



Opodo explores international sponsorship arena with an integrated sponsorship/media deal in Formula 3 Racing.

London – Aug 3, 2001 - Opodo, the new European online travel service backed by Europe's nine leading airlines, will officially unveil its first international sponsorship deal by entering in to the Formula 3 arena at the Dutch Zandvoort Marlboro Masters racing tournament this weekend (Aug 4 and 5).

Opodo has sponsored Formula 3 racing driver Gianmaria (Gimmi) Bruni, who was victorious at last weekend's Formula 3 race at Donington Park, fast moving him from 8th to 6th position in the championship. Bruni is also the first Italian to win a British F3 round since Andrea de Cesaris in 1979.

Opodo Marketing Director Nicolas DeSantis said the deal is the first high profile marketing initiative announced by Opodo.

"In our quest to differentiate and make Opodo the leading European online travel brand by 2004, we are exploring select cost-effective integrated sponsorship deals," he said.

"Opodo has already received very positive results from this first inroad into sponsorship, with extensive guaranteed TV coverage reaching our key target audiences."

The deal also includes a guaranteed TV advertising campaign on CNBC Sports managed by Parallel TV and the sister company to Parallel Formula (Bruni's management company). The ad campaign coincides with Opodo's launch in various European markets. CNBC Europe reaches 53 million homes and its audience are AB1's. Germany, where Opodo will first launch its commercial site in December, is CNBC Europe's largest market reaching 26 million homes.

"We are now looking into further developments which include TV sponsorship of travel programming in various markets," Mr DeSantis said.

By choosing Formula 3, a global championship, the Opodo sponsorship deal will also leverage connections with travel and the brand will be televised across the globe on the other channels including UK's Channel 4, SKY TV, BBC, ITV, EuroSport, Star TV Asia and Brazil's Global Sat during races.

Bruni, who is currently being sought by Formula One teams following his racing performance and the Donington Grand Prix win, said, "Motor racing's popularity across Europe, and the public exposure from such spectacular

Grand Prix events, makes this an attractive sponsorship opportunity for Opodo. I am delighted to represent and be associated with Opodo and I am confident it will become a powerful brand and household name across Europe," Bruni said.

DeSantis said, "Gianmaria Bruni is an outstanding driver and we're delighted to be supporting his title challenge". He continued, "The global racing fraternity and its followers are also among some of the top travellers touring the globe, which also provides a direct correlation between the sport and our brand".

Opodo has sponsored Bruni, and his Renault-engine car. Gianmaria Bruni's driver suit will be branded in Opodo's corporate colours.

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Notes to editors

Photographs of Opodo-branded Bruni and his winning vehicle are available on request.

About Opodo

Opodo is a new online travel service created by Europe's nine leading airlines - Aer Lingus, Air France, Alitalia, Austrian Airlines, British Airways, Finnair, Iberia, KLM and Lufthansa. Opodo addresses the real needs of today's traveller by offering an unbiased and competitively priced online travel service for world travel, with access to flights from over 480 airlines, 54,500 hotel properties and car rental from over 23,500 car rental locations worldwide, as well as travel insurance.

Further information about Opodo is available at www.opodo.com.

About Gianmaria Bruni

Despite being only twenty years of age, Italian born Gianmaria Bruni is already generally regarded as one of motor sport's brightest prospects. At the age of fourteen he participated in the Italian and 100cc Junior European Kart Championships. Later that year he came second in the Trofeo dei Campioni and third in the European Championship of the Federation Cup. In 1998 he took the Italian Championship title in the Formula Renault Campus category. The following year he won the Formula Renault Eurocup title. Last season, Bruni joined the Formula 3 circuit, and finished in fifth place for Fortec Renault. (www.gimmibruni.com)

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