



British Racing Debut For Lexus IS200 In 2001 BTCC

2 April 2001

The Lexus IS200 will make its British motor sport debut in the 2001 theaa.com MSA British Touring Car Championship. The compact executive saloon has quickly established itself as a winner with UK car buyers looking for refinement, quality and inspirational driving characteristics. Now it is set to prove its worth in the nation's premier racing series.

ABG Motorsport is entering a brace of IS200s in the BTCC, to be piloted by British driver Kurt Luby and the British-based Brazilian Thomas Erdos. Luby makes a welcome and long-awaited return to the championship, while Erdos, a respected star of International and British GT competition, will be driving in touring cars for the first time. Between them they bring an excellent combination of experience, speed, race-craft and technical know-how, qualities certain to help the team achieve race-winning potential.

The team is an independent entry in the championship, having secured the necessary approval from Lexus (GB) Ltd. Its cars will be competing in the Touring class, taking on the might of the works-supported Vauxhall Astras and Peugeot 406s, as well as the fellow independently-entered Alfa Romeo 147s.

Team boss Tim Blake is confident the Lexus can make a serious impact: "Our main aim is to win the Independents' Championship title and I am confident we can do that, but I think we have the potential to be crossing the finish line in first place by mid-season.

" We looked all around the world to find the best car available and we believe that in the Lexus IS200 we have found it."

He points to the car's rear-wheel drive and superbly balanced chassis as ideal ingredients for a successful race car, combined with a robust and flexible 2.0-litre engine.

Runcorn-based ABG Motorsport has a long and successful pedigree of preparing championship-winning cars across a broad sporting spectrum, including GT, single-seater and one-make series. This will be its maiden BTCC season.

The Lexus IS200 is set to make its first appearance in the opening two rounds of the season at Brands Hatch on April 15/16 with Kurt Luby driving. The second car, with Thomas Erdos at the wheel, should join the fray by early June. The cars will be running with sponsorship from GT Logistics, leading motor sport web site and TotalMotorSport.com.

ENDS