



THAILAND MOTORSPORT

A growing home market with more Thai talent breaking onto the international stage

Insight report | September 2026

Thailand has had a strong motorsport audience for years, especially around MotoGP and domestic racing. What feels different now is the number of Thai athletes appearing across major international championships.

In 2026, Thailand had representation across Formula 1, Formula 2, Formula 3 and WorldSBK, while Buriram remained one of MotoGP's most established stops in Southeast Asia.

That creates a more complete story for the market: not just fans watching international motorsport, but Thai athletes increasingly becoming part of it.



THAILAND ALREADY HAS A STRONG MOTORSPORT BASE

The clearest proof is the Thai MotoGP round in Buriram.

Thailand joined the MotoGP calendar in 2018, and the event quickly became one of the larger race weekends in the region. Across its first four editions, MotoGP reported more than 800,000 spectators at Chang International Circuit.

The Thai GP then opened both the 2025 and 2026 MotoGP seasons, giving the race even more prominence on the international calendar.

The 2025 event drew a record 224,000 spectators, and Thailand has since extended its MotoGP deal through 2031.

Chang INTERNATIONAL



A FEW NUMBERS WORTH KNOWING

224K

Spectators at the
2025 Thai GP

800K+

Combined attendance
across the first four
editions

2031

MotoGP secured in
Thailand through this
season

4.55 km

Chang International
Circuit lap length





2018 launch

2025 record crowd

*2025/26
season opener*

Extended to 2031

THE MORE INTERESTING STORY IS NOW THE DRIVER PIPELINE

For a long time, Thailand's international four-wheel story was mainly about Alex Albon. That is starting to change. In 2026, Thai drivers are represented at three consecutive levels of the Formula 1 development ladder.



FORMULA 1

Alex Albon

WILLIAMS RACING

Albon remains the most established Thai driver on the international stage and has been confirmed with Williams through 2027.

He also reached his 100th race with Williams in 2026, while continuing to give Thailand regular visibility at the top level of global motorsport.



FORMULA 2

*Tasanapol
Inthraphuvasak*

ART GRAND PRIX

Tasanapol moved into Formula 2 for 2026 after a strong 2025 Formula 3 season, where he finished 7th overall with three race wins.

As of September 2026, his official F2 profile lists him 10th in the championship with 71 points.

His recent progression has been fairly quick:

2024 FIA Formula 3 — 24th

2025 FIA Formula 3 — 7th, with 3 wins

2026 FIA Formula 2 — ART Grand Prix
71 points, 10th as of September



FORMULA 3

Nandhavud
Bhirombhakdi

DAMS LUCAS OIL

Nandhavud joined FIA Formula 3 in 2026 after progressing through F4 and Formula Regional.

His rookie season is still more about development than results, but his presence is important because it gives Thailand another young driver inside the FIA single-seater system.



SOMKIAT CHANTRA HAS ALREADY MADE HISTORY ON TWO WHEELS

On the motorcycle side, Somkiat Chantra has had an equally important role. He became the first Thai rider to compete in MotoGP when he joined LCR Honda in 2025.

His path to the top level included several important milestones:

2016 Asia Talent Cup champion

2022 First Thai rider to win a Moto2 race

2023 Second Moto2 victory. Finished 6th overall

2025 First Thai rider in MotoGP

2026 Honda HRC WorldSBK

His move to WorldSBK created another milestone, with the championship describing him as the first full-time Thai rider in WorldSBK.

For Thailand, Chantra is important because he shows a clear route from Asian development racing into the highest levels of international motorcycle competition.



FOUR ATHLETES, FOUR DIFFERENT ROLES

Alex Albon
Formula 1
Thailand's
established
global name



Tasanapol Inthraphuvasak
Formula 2
The next driver moving
up the ladder



Nandhavud Bhirombhakdi
Formula 3
Emerging international
talent



Somkiat Chantra
WorldSBK
Emerging international
talent



The mix is useful because these athletes are not all telling the same story.

Albon offers global reach.

Tasanapol and Nandhavud give fans something to follow over time.

Chantra connects directly with Thailand's strong motorcycle culture.

Together, they give Thai motorsport more depth than it had a few years ago.



DOMESTIC MOTORSPORT STILL MATTERS

International athletes sit on top of a much broader local racing scene.

The Thailand Super Series continues to provide a domestic platform across GT3, GTM, GT4 and one-make racing, with events held at venues including Chang International Circuit.

This creates several levels of engagement:

INTERNATIONAL

F1, F2, F3, MotoGP, WorldSBK

REGIONAL

Asian championships and driver development

DOMESTIC

Thailand Super Series and local championships

GRASSROOTS

Karting, sim racing, tuning and enthusiast communities

For brands, that means motorsport does not have to start with a large global sponsorship. There are smaller entry points that can still feel credible and relevant to local fans.

MOTORSPORT IS ALSO A TOURISM PLATFORM

MotoGP is one of the clearest examples of how a major sporting event can bring tourism spending into a regional Thai city.

For the 2026 Thai Grand Prix, the Ministry of Tourism and Sports' preliminary post-event survey recorded 228,228 attendees across three days and estimated THB 5.14 billion in economic circulation across Buriram and other provinces. Of that, around THB 4.47 billion came directly from attendee spending, with a further THB 673 million from public and private investment.

228,228

Total attendance across the race weekend, a new high for the Thai GP

THB 5.14B

Estimated economic circulation generated around the event.

THB 4.47B

Spending from attendees alone, roughly 87% of the total economic activity measured.

18%

Share of attendees reported as international visitors.

THB 36,636

Average spending per trip among international visitors, versus THB 18,057 for Thai visitors, roughly twice as much.



The impact also moved well beyond the circuit. Post-event reporting showed accommodation reaching 100% occupancy across Buriram and spilling into nearby Surin, Nakhon Ratchasima and Chaiyaphum, while OTOP and local-product sales were reported at around 5x normal levels during the event. The race was also estimated to support 7,983 jobs and generate at least THB 358 million in tax revenue.

This is not a one-year effect either. In 2024, the Thai GP attracted 205,343 spectators, including 50,677 international visitors, and generated an estimated THB 4.76 billion in economic impact, supporting 6,939 jobs.

FROM RACE WEEKEND TO DESTINATION SPEND

The important point is where the money goes.

Fans coming to Buriram are not only buying race tickets. Their trip also creates demand across:

- Hotels and homestays
- Food and restaurants
- Domestic transport
- Flights and inter-provincial travel
- OTOP and local products
- Entertainment and concerts
- Pre- and post-race tourism

For international fans in particular, the race can become one part of a wider Thailand trip rather than the whole itinerary.

That makes MotoGP useful not just as a sporting property, but as a way to bring higher-spending visitors into places that sit outside Thailand's traditional tourism centres.

