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SRT Motorsports Post-Qualifying Report - Lone Star Le Mans at Circuit of The Americas

September 18, 2014, Austin, Texas - The SRT (Street and Racing Technology) Motorsports Dodge Viper SRT GTS-Rs both qualified in the top-four overall for tomorrow's Lone Star Le Mans, including what turned out to be a pole-winning performance by Jonathan Bomarito in the No. 93 Dodge Viper SRT GTS-R, at Circuit of The Americas (COTA) on Friday.

Bomarito turned a top time of 2:03.539 (99.078 mph) that was originally the second-fastest lap of the qualifying session, but the No. 93 was later elevated to the top spot when the provisional pole-winning Porsche failed technical inspection. That change also moved Marc Goossens up to fourth on the starting grid after originally clocking in fifth fastest at 2:04.003 (98.707 mph) in the No. 91 Dodge Viper SRT GTS-R.

Bomarito co-drives the No. 93 with Kuno Wittmer and Goossens shares the No. 91 with Dominik Farnbacher.

The pole – the second of the year for the No. 93 after Wittmer qualified first at Canadian Tire Motorsport Park – is key for both the team and drivers as they battle for GTLM class championships with just two races remaining in the 2014 IMSA TUDOR United SportsCar Championship schedule. The No. 93 team with Bomarito and Wittmer entered COTA ranked second in both the GTLM team and driver standings with 264 points, just six markers out of first in both championships.

The No. 93 squad has closed the points gap in the GTLM standings by finishing ahead of the class leader in each of the last three races. A fifth-place showing one race ago at Virginia International Raceway (VIR) was also the No. 93's fifth-consecutive top-five finish, the longest such streak in SRT Motorsports history. The run of success also featured four-straight top-three finishes, including two dual-podium finishes at New York's Watkins Glen and Canadian Tire Motorsports Park.

Goossens, Farnbacher and the No. 91 team are tied for third in the GTLM team and driver championships and sit 20 points behind the leader.

With the No. 93 Viper's qualifying successes in 2014 and Marc Goossens' pole position for the season-opening Rolex 24 At Daytona, SRT Motorsports has now tallied six poles over the last two seasons. Bomarito leads SRT with three pole positions, while Farnbacher, Goossens and Wittmer have each claimed one.

The No. 93 Viper will start six positions ahead of the GTLM points leader, who qualified seventh.

The Lone Star Le Mans at Circuit of The Americas, the 10th and penultimate race for the GTLM class in the 2014 IMSA TUDOR Championship schedule, will be run on Saturday, Sept. 20 at 11:35 a.m. CDT. The race can be seen in live coverage on FOX Sports 2 at 12:30 p.m. EDT/11:30 a.m. CDT with a two-hour rebroadcast airing on FOX this Sunday, Sept. 21, in various time slots throughout the country. Viewers can check local listings for air times.

Jonathan Bomarito, driver, No. 93 Dodge Viper SRT GTS-R

How was your qualifying session?

"Qualifying was good and tough as usual. It was flat out as hard as you can go. We're pushing hard right now for this championship and qualifying is important in this series. It's hard to pass at times because everybody makes it difficult with the pro-pro lineups. We were pretty close to pole, and now we have it after the Porsche didn't make it through tech, but we were still right there within a couple tenths. More importantly, we've got a really good race car. We've got a good car over the stint and tire run. The guys are focused and we're just trying to put every ounce of effort, thought and focus into this for the championship."

What is your mindset for tomorrow's race?

"Right now, we need to win this thing. If we win the race, it kind of takes care of itself. We maximize our points and it is then up to the leader to finish where they will to manage that gap of six points. We're there and now starting first puts us in an even better position. We need to leave this weekend with another chunk taken from their lead and go to Petit Le Mans and fight for the championship."

Do you think weather will impact the race?

"The weather is what it is and it's hard to predict out here. These little cells come through quick. They seem to dump rain and then stop, which will make for some hard decisions if that happens. Do you stop for rain tires or not? Do you stick with your slicks? We have some great guys on the box, so it's a nice confidence builder knowing that they're going to make the right calls for us on track."

Kuno Wittmer, driver, No. 93 Dodge Viper SRT GTS-R

What do you think of your teammate's performance in qualifying?

"I think he did pretty good and it's a good effort by everybody, the whole team. We're just working so hard this weekend to make up those six points by the end of the championship. You always try to get the pole position and we would have been happy with the front row, but we'll take the pole now for sure. The Viper is really good and for the race we should have a very comfortable car to drive. The team built a real nice machine and it's all going to depend on heat, rain and everything else as for what strategy we go with."

Marc Goossens, driver, No. 91 Dodge Viper SRT GTS-R

How was your qualifying session?

"My qualifying was okay. We didn't expect to get that much out of the car after the session before. Something is missing, whether it's a traction control issue or just grip level. I just can't get to the power the way I want to. It was a little bit better in qualifying. I think I extracted everything out of the car that's in it, but even in comparison to the 93 Viper we're missing half a second. I just can't get to the throttle. All in all, it's good to see the 93 up there and now on pole, especially considering where they are in the championship."

Are you happy with your position?

"In all honesty, I would have had a hard time believing we'd be better than seventh going into qualifying and we ended up fourth. All in all, I'm not too disappointed, but there's still a gap to bridge. We need to look at data and figure out what's going on because the issue we have now we didn't have this morning. Either something isn't right or functioning anymore – maybe a sensor went ballistic on us – but we're looking into it and hopefully tomorrow we have a good car for the race."

Dominik Farnbacher, driver, No. 91 Dodge Viper SRT GTS-R

What do you think of your teammate's performance in qualifying?

"Marc was qualifying our car and both of my teammates did a great job. We are now in the top five with both cars which is good starting grid position and a job well done by both drivers. Porsche was very quick today, so they may be the ones we have to beat in the race. For the championship, the gap is quite large to the No. 3 car and if they can maintain that through the race then they are right there for the last race."

Ralph Gilles, president and CEO of SRT Motorsports

What did you think of the qualifying session?

"That was a great qualifying effort by Jonathan Bomarito and hopefully this is an indicator of what we can expect on Saturday. We're leading the field to the green for the Lone Star Le Mans and we want to win, but the primary focus is the championship and we have to keep that in mind. Obviously, there's a lot on the line and I'm proud of SRT Motorsports for taking the pole here today. Bomarito was only a few tenths of seconds off the quickest lap, but we'll gladly accept the pole after the No. 910 had their time disallowed."

Matt Bejnarowicz, lead engineer, No. 93 Dodge Viper SRT GTS-R

How was your qualifying session?

"I'm pretty happy with it. It's tough being that close to the pole, but we ended up with it after technical inspection and we worked hard to be in that position. You could see it in JB's (Jonathan Bomarito) eyes, he wanted it, he was hungry for it and he did an outstanding job. To put that kind of lap time down is pretty incredible. The engineering guys have worked hard this whole weekend to get us here and Jonathan has been on it since we got here. We're

hoping for good things tomorrow.”

What is your strategy for tomorrow’s race?

“The strategy all depends on the weather. If it’s dry, it’s a similar strategy to any other two hour and 45 minute race that we go to. We’ll be pretty close on fuel for the time window and we’ll have to pick our pit stops pretty close. If weather comes into play, then the strategy is all based on the radar and how wet we think the track is going to be and how quick it’s going to try dry. We’ve seen at this track that it is very smooth and water doesn’t seem to go anywhere when it does rain. It sits up on the surface and it stays in a slippery, damp condition longer than we would expect.”

What are your thoughts on the championship battle?

“There are a couple championships we’re going for. In the driver’s championship, we’re pretty optimistic right now because the leader is pretty far in the back after qualifying. If that’s any indication of the speed they’ll have during the race, we’re pretty hopeful. On the flip side, we’re racing Porsche for the manufacturer’s championship and they are pretty fast. Our strength with the Viper is always with the long runs and we’re hoping the Porsches will run off their tires a little bit more and consistency will be our strength again, but we won’t know until tomorrow.”

Bill Riley,lead engineer, No. 91 Dodge Viper SRT GTS-R

How was your qualifying session?

“I think it was pretty good and it is even better now with the pole for the 93. We had a tough practice and it hasn’t been fun to say the least. We’ve been working hard on both cars, as hard as we can, and the drivers did a great job. We ended up first and fourth and that’s pretty solid. We still have work to do for the race to have a good race car, we’ll work hard on that and we’ll get it turned around.”

How do you strategize for tomorrow’s race?

“The strategy has to be that you’re open to any kind of strategy. You can’t have your mind set on what you’re going to do because the weather is going to dictate that. You just have to be okay with the weather and have a heads up as to what you’re going to do to adjust to that.”

SRT Motorsports Team Lineup for Circuit of The Americas

No. 91 Dodge Viper SRT GTS-R

Driver: Dominik Farnbacher (Germany)

Driver: Marc Goossens (Belgium)

Lead Engineer: Bill Riley

No. 93 Dodge Viper SRT GTS-R

Driver: Jonathan Bomarito (United States)

Driver: Kuno Wittmer (Canada)

Lead Engineer: Matt Bejnarowicz

Race Information

Name: Lone Star Le Mans (race 10 of 11 for TUDOR Championship GTLM)

Date: Sept. 20, 2014

Time: 11:35 a.m. CDT for 2 hours and 45 minutes

Track: Circuit of The Americas, 3.427-miles, 20 turns

Broadcast Information: FOX Sports 2 at 12:30 p.m. EDT

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