

Lotus and Andretti to be first around Circuit of The Americas

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Lotus will have the honour of being the first F1 team to take to the new Circuit of the Americas (COTA) this weekend when the track in Austin, Texas launches ahead of November's 2012 Formula 1 United States Grand Prix.

American racing legend and COTA Ambassador Mario Andretti, actor Patrick Dempsey and Lotus's third driver Jerome D'Ambrosio will all complete demonstration runs behind the wheel of the team's 2010 F1 challenger, the R30, during the circuit's Official Opening Ceremony on Sunday October 21.

Andretti will formally cut the ribbon to open the track by driving the opening laps of the circuit, in what will be the 1978 world champion's first time behind the wheel of a contemporary Formula One car since he last competed in the sport in 1982.

Actor Patrick Dempsey - known internationally for playing the character Dr Derek Shepherd in TV drama Grey's Anatomy - will drive an F1 car for the first time. Dempsey, who is an ambassador for Lotus partner Trina Solar, is a keen motorsport enthusiast who has contested a number of races in different categories, including racing at the Le Mans 24 Hours.

Finally, D'Ambrosio - who contested this year's Italian Grand Prix for the team - will also conduct demonstration laps at the event, which takes place four weeks ahead of the inaugural Austin race on November 16-18, marking the return of Formula One racing to the USA after a five-year absence.

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