards function.

## Teams Championship Trophy

The TRS Teams Championship Trophy will be awarded to the team that gains the highest aggregate points overall from all five rounds constituting the championship. Teams nominate two drivers per sub-team to score points.

## Rookie of the Year\*

The TRS Rookie of the Year Trophy will be awarded to the rookie driver gaining the highest aggregate points overall from all five rounds constituting the championship.

*\*To be eligible for the Castrol Toyota Racing Series Rookie of the Year Trophy drivers must have entered and competed in no more than three rounds of any previous Toyota Racing Series Championship and must have entered and competed in no more than three rounds of any equivalent or higher level single-seater formula within the last 12 months.*



## FEATURE RACE TROPHIES

### Lady Wigram Trophy

The Lady Wigram Trophy will be awarded to the winner of the feature race of round one of the championship.

### The Spirit of a Nation Cup

The Spirit of the Nation Cup will be awarded to the winner of the feature race of round two of the championship.

### The New Zealand Motor Cup

The New Zealand Motor Cup will be awarded to the winner of the feature race of round three of the championship.

### Denny Hulme Memorial Trophy

The Denny Hulme Memorial Trophy will be awarded to the winner of the feature race of round four of the championship.

### Dan Higgins Trophy

The Dan Higgins Trophy will be awarded to the winner of the first race of round five of the championship.

### The New Zealand Grand Prix

The New Zealand Grand Prix Trophy will be awarded to the winner of the final race of round five of the championship.

### Dorothy Smith Memorial Cup

The Dorothy Smith Memorial Cup will be awarded to the overall winner of round five based on championship points.



# CALENDAR

HEADING INTO ITS 13<sup>TH</sup> CONSECUTIVE SEASON, THE CASTROL TOYOTA RACING SERIES AGAIN PROMISES TO DELIVER FIVE INTENSE WEEKENDS OF ACTION-PACKED RACING.

- ROUND 1:** RUAPUNA 14-15 JANUARY 2017
- ROUND 2:** TERETONGA 21-22 JANUARY 2017
- ROUND 3:** HAMPTON DOWNS 28-29 JANUARY 2017
- ROUND 4:** TAUPO 4-5 FEBRUARY 2017
- ROUND 5:** MANFEILD 11-12 FEBRUARY 2017

# PARTNERS 2017

SPONSORED BY TOYOTA NEW ZEALAND, THE TOYOTA RACING SERIES HAS PARTNERED WITH LIKE-MINDED BUSINESSES TO BRING YOU THE CASTROL TOYOTA RACING SERIES.

## OFFICIAL SPONSORS



## OFFICIAL PARTNERS



## OFFICIAL SUPPLIERS







## **DRIVER PROFILES**



# #3

## BRENDON LEITCH

Cromwell, New Zealand  
28 November 1995  
Victory Motor Racing



<https://www.driverdb.com/drivers/brendon-leitch/>

<https://www.facebook.com/brendonleitch86/>



Brendon was the most successful local driver in last season's TRS championship, finishing third overall. He won the preliminary race at Manfeild and had three other podium finishes.

In 2015, he won the feature race for the Spirit of a Nation Cup at his home track, Teretonga, having made his TRS debut the previous season.

Like many drivers Leitch started his career in karting in 2005, moving into Formula Ford in 2011.

In the 2012 National Championship he finished third and was runner-up the following year with three wins and 11 podium places.

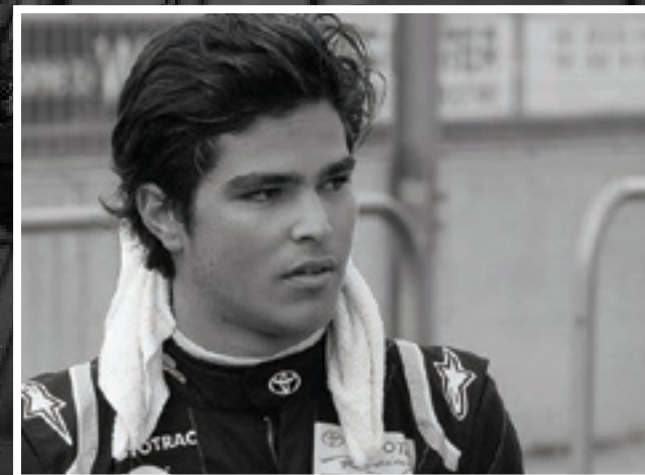
Unlike his rivals, Leitch has done virtually no racing over the New Zealand winter, apart from two days of F2000 testing at Indianapolis.

If Leitch can up his pace and qualify nearer the front of the grid he could be a real threat to the international visitors, especially at the two South Island tracks which he knows so well.

# #5

## PEDRO PIQUET

Brasilia, Brazil  
30 July 1998  
M2 Competition



<https://www.driverdb.com/drivers/pedro-piquet/>



The 18-year-old Brazilian was one of the stars of last summer's racing.

Going into the final round, Piquet was the only driver who had a chance of toppling the eventual champion, Britain's Lando Norris, off the top of the points table.

Piquet had won two races, including the prestigious New Zealand Motor Cup at Hampton Downs. A trophy which dates back to 1921 and was formerly awarded to the winner of the New Zealand Grand Prix when it was held at Ardmore and Pukekohe.

Piquet had also scored five other podiums in the first four rounds. Unfortunately, Piquet had his worst weekend of the five-round, 15-race series at the Manfeild Grand Prix meeting and dropped from second to fifth in the final standings.

He headed off for a season of racing in the FIA European Formula 3 Championship, but only managed to finish 19th overall in the 30-race series.

Piquet showed a glimmer of form last November when he finished ninth at the Macau Grand Prix, a race that attracts all the top junior formula drivers in the world.

This summer he will be looking for redemption and endeavouring to get his career back on track.



# #8

## MARCUS ARMSTRONG

Christchurch, New Zealand

29 July 2000

M2 Competition



<https://www.driverdb.com/drivers/Marcus-Armstrong/>

<https://www.facebook.com/Marcus-Armstrong-255432384485894>

@armstrongm\_



Armstrong's career began in karting in 2007 at the age of seven and ramped up sharply to win the cadet national title in 2011 and was second overall in the 100cc Junior Restricted class at the New Zealand School Nationals. In 2012 Armstrong was juggling study with motor racing both in New Zealand and the USA, and winning the Kiwi 100cc Junior Restricted title.

In an impressive karting career spanning six years, Armstrong had amassed seven major category title wins and many podium finishes here and in the USA.

He drove seven races of the inaugural Toyota Finance 86 Championship in 2013-2014. Despite only contesting the second part of the season he finished eighth overall.

Returning the following year, he raced the first three rounds, recording two outright wins and finishing seventh overall, winning the Rookie of the Year award.

Armstrong topped his 86 career off with three races in the most recent championship, recording two podium finishes and one fastest lap.

His racing gathered momentum this year, the 16-year-old competing in European and world championship events in the intensely competitive KZ classes. At the same time he began testing in a Formula Renault single-seater, then contested the penultimate round of the Formula Renault 2.0 NEC at the Nurburgring and at the final round for the British Formula 3 Championship.

Though entered as a 'wild card' with the intention of simply gaining experience in single seaters, Armstrong was instantly competitive in fields of two dozen or more.

# #9

## JEHAN DARUVALA

Mumbai, India

1 October 1998

M2 Competition



<https://www.driverdb.com/drivers/jehan-daruvala>

<https://www.facebook.com/JehanDaruvalaOfficial>

@daruvalajehan



Eighteen-year-old Daruvala finished runner-up in the championship to Britain's Lando Norris last summer and headed off to Europe for a season of racing in Formula Renault.

But the European results weren't quite as pleasing as he and his backers, the Force India Formula One team, expected. After 30 races, Daruvala came fourth in the Northern European Cup with a win and four podiums, while in the main European Cup he had to settle for ninth overall and just one podium.

"The results were definitely not up to my expectations. I was hoping for more podiums and more wins. I certainly expected to finish higher in the championship standings than fourth and ninth," said Daruvala from his Mumbai home.

He said his teammate Lando Norris was very quick right through the year, on all tracks and in all conditions. "I felt that with the pace I had shown in practice and qualifying, I should have been fighting for top three in the championships."

So Daruvala is returning to New Zealand for the second time inside 12 months for the five-round, 15-race series, before he steps up to Formula 3.

Daruvala believes he needs to improve his driving in the wet, which is somewhat ironic, as he won the Lady Wigram Trophy Race at Ruapuna last January in track conditions that changed from wet to dry.



# #10

**THOMAS NEUBAUER**

Paris, France

8 June 1999

MTEC Motorsport



<https://www.driverdb.com/drivers/thomas-neubauer/>

<https://www.facebook.com/NeubauerThom/>



Neubauer arrives here as one of the least experienced drivers in the field. The 17-year-old only got into a single seater earlier this year after a karting career.

He has had 11 races in Formula Renault in France scoring one podium.

# #11

**TAYLOR COCKERTON**

Pukekohe, New Zealand

18 September 1997

MTEC Motorsport



<https://www.driverdb.com/drivers/taylor-cockerton>

<https://www.facebook.com/taylorcockertonracing/>



The 2014/15 NZ Formula Ford champion, Cockerton will compete in TRS for the second time and will be looking to improve on his stellar debut in 2016.

The 19-year-old Waikato University student will once again have the backing of Christchurch's Andy Neale who engineered Cockerton's Formula Ford title win. Neale comes with extensive TRS experience having worked with a number of drivers and winning the 2014 series with Singaporean driver Andrew Tang.

"We want to improve on last season. We particularly want and need to improve on our qualifying efforts. Breaking into the top six will also be important."

Last season Cockerton was able to finish all 15 races, with his best result a fifth place in the second race at the NZ Grand Prix meeting at Manfeild Park. He placed ninth overall and third rookie on the points table.

"I certainly learnt last season the importance of scoring points. There were a number of drivers with better pace that failed to finish races. It was a big step up for me particularly in competitiveness. The international field had drivers with top experience and a higher level of aggressiveness in both passing and defending so I learnt a lot of technique in a very short space of time."



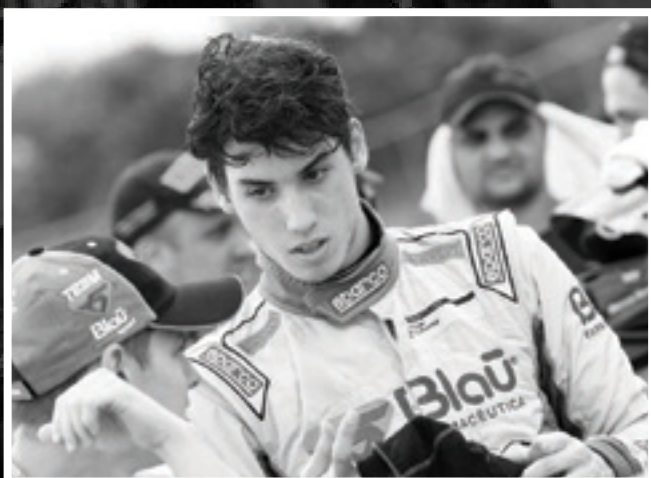
# #12

## CHRISTIAN HAHN

Sao, Paulo, Brazil

12 June 1998

Giles Motorsport



Hahn is following in the footsteps of compatriot Pedro Piquet, who came here last year after two seasons of racing in the Brazilian Formula 3 Championship.

Hahn finished fourth in the 2016 championship winning his first race.

In 2015 he was seventh overall.

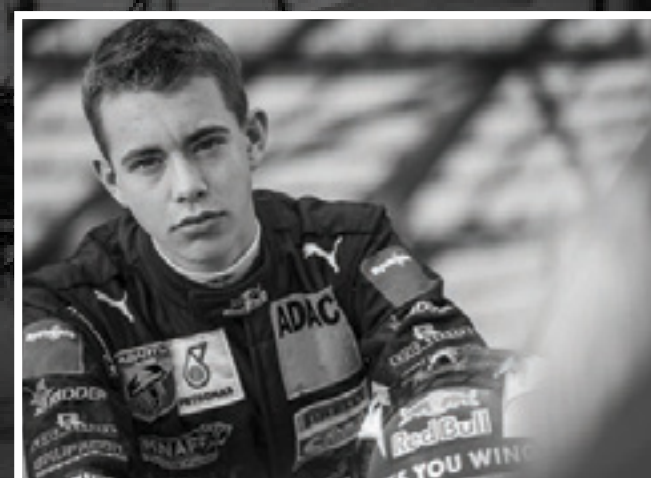
# #22

## RICHARD VERSCHOOR

Benschlap, Netherlands

16 December 2000

Giles Motorsport



@kartingrich



It took the 16-year-old Verschoor just one race meeting to get noticed by the Red Bull Junior Team who promptly signed him up to its support programme.

In his single-seater debut, the Dutch teenager won the opening round of the Northern European Zone Formula 4 Championship at Sochi in April.

He was victorious for 11 consecutive races and took out the title. From Benschop in the Netherlands, Verschoor was even more dominant in the Spanish Formula 4 Championship, winning 17 of the 20 races.

"The 2016 season has been really good. The experience I gathered will for sure help me in New Zealand," said Verschoor.

"I am really looking forward to a different adventure, adapting myself to a new car and environment in the Toyota Racing Series, to push myself to the maximum and to prepare for next season in the best conditions."

With an eye to the future Verschoor also did some rounds of the German Formula 4 Championship where he was a top five contender. In a one off appearance at an Italian F4 round he finished third, all at tracks he had never seen or tested at before.

Verschoor has started his motor racing career after five seasons of karting, winning Dutch titles, German and European championships and finishing sixth at the World Championships.

While he was still karting Verschoor was elevated to the Dutch Knaf Talent First motor racing talent programme.



# #24

**AMEYA VAIDYANATHAN**

India, lives in London

29 July 1996

MTEC Motorsport



<https://www.driverdb.com/drivers/Ameya-Vaidyanathan>



The 20-year-old Londoner has followed a similar path to many of his fellow competitors.

A career in karting led to 50 races in British Formula 4 Championship in 2015.

He gained three podiums and finished twelfth overall in the most prestigious series run by the British Racing Drivers Club.

Vaidyanathan missed three rounds of the British Formula 3 Championship in which he claimed one podium. He also missed one round of the European Open Formula 3 Championship - his other major target for 2016.

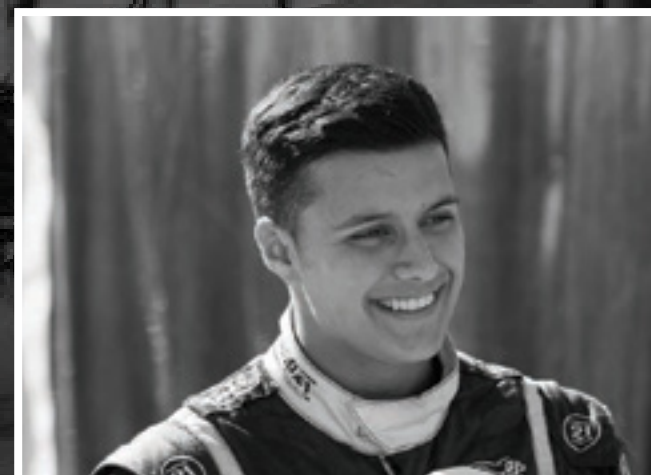
# #26

**HARRY HAYEK**

Sydney, Australia

9 March 1998

Giles Motorsport



<https://www.driverdb.com/drivers/harryhayek/>

<https://www.facebook.com/harry-hayek-610326929009817>

@harry\_hayek



Seventeen-year-old Hayek has mainly raced in the Australian Formula 4 Championship for the last two years, although this year he only did 12 of the 18 races to finish fifth overall after competing in Britain early in the season.

He had two wins and five podiums in his Australian campaign in 2016, an improvement on the four podiums in 2015, when he came fourth in the series, having competed in all the rounds.

Prior to that Hayek had two years of karting experience, winning both junior and senior New South Wales titles.

Hayek is a member of the Confederation of Australia Motorsport's Junior Academy



# #27

## JEAN BAPTISTE SIMMENAUER

Angerville, France  
19 November 2000  
M2 Competition



<https://www.driverdb.com/drivers/jean-baptiste-simmenauer>

<https://www.facebook.com/jeanbaptiste.simmenauer>



Sixteen-year-old Simmenauer will be making his single-seater racing debut in the five round, 15 race series which finishes with the New Zealand Grand Prix at Manfeild on February 12.

"I want to make a great preparation for 2017 by competing in the Toyota Racing Series," said Simmenauer, who comes from Angerville, just south of Paris.

He has been testing with several Formula Renault single seater teams over the past few months. "The goal is to compete in Eurocup Formula Renault in 2017," he said.

Simmenauer, who started karting in 2012 graduated to the Italian Tony Kart Team, for whom he won the French title this year and finished third in the German championship. He was also third in the French championship in 2014.

# #33

## KORY ENDERS

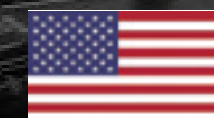
Houston, Texas, USA  
4 August 1997  
MTEC Motorsport



<https://www.driverdb.com/drivers/kory-enders/>

<https://www.facebook.com/killerkory/>

@koryenders



Kory is a newcomer to single seater racing. The nineteen-year-old did the final three races of the Pro Mazda Championship at Laguna Seca in September.

His trip down under for the Castrol Toyota Racing Series is preparation for a full season of racing in the Pro Mazda Championship in 2017.



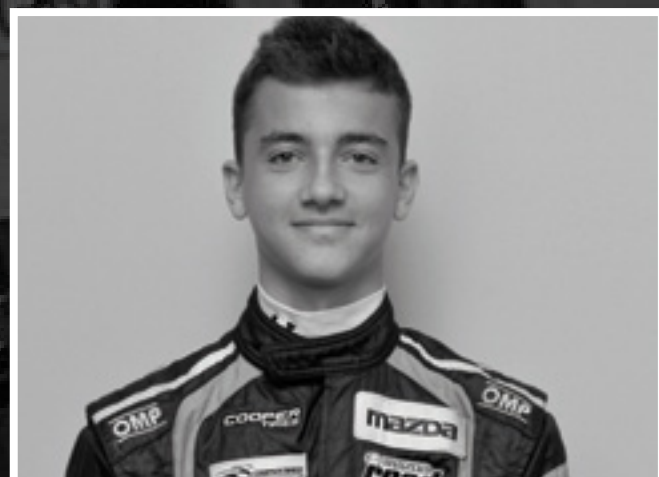
# #47

**KEYVAN ANDRES**

Naples, Florida, USA

8 March 2000

Giles Motorsport



<https://www.driverdb.com/drivers/keyvan-andres-soori/>

<https://www.facebook.com/keyvanracing/>

@keyvanandres



Born in Germany, Andres spent his childhood in France before the family moved to Florida in 2013.

He raced karts in France and was victorious in a Skip Barber series soon after arriving in the USA.

Andres moved into Formula 2000 in 2014 finishing sixteenth in the championship.

In 2015, he contested two series, rising to eleventh in Formula 2000 and winning five races in Atlantic Championship Series claiming fifth, even though he only competed in four of the eight rounds.

Andres, whose family roots are in the Middle East, returned to Europe for 2016, competing in the Formula Renault Open Championship and finishing twelfth overall and third rookie.

# #49

**THOMAS RANDLE**

Melbourne, Australia

7 April 1996

Victory Motor Racing



<https://www.driverdb.com/drivers/Thomas-Randle/>

<https://www.facebook.com/thomasrandle49/>

@thomasrandle49



Randle came tenth in the Toyota Racing Series at the start of 2015, finishing third at Ruapuna and Taupo.

Randle won the Australian Formula Ford title in 2014 with five wins and seven other podium places in 18 races after a career in karts, where he won both the Junior Clubman and Junior Rotax titles in 2012.

The now 20-year-old Melbourne driver finished runner-up in the Australian Formula Four Championship in 2015, with seven wins and another eight podiums in the 21 races.

He also spent 2015 competing in Australia's National Sports Sedans Series where he finished third in a five round, 15 race series, winning twice and scoring eight other podiums.

This year he concentrated on the British Formula 3 Championship, winning two races and scoring five other podiums to finish fourth overall in the 23 race series.



# #51

**SHELBY BLACKSTOCK**

Nashville, Tennessee, USA

23 February 1990

Victory Motor Racing



<https://www.driverdb.com/drivers/Shelby-Blackstock/>

<https://www.facebook.com/ShelbyBlackstock>

@Shelbilly



Blackstock is the only son of Reba McEntire, one of the most famous country music singers of all time.

The 26-year-old from Nashville, Tennessee – where else would the son of a country music singer live – has had five seasons of single-seater racing in the United States and will be making his international debut in New Zealand.

His mother, Reba McEntire has a singing, song writing, acting and record producing career spanning more than 40 years, which has seen her win more female country music awards – 23 from 49 nominations – than any other artist with total sales of more than 85 million records. Twenty four of which have reached gold or platinum status.

Blackstock was drawn to motor racing while attending University when he spent a day at the Bob Bondurant Driving School in Arizona.

In his first season, 2012, Blackstock finished eighth in Formula 2000. For the next two years he competed in the Pro Mazda Series finishing third and fourth in the championship gaining 12 podiums and a solitary win in that time.

In 2015 and 2016 Blackstock raced in the Indy Lights, the series one step below the full Indy Car series. He finished tenth last year and eighth this year.

# #62

**FERDINAND HABSBURG**

Vienna, Austria

21 June 1997

M2 Competition



<https://www.driverdb.com/drivers/Ferdinand-Habsburg/>

<https://www.facebook.com/DoubleEagle62/>

@DoubleEagle62



Last January Habsburg book-ended the series by winning the first race at the opening round at Ruapuna and then the Saturday preliminary event at Manfeild before the series ending New Zealand Grand Prix.

With a second place in the Lady Wigram Trophy race, Habsburg's somewhat up and down form eventually netted him fifth equal in the championship.

A descendant of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria whose assassination in June 1914 was the spark that started the First World War, the current Ferdinand Habsburg does not have any royal position. His grandfather renounced all claims to the Austrian throne in 1961, after living much of his life in exile after 1919.

Habsburg is based in Vienna and during 2016 contested three different Formula Renault series in Europe, winning two races, taking four pole positions during qualifying and 14 podium places.

His most successful series was the European Open Championship where his two victories and 10 podiums came on his way to second overall.

If the 19-year-old can recapture the form he showed at Ruapuna and Manfeild for all five rounds, he could become one of the top challengers for overall honours in the 2017 Castrol Toyota Racing Series.



# #65

**ENAAM AHMED**

London, United Kingdom

4 February 2000

Giles Motorsport



<https://www.driverdb.com/drivers/enaam-ahmed/>

<https://www.facebook.com/Enaammotorsport/>

@enaammotorsport



Ahmed arrives here knowing what he is up against, having been in the same team as defending champion Lando Norris in 2015.

A former Junior World and European karting champion in 2014, Ahmed will only turn 17 years old on the Saturday of the Taupo round.

He was the Rookie of the Year in the British Formula 4 series in 2015, winning one race and claiming four podiums to finish eighth overall.

He also did five rounds of the European Northern Zone Formula 4 series claiming five wins and two other podiums.

This year he has contested three Formula 3 Championships, winning the British autumn series with two wins and three podiums.

Ahmed finished fifth overall in the main British Formula 3 Championship with two wins and five podiums and in the European Open series he finished eleventh overall, despite missing four rounds.

# #80

**NIKITA LASTOCHKIN**

Russia – lives in Los Angeles

5 May 1990

Victory Motor Racing



<https://www.driverdb.com/drivers/nikita-lastochkin/>

<https://www.facebook.com/Nikitagoesracing/>

@nikitagoesracin



The Los Angeles based 26-year-old has only been racing for three years and has no back ground in karting like many of his rivals.

When he starts the first of 15 races in the five round series Lastochkin will be making his debut outside the United States where he has had three seasons driving single seaters.

Lastochkin arrived in California 10 years ago by himself to study and learn English and has made it his home ever since.

“I had no friends or family here, but I enjoyed all the different cultures and lifestyle,” he said.

Lastochkin discovered motorsport almost by accident when he attended a Skip Barber track day for some fun and was hooked on going fast. In 2014, his debut season, he finished sixth in the National F1600 championship and won the Pacific F1600 series with four wins.

Last year he moved up to the US Formula 2000 series and came eighth, a position he has repeated this year.

“I wanted to come to New Zealand last summer, but didn’t quite have the budget. This year I’ve made it.”

Lastochkin is looking to the Toyota one make series to gain more experience before he heads for a season of racing in Europe in 2017.



# #83

## KAMI LALIBERTE

Canada – lives in Zurich  
13 September 1999  
M2 Competition



Laliberte, the son of Cirque du Soleil founder Guy Laliberte, is returning for a second tilt at the Castrol Toyota Racing Series.

The 17-year-old Geneva based Canadian made his debut here last summer, when he finished thirteenth overall after less than 12 months of single-seater racing following a five year career in karting.

In 2016, he has raced in the eight round, 24 race German Formula 4 Championship, where he finished ninth overall.

Laliberte's most success came in the second half of the season, when he won a race at Zandvoort in the Netherlands and had two podium placings at the final round at Hockenheim. A one off appearance at the Pau Formula 4 race netted second place.

Multi lingual Laliberte – speaking English, French, Portuguese and Italian – is looking for his European experience to give him a boost into this summer's racing.

"Last year New Zealand was a big step up from what I was used to before I came here," said Laliberte.

"Now I have experience in the car and know the tracks too."



<https://www.driverdb.com/drivers/kami-moreira-la-liberte/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/Kami-Moreira-Laliberte-240379485993831/>  
@KamiLaliberte

# #96

## LUIS LEEDS

Melbourne, Australia  
6 March 2000  
Giles Motorsport



Sixteen-year-old Leeds is a member of Australian Motorsport's Junior Academy.

Luis will arrive in Christchurch with the advantage of having raced at Ruapuna in a round of the Toyota 86 Championship in 2015. He returned to finish first and second in Formula Ford races at the New Zealand Grand Prix meeting at Manfeild later that year.

After four seasons in karting, which he started as an 11 year old, Leeds contested Formula 4 and Formula Ford races in Australia in 2015.

He finished third in both the National and Victorian Championship. He claimed a total of eight wins and 17 other podium places during the year.

This year he has done 30 races in the British Formula 4 Championship, winning three and claiming eight other podiums to finish third in the championship.



<https://www.driverdb.com/drivers/luis-leeds/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/luisleeds96/>  
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