

Huge crowds exceed expectations for 1st Grand Prix of San José

For Immediate Release

Contact: Jody Meacham, 408 / 288-2934, jody@sjsa.org

SAN JOSE (July 31, 2005) – The inaugural Taylor Woodrow Grand Prix of San José burst onto the Northern California sports scene this weekend with perhaps the highest attendance ever for a San Jose sports event.

The three-days of auto racing through San Jose's city streets – highlighted by Frenchman Sebastien Bourdais' victory in the Champ Car World Series race – drew 153,767 fans, according to race officials.

"It was a fantastic culmination of two years' work by the city and the San Jose Sports Authority," said Dean Munro, the Sports Authority's executive director. "The race showcased our city before a national television audience in a way that has never happened before, and the fan support was overwhelming."

"We had a great first event," said Dick Eidswick, Champ Car president, who has reoriented the open-wheel racing series toward three-day racing festivals in international cities. "We look forward next year to coming back to an even better event. This is the very image of the kind of events we're trying to spawn all over the world."

An announced crowd of 62,371 saw Sunday's finale in which Bourdais won the Champ Car race from the pole and Katherine Legge from Silverstone, England won her third race of the season in the Toyota Atlantic Series.

"The first thing I want to say is thumbs up for the people here in San Jose," said Spain's Oriol Servia, third-place finisher to Bourdais.

Canadian Paul Tracy, runner-up to Bourdais in the main event, said the inaugural San Jose appearance on the Champ Car circuit was "a great success for the city. The buzz in the city was great, being right downtown. It was a great festival event."

Track workers labored through the weekend fine-tuning the layout to suit drivers and to handle the larger-than-expected turnout of fans.

Conceding that officials had underestimated the huge turnout, Bob Singleton, race general manager, promised more pedestrian bridges for next year's race to accommodate fans seeking to enjoy the festival events at the McEnery Convention Center and elsewhere in the interior of the 1.4-mile race course.

"We turned the inside of this race track into a three-day festival," Singleton said. "The first thing I'll say is next year there will be more bridges. We're sorry for the frustrations of some fans. We will learn, and there will be less frustration next year."

The San Jose Sports Authority is the sports marketing agency for the City of San José. Since its creation in 1991, the Sports Authority has brought more than 150 events to the city including six NCAA Championships, the NHL and MLS All Star Games and the U.S. Figure Skating Championships. Visit us on the Web at www.sjsa.org.