

## Press Release

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## Red Bull Driver Search

Searching for the future American F1 Champion

### Red Bull F1 Driver Search: And The Candidates Are...

**Indianapolis, IN (26 September 2002)**—At a press conference today at Indianapolis Motor Speedway, the organizers of the Red Bull F1 Driver Search program revealed the identities of the young American drivers slated to vie for fully funded 2003 racing seasons. Their names kept secret for months, a total of 15 drivers were nominated, and each was there to be introduced by the program's spokesperson and lead "scout," former Formula One driver and 1985 Indy 500 winner Danny Sullivan.

The racers, aged 16 to 24, will be assessed in an intense five-day testing program at a racetrack in France mid-October. A panel of judges that includes Sullivan, former F1 driver Gerhard Berger, racing school founder Skip Barber, plus other proven talent scouts from Europe, will then select four drivers who will be financially backed by Red Bull Energy Drink to race in European junior formula in 2003.

The driver search initiative will annually find, fund and cultivate the nation's most promising young drivers in order to return America to the world stage that is Formula One (F1) auto racing. F1, massively popular around the world except in the United States (noting, however, that the United States Grand Prix at Indy is the best-attended F1 race on the calendar in terms of live gate), has lacked an American driver for almost a decade, and it's been nearly 25 years since F1 last crowned a world champion from America (Mario Andretti, 1978). Realizing that F1 team owners and managers look almost exclusively to Europe's minor league racing ranks for up-and-coming talent, Red Bull is funding the young Americans' racing in championships such as British Formula Ford, Formula BMW, German and British F3, etc.

**Following are the names and short biographies of the 15 candidates of the inaugural Red Bull F1 Driver Search:**

#### **Michael Abbate**

Las Vegas, Nevada

D.o.B.: 22 December 1985 (16)

2002: Stars of Tomorrow shifter karts

Prior: Karts

Background: Michael got a kart for a birthday present at age 10, and racing locally, he dominated. Realizing that in order to keep progressing, the "team" had to "leave town," so

off Michael went to an IKF race in Phoenix – where he was lapped twice. "The club racing success had spoiled me," Michael said, "The Phoenix race was a real eye-opener." It was only a few races later that he was finishing in the top five, and he's been winning ever since (multiple local, regional and national shifter kart championships, and a 2001 Skip Barber Karting Scholarship finalist. Michael is the first and only American to be a factory driver for leading Italian kart-maker Birel. His Dad, Mike Abbate, has raced motorcycles, cars and boats all his life. Other Notables: 2000, SKUSA Mission Series Champion, and SKUSA Super National Champion S-2; 2001, youngest-ever driver chosen as Skip Barber Karting Scholarship finalist; 2002, 3 wins and two track records, second in championship, Stars of Tomorrow Western Region.

### **A.J. Allmendinger**

Hollister, California

D.o.B.: 16 December 1981 (20)

2002: Champion, CART Barber Dodge Pro Series

Prior: Karting star, Skip Barber Regional Formula Dodge, Skip Barber National Formula Dodge, 3 races in 2001 Barber Dodge

Background: As a rookie, A.J. dominated this year's (2002) CART Barber Dodge Pro Series championship, clinching the title in round 8 of 10. In karts, he was a Stars of Tomorrow winner and a multiple IKF champion. A.J. then graduated to Skip Barber Regional Formula Dodge, then Skip Barber National Formula Dodge, where in 2001 he finished second in the championship. His father, Greg, is a carpet installer who raced at local short tracks before A.J. was born.

Other Notables: Protégé of CART star Paul Tracy, a big booster of karting; awarded 2002 Team USA Scholarship along with Bryan Sellers – the two of them excelled in the New Zealand 1600 Formula Ford winter series; as a Barber Dodge rookie in 2002, A.J. dominated the ultra-competitive series, clinching the title in round eight of 10.

### **Paul Edwards**

Santa Maria, California

D.o.B.: 11 January 1978 (24)

2002: World Challenge race, Laguna Seca Raceway

Prior: Karts, British Formula Ford, Formula Ford Festival, British Formula Renault, EFDA (European Formula Drivers Association) Euroseries, British Formula Vauxhall, Formula Palmer Audi Winter series, British Formula 3 Background: Here's an American driver with impeccable European open-wheel credentials, earning poles and winning races in every category he's competed in. Some of Paul's accomplishments include; first American in two decades to win a British Formula Ford race (1997); European Formula Opel Winter Series Champion (1998); British Formula Europa Cup Champion (1999); and representing the United States in 1997 in the massively competitive Formula Ford World Finals, Paul notched two wins and two poles in the quarter-finals, took the pole, set a track record and finished second in the semis, and in the final, he was in third place but was crashed out by another driver's mistake – with one corner to go.

Other Notables: First consecutive-year winner of the Valvoline Team USA Scholarship (1998 & 1999).

### **Phil Giebler**

Oxnard, California

D.o.B.: 5 March 1979 (23)

2002: FIA Spanish Formula 3

Prior: Karts, Skip Barber Regional Formula Dodge, French Formula Renault Campus, French Formula 3 (Class-B), Formula Palmer Audi Winter Series, German Formula 3, British Formula 3

Background: In the manner of Paul Edwards, Phil is that rarest of American drivers: succeeding in open-wheel racing in Europe. Between 1990 and 1997, he starred in karts mainly in the U.S. By 1999 Phil moved to Europe and finished second in the French Formula Renault Campus Championship. Last year, he showed very well in both the German and British F3 championships and is currently running up front in Spanish F3 with the Azteca team.

Other Notables: In 1998 Phil won a Skip Barber Karting Scholarship to race in Formula Dodge, posting numerous poles and wins. In 2000, he won the Valvoline Team USA Scholarship (along with Joey Hand), which Phil used to win the Formula Palmer Audi Winter Series championship and finish second in French Formula 3(B).

### **Joey Hand**

Chardon, Ohio

D.o.B.: 10 February 1979 (23)

2002: CART Toyota Atlantic

Prior: Karts, Star Mazda, Formula Palmer Audi Winter Series, CART Toyota Atlantic

Background: With a father who has a penchant for starting businesses from scratch – restaurants, moving companies, tire retailing, housing development, towing outfits, to name a few, each successful enough to fund a passion for dirt track stock car racing – Joey followed in his Dad's footsteps, racing karts from 1991 onward. Hand tried midgets and sprints in 1997, but his love for formula cars took him to the Star Mazda Series, where he won races in 1998 and 1999. A karting injury late in 1999 precluded him finding a full time ride in 2000, but leading Toyota Atlantic team DSTP tested Hand late that year, earning the 2001 ride that resulted in third place in the championship, including one pole and two victories. Joey missed six Toyota Atlantic races this year after breaking his back in a testing accident at Milwaukee, but still finished 12th in points with, in just six races, one pole, a podium, three top-fives and four top-10s.

Other Notables: Hand (along with Giebler) won the 2000 Team USA Scholarship, funding which helped him finish fifth in the Formula Palmer Audi Winter Series, which Joey parlayed into his Toyota Atlantic seat for 2001.

**Ryan Hunter-Reay**

Boca Raton, Florida

D.o.B.: 17 December 1980 (21)

2002: CART Toyota Atlantic

Prior: Karting star, Skip Barber Regional Formula Dodge, Skip Barber National Formula Dodge, CART Barber Dodge Pro Series

Background: Ryan has won races and/or championships in everything he's raced since he first jumped into a kart at age 14. To wit: Numerous WKA karting titles between 1994 and 1997; 1998 Rookie of the Year in Skip Barber Regional (South) Formula Dodge Series; 1999 champion in Skip Barber Regional (East) and National Formula Dodge; two wins in his sophomore year (2001) of Barber Dodge; and as a rookie in CART Toyota Atlantic in 2002, Ryan scored three poles and three wins after a horrendous start to move himself into the title chase late in the season, eventually finishing sixth in points.

Other Notables: Ryan won a 1998 Skip Barber Karting Scholarship; the next year, he won the \$185,000 Skip Barber "Big Scholarship"; and he was the 2000 Barber Dodge Rookie of the Year.

**Patrick Long**

Oak Park, California

D.o.B.: 28 July 1981 (21)

2002: British Formula Renault

Prior: Karts, French Formula Renault Campus, Skip Barber Formula Dodge, British Formula Ford Zetec

Background: Patrick's first kart race was at age 8 and by 10, he was winning regional championships. IKF and WKA National titles were his by 1997. In 1998, Patrick made karting history by becoming the first American in almost two decades to win an international karting event in Europe ("The Winter Cup"). The following year, Patrick drove race cars for the first time: France's Elf Campus Series and the Skip Barber Regional Formula Dodge championship. In 2000, Patrick entered the cut-throat British Formula Ford Zetec Series, garnering eight top-10 finishes with a mid-level team, then he secured a ride with a top FF team for the Winter Series, taking two poles and winning a race. In 2001, Patrick won three races, took two poles and finished second in the title chase – the best ever by an American. One other accomplishment: he won two heats in the British Formula Ford Festival, no mean feat – just ask Danny Sullivan...

Other Notables: In 1999, while competing simultaneously in Skip Barber Formula Dodge and the French Elf Campus Series, Patrick scored 15 consecutive podium finishes; he won the 2000 Skip Barber "Big Scholarship," but shockingly declined the \$185,000, deciding to continue in British Formula Ford instead.

**Grant Maiman**

New London, Wisconsin

D.o.B.: 22 September 1980 (23)

2002: Champion, Skip Barber National Formula Dodge presented by RACER

Prior: Skip Barber Regional Formula Dodge

Background: Of this group of young drivers, only Grant Maiman and Bobby East do not have extensive competitive kart racing in their backgrounds. But that hasn't slowed Grant, who sold his beloved Jeep and Buick Grand National in 1997 in order to pay for a Skip Barber Three Day Racing School, with the goal of a professional racing career foremost in his mind. With no connections, no experience, and no money of any consequence, Grant still had the support of his Mom and Dad, a result of the vow his family made that "everyone should live the life they want"; two years earlier, his sister Brooke had died of a rare cancer at age 20.

Other Notables: In 2000, Grant was the championship runner-up in Formula Dodge Regional (Midwest) with five wins.

**Rocky Moran, Jr.**

Coto de Caza, California

D.o.B.: 11 January 1980 (22)

2002: CART Toyota Atlantic

Prior: Karts, Jim Russell Graduate Series, CART Barber Dodge, CART Toyota Atlantic

Background: After famous-racer Dad Rocky, Sr., taught him how to drive a go-kart at age 3, Rocky, Jr., was racing them by age 10. After winning 40 times in 150 kart starts, at age 15 he started racing cars in the Jim Russell championship. He then graduated to the CART Barber Dodge Pro Series in 1996, where Rocky was the youngest driver ever to compete in that championship. In three-and-a-half years in Barber Dodge, his best year was 1998 – the year the series switched from space-frame Mondiales to carbon-fiber Reynards – when he won twice, took three poles and set two fastest race-laps. Rocky moved up the ladder to CART Toyota Atlantic, doing a partial season in 1999, a full 2000 season (fifth), won his first Toyota Atlantic event in 2001, and won again in 2002, winding up fifth in points with a brand-new team

Other Notables: 1997: Team Kool Green Academy and Team USA finalist; voted inaugural CART All-Star for Toyota Atlantic in 2000; he's an instructor for Derek Daly Racing School and private coach in CART Barber Dodge; and if you ask real nice, we'll tell you Rocky, Jr.'s real name...

**Joel Nelson**

Reno, Nevada

D.o.B.: 12 July 1981 (21)

2002: Formula Palmer Audi, Formula Russell

Prior: Karts

Background: When a family friend invited Joel and his father to a CART race at Phoenix International Raceway, the kid was hooked. Joel bugged Dad for a kart incessantly – eight years! – and he finally relented. Racing never kept him from the books, however; Joel graduated with honors from high school, which helped him earn a full scholarship to the University of Nevada. But Joel is now winning poles and races on both sides of the pond (Palmer Audi in England, Formula Russell on the West Coast), with his eyes set on an entirely different kind of scholarship...

Other Notables: A musician of no little talent, Joel has played bass with the Reno Philharmonic; he is also an instructor for Dr. Jonathan Palmer's corporate ride-and-drive and track events.

### **Scott Poirier ("póy – yer")**

Deerfield Beach, Florida

D.o.B.: 25 February 1983 (19)

2002: Skip Barber National Formula Dodge, SCCA Touring Sedans

Prior: Karts, Skip Barber Regional Formula Dodge

Background: An honors student like Nelson, Scott had been a Florida karting star since 1993 before leaping onto the Skip Barber ladder system in 1999. His successes in the Formula Dodge Southern Series earned him a \$45,000 scholarship to the 2002 National Formula Dodge championship, where Scott found himself in close battle with Grant Maiman for this year's title, until Maiman clinched in August. Scott's Dad, Ken, owns an auto repair shop while Ruth is, in Scott's words, "a housewife and the best Mom ever."

Other Notables: 1999 Formula Dodge Southern Series Rookie of the Year; 2002 lead driver for Autohaus Motorsports (SCCA Touring Sedans).

### **Boston Reid**

Kokomo, Indiana

D.o.B.: 29 December 1982 (19)

2002: USAC Stoops Freightliner Sprint Car Series (non-winged), Winged Sprints

Prior: Motocross, Quarter-midgets and Karts, Midgets, Modified Midgets ("mini-sprints"), various Winged Sprint Car series

Background: Boston's backstory reveals a father, Lynn, who wrenched on Champ cars, with famous racers Fred Gearhart, Wally Dallenbach and Jim McElreath all having driven for him. Reid has been blessed – or cursed, depending on your perspective – with the tag, "the next Jeff Gordon." Those in the know say that what Boston's shown in 2002 in his first venture into the big sprint cars points in that direction. Whether that's the case or not, the fact remains that Boston has been guided in recent years by Jeff Gordon's stepdad, John

Bickford... Lynn now owns a Honda motorcycle dealership, and Boston's sister Brandie is in her third year of medical school at Indiana University.

### **Bryan Sellers**

Centerville, Ohio

D.o.B.: 19 August 1982 (21)

2002: SCCA Pro Zetec Formula Ford 2000

Prior: Karts, Star Mazda, Skip Barber Regional Formula Dodge, Skip Barber National Formula Dodge

Background: As a small boy, Bryan couldn't help but be intrigued by photographs of his Dad and uncles racing karts. Guess what Bryan saw under the Christmas tree when he was nine? ("Santa" figured that the kart could be used to keep Bryan "motivated" in school. Santa was right.) Bryan won a host of races and titles before stepping into Formula Dodge (1999) by virtue of winning one of Skip Barber's karting scholarships. He was victorious immediately, taking the Formula Dodge Midwest Region Championship in his rookie season. Bryan went to the Skip Barber National Formula Dodge series in 2000 and posted three wins, finishing second in the points chase. He sat out 2001, when the Zetec Formula Ford 2000 team he had signed with backed out of the series. By this year, Bryan was back in the championship – taking poles (5) and winning races (4) – and with two race weekends remaining (four races), he has a 27-point lead in the points standings.

Other Notables: Bryan's career was revived last year when he (and A.J. Allmendinger) were chosen for the 2001 Team USA scholarship. They both kicked Kiwi butt in New Zealand FF1600, but Bryan did particularly well, winding up second in points for the season.

### **Scott Speed**

Manteca, California

D.o.B.: 24 January 1983 (19)

2002: Skip Barber National Formula Dodge, National Star Mazda

Prior: Karts, Jim Russell Graduate Run-off, USAC Formula Russell

Background: Most of Scott's 19 years have been spent at the race track. At 4, he began to follow his Dad (Mike, an electrical engineer and owner of Speed Concepts, an electronics instrumentation outfit) around as he raced. By age 10, Scott was racing karts and within two years (1995) had won his first national title. Moving to shifter karts in 1997, he found more success: By 2001, Scott had won the prestigious 125cc SKUSA Super National title (the last of his seven national championships) for the second time. The reward for that was a Three-Day Jim Russell racing school, with a chance at winning its Graduate Run-off. Which he did. So all Scott did with that chance was race his way to the 2001 USAC Formula Russell title – and of course was the Rookie of the Year. Stepping up to the National Formula Dodge series for 2002, Speed was in the title hunt all year (until Grant Maiman clinched it in August), winning twice in 10 starts.

Other Notables: In his rookie debut in Star Mazda at the beginning of 2002, Scott won the race; in December of 2001, he tested a Bobby Rahal-run Lola-Ford CART Champ Car as part of CART "Stars of Tomorrow" program.

### **Bobby Wilson**

Oconomowoc, Wisconsin

D.o.B.: 6 October 1981 (20)

2002: Karts, 2 races in SCCA Pro Zetec Formula Ford 2000, SCCA National Formula Atlantic (two wins)

Prior: Karts, SCCA Club Formula Ford 2000

Background: At 11, Bobby started racing karts with the help of his father, Bob. He started winning when, as Bobby puts it, "I could give usable feedback and make good judgments on set-up." By the time he was 15, Bobby was racing – and winning – in 125cc shifter karts. His 2001 shifter kart season was cut short by a bad accident, so Bobby's Dad purchased a Formula Ford 2000 car (Bobby went to work at the engine prep's shop in order to pay for the motor). His first race with the car? Pole and win. Second race? A second place, against pro teams who were using the regional race as preparation for their race the following weekend. Bobby Rahal and Wilson have struck up a relationship, after Rahal saw Wilson dominate two SKUSA ProMoto races; in Austin, Texas, and the noteworthy Norway, Illinois, event. Between the two, Wilson took four poles and won four races.

Other Notables: 1998 WKA Daytona 125 champion; with very little preparation time, Bobby and his Dad converted the Club Racing FF2000 into Pro Zetec 2000 specifications for the season-opening races (rounds one and two at Sebring International), finishing a very impressive fourth on Sunday.

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