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KIA SPORTAGE PREVAILS IN THE LAUGHLIN SCORE DESERT SERIES

Kia Scores Dual Victory

IRVINE, Calif., November 8, 1999 - A Kia Sportage won the grueling Baja 1000 in Class 3 (short-wheelbase four-wheel-drive sport-utility vehicle) of the Laughlin/SCORE Desert Series, finishing the 672-mile course in 21 hours and 21 minutes.

The Sportage, driven by off-road champions Darren Skilton and Curt LeDuc, also claimed the 1999 Class 3 championship by winning its fifth race of the six-race series. Skilton also drove the Sportage to Class championships in 1997 and 1998.

In the Baja 1000, the Sportage beat out seven Class 3 competitors that included a Nissan Pathfinder, Isuzu VehiCross, Jeep CJ-7, two Isuzu Amigos and two Ford Bronco IIs. Only three of the eight competitors in the class finished the race. The Pathfinder was second with a time of 21 hours, 43 minutes, and the VehiCross was third at 22 hours.

"Winning this race is extremely gratifying," Skilton said, "because this was one of the toughest Baja 1000 courses I've ever competed on. Plus, the other vehicles in our class were well-prepared."

Skilton drove all but the 90 miles of the 672-mile race. On the first lap, auto journalist Sue Mead served as navigator and, on the second lap, Glen Plake took over the co-pilot's seat.

"This race prepared us well for another great test at the Paris-Dakar-Cairo rally this January," Skilton said. Kia will sponsor a two-vehicle team in the Paris-Dakar-Cairo 2000, regarded by many as the most difficult motorsports event in the world. Kia Motors America is the U.S. marketing, sales and service arm of Kia Motors Corp., Seoul, Korea.