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KIA PREPARES FOR THE PARIS-DAKAR-CAIRO 2000

Sportages Will Race Across Grueling 10,000-Kilometer Course

IRVINE, Calif., December 7, 1999 - Kia is preparing two Sportage sport-utility vehicles to participate in one of the world's most difficult motorsports events, the Paris-Dakar-Cairo 2000. Entered by Baja Automotive Adventures, the Sportages will be driven by the only American team entered in the event and will compete in Class T3.1.

One Sportage will be driven by three-time SCORE Class 3 desert racing champion Darren Skilton, who will be accompanied by co-driver and automotive journalist Sue Mead. The second Sportage will be driven by former SCORE Trophy Truck champion Curt LeDuc.

The rally gets underway Jan. 6, 2000, and will cross six countries and 10,000 kilometers during the 18-day race. The competing teams will do battle with some of the most difficult terrain in the world, first crossing Senegal before tackling Mali. The competitors will have to cross the Tenere, and then pass through the lonely, wind-blown reaches of southern Libya. Finally, if their machines are still in operating condition, the competitors will race across the cathedral dunes of Egypt. From oasis to oasis, the rally route will lead all the way to the foot of the pyramids in Cairo for a grand finale. Most consider simply finishing the event to be a huge victory. "The Dakar Rally is the ultimate challenge for me as an off-road racer and something I have been preparing myself for since 1993," Skilton said. "I've driven the Sportage in desert races for three years, and I believe we have a great chance to succeed in this event."

As the rally unfolds, Skilton's co-driver Sue Mead will provide reports to various radio and TV outlets covering the event. "I've competed in many vehicle endurance events," Mead said, "but this will be the highlight of my career."

Kia crew members include off-road veterans Troy Johnson, Glen Plake, Larry Hawkins, James Fisher and Gavin Skilton.

Kia Motors America is the U.S. sales, marketing and service arm of Kia Motors Corp. in Seoul, South Korea.