

International field comes to Sears Point

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SONOMA — This weekend's California Grand Prix at Sears Point Raceway has worldwide appeal.

Americans will be joined by drivers from Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, England, Estonia, France, Germany, Monaco, Peru, South Africa, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland in the various races in the Professional SportsCar Racing, Inc., series. Professional SportsCar Racing is the successor to IMSA.

Estonia is represented in the Black Magic Series by Rain Pilve, 26, who was U.S.S.R. kart champion in 1985 and Formula 1300 title-winner in 1991. Americans would be stunned by Pilve's accounts of motor sports under communism. The formula championship brought him \$5.

The Black Magic event is Sunday at 10:20 a.m., a warmup for the featured Exxon World SportsCar Championship at noon and the Exxon Supreme GT Series at 3 p.m.

Qualifying will take place Friday

World SportsCar Championship draws drivers from around globe

and Saturday and road racing will begin Saturday from 3-6 p.m. before the international pilots take over the 2.52-mile road course Sunday.

The American Cities Racing League and the Russell USAC Triple Crown will be contested Saturday.

Pleasanton's Jeff Glenn, driving for Team Beverly Hills, is the ACRL points leader after winning the last race in Portland, Ore. Glenn is factory driver for Carbir Race Cars of Grafton, Wis., and his Sports 2000 racer has several Bay Area sponsors.

"I always look forward to Sears Point," said Glenn, who sat on the pole last year. "It feels like a home track to me. It is also a special event in that all of our sponsors and supporters will be on hand to cheer us on."

The Swift DB-5 raced last year by Glenn will be driven by teammate

Mark Neuhaus.

The World SportsCar Championship, the only West Coast stop on the circuit, is round six of 11 races. Previous stops indicate the two-hour race should be a shootout between current points leader Elliott Forbes-Robinson and his teammates in the Dyson Racing Ford R&S MkIII and the Rob Morgan team in its Ferrari 333.

Last year's victor, Ferrari's Wayne Taylor, had a winning margin of .198 of a second, closest finish in the history of the series.

In the Supreme GTS-1 class, teammates Andy Pilgrim and Jochen Rohr hold the points lead in their Porsche 911, followed by Chevrolet Camaro teammates Stu Hayner and Roger Schramm.

The Prototype Technology Group

is fielding three BMW M3 entries in its bid to duplicate last year's 1-2-3 sweep. Team owner Tom Milner announced a driver lineup of Bill Auberlen and Boris Said III in the four-door, Derek Hill and Javier Quiros in the coupe and Dieter Quester and Marc Duez in another coupe.

Pete Halsmer, 53, who drove the winning BMW in 1996, is back but will be at the wheel of a BMW M3 owned by Mattco Racing's Matt Cohen. Halsmer won the June 1 race at Watkins Glen and considers Sears Point much more of a challenge.

"Sears Point requires the most decision-making-per-mile of any place we run," Halsmer said, Mich. "But I love it here. I consider it my home track, even though I'm originally from Indiana, because I lived in California for many years and essentially cut my teeth in racing here in Formula Vee and Formula Atlantic."

Ticket prices are \$5 Friday, \$10 Saturday and \$30 Sunday. There is no charge for preteens.