



## **Red Bull Driver Search**

Searching for the future American F1 Champion

### **Press Release**

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### **American F1 Driver Search Finds Its First Four**

**Le Beausset, France (18 October 2002)**—They came, they saw, four conquered: The inaugural Red Bull F1 Driver Search culminated today in the choosing of four young American racers after nearly a week of assessment at Circuit Paul Ricard High Tech Test Track, a state of the art motorsport facility in southern France. Paul Edwards, Grant Maiman, Joel Nelson and Scott Speed were chosen by a select panel after being judged the most likely to quickly ascend to the world's top racing category, Formula One (F1).

A total of 13 drivers had come to Paul Ricard, each hoping to be one of four to be funded by Red Bull Energy Drink to race in Europe's junior categories in 2003; it is these European "minor league" championships that F1 team owners and managers look to almost exclusively for their next star. The fact that there has not been an American driver in F1 since 1993 (Michael Andretti) led to the creation this past April of the Red Bull F1 Driver Search initiative.

"We had 13 tremendously talented American racers here," said judge and program manager Danny Sullivan, an Indy 500 winner and one of just a handful of Americans to have competed in Formula One since 1950. "All the boys were so good that it made our decision very, very difficult. Beside being among the fastest during the lapping sessions, we had to consider not only each driver's individual experience, but also the variety of the cars they've driven and the variety of the cars we utilized here at the run-off. To do this right, to find the drivers most likely to succeed in the extremely competitive European racing universe, the judges had to factor all of it in."

Edwards, 24, is from Santa Maria, Calif., and already has more than four years experience racing in Europe; Maiman, 24, New London, Wis., has been racing cars only since 1999. Nelson, 20, from Reno, Nev., is another raw talent, having gotten into a race car for the first time just about a year ago; and Speed, 19, of Manteca, Calif., has raced karts since age 10 and formula cars since 2001.

Within the next 10 days, the decisions will be made regarding which European series and teams each of the four drivers will be competing in.

The other nine drivers at Circuit Paul Ricard -- "Each were utterly impressive and will likely be considered again for next year," said Sullivan -- were Michael Abbate, 16, Las Vegas, Nev.; Phil Giebler, 23, Oxnard, Calif.; Joey Hand, 23, Chardon, Ohio; Patrick Long, 21, Oak

Park, Calif.; Rocky Moran, Jr., 22, Coto de Caza, Calif.; Scott Poirier, 19, Deerfield Beach, Fla.; Boston Reid, 19, Kokomo, Ind.; Bryan Sellers, 21, Centerville, Ohio; and Bobby Wilson, 20, Oconomowoc, Wis. Two other drivers had also been invited, but prior to the run-off in France signed deals with teams to race in the U.S. in 2003: A.J. Allmendinger, 20, Hollister, Calif., and Ryan Hunter-Reay, 21, Boca Raton, Fla.

[Note to editors: The judging panel was comprised of Danny Sullivan, Bertram Schafer, Dr. Helmut Marko, Skip Barber and Alan Docking. They represent a combined 200-plus years in racing experience, most of which has been in the area of spotting and developing up-and-coming driving talent. Their biographies, as well as program details, photographs and driver biographies, can be found at [www.redbulldriversearch.com](http://www.redbulldriversearch.com). More photography of the four-day run-off at Circuit Paul Ricard can be found -- also free of charge -- at <http://www.sutton-images.com> It takes just a moment to register, and within an hour you receive your password via e-mail.]

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