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SRT Motorsports Pre-Race Report - Petit Le Mans at Road Atlanta

September 30, 2014, Braselton, GA - SRT (Street and Racing Technology) Motorsports will maximize its championship opportunities in the season finale at Road Atlanta by making a driver lineup switch for the IMSA TUDOR United SportsCar Championship's Petit Le Mans endurance race on Saturday, Oct. 4.

Drivers Dominik Farnbacher and Kuno Wittmer will swap Dodge Viper SRT GTS-R race vehicles for the championship-deciding race at Road Atlanta. Wittmer, who is tied with teammate Jonathan Bomarito for the GTLM class points lead, will co-pilot the No. 91 Viper with Marc Goossens, while Farnbacher will move to the No. 93 entry.

By splitting the regular lineup for the No. 93 Viper in the 10-hour race, the new groupings give SRT two entries with a points leader and a greater chance to capture the driver's championship. The move will provide the team the insurance of having a points-leading Viper driver remain in the hunt should the sister entry have a setback.

In addition to the IMSA TUDOR Championship driver's title, SRT Motorsports is contending for the GTLM team and manufacturer championships. The No. 93 Viper leads the team standings with 300 points, and SRT is tied for first in the manufacturer's title rankings with 308 markers.

Bomarito and Wittmer have 300 points in the driver standings and SRT holds a seven-point advantage in both the driver and team rankings.

The advantage in driver and team points marks the first time SRT Motorsports has led the standings since the Viper's return to major sports car racing with a part-time schedule in 2012.

The SRT team took the points lead with a win in the most-recent race at Texas' Circuit of The Americas. The triumph in Austin, the second victory of the season for Bomarito and Wittmer, marked the fourth-consecutive race in which the No. 93 Viper bested the previous point leaders to surge in the standings.

Armed with their first-ever points lead, the Vipers now look to take the GTLM title with a solid result in the 10-hour season finale at Road Atlanta.

With podium finishes in each prior endurance contest, SRT Motorsports has confidence in the Viper's durability over the duration of the race. SRT is the only team to have finished on the podium in each endurance event.

The No. 91 Viper with regular drivers Farnbacher and Marc Goossens finished third in the second-opening Rolex 24 At Daytona and the No. 93 Viper team took second in the Twelve Hours of Sebring. In the third endurance event, the Sahlen's Six Hours of The Glen, the No. 91 and 93 Vipers finished second and third, respectively.

The No. 91 Viper ranks third in the GTLM driver and team standings.

Ryan Hunter-Reay, the 2014 Indy 500 winner and 2012 IndyCar champion, will join the lineup of the No. 91 Viper for the Road Atlanta race, while two-time European Le Mans Series champion Rob Bell will co-pilot the points leading entry. Bell and Hunter-Reay previously competed with SRT at Daytona and Sebring in 2014.

For Hunter-Reay, the 2014 race marks his second appearance at Road Atlanta with SRT Motorsports. The IndyCar champion drove the No. 91 Viper to an eighth-place result in Atlanta with Farnbacher and Wittmer in 2012.

Petit Le Mans marks the fourth-and-final endurance contest of North American Endurance Cup, a four-race

championship within the 2014 IMSA TUDOR Championship calendar.

Prior to the Viper's return to racing in 2012, factory-backed Dodge Vipers last captured major sports car championships 1999 and 2000 in the American Le Mans Series.

SRT Motorsports Storylines for Road Atlanta

ONE-TWO IN TEXAS: The Dodge Viper SRT GTS-Rs finished first (No. 93) and second (91) in the most-recent IMSA TUDOR Championship race at Texas' COTA in September. By finishing ahead of the GTLM points leader for the fourth-consecutive race, the No. 93 Viper took the points lead and holds a seven-point advantage entering the final race of the season. The No. 93 Viper team started from the pole position in the Texas race, but was positioned for a second-place finish before a late-race incident ended the leaders' day, relinquishing first and second to the No. 93 and 91 Viper, respectively.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: The No. 93 Viper sits in the proverbial driver's seat entering the IMSA TUDOR Championship's season finale to determine the series' inaugural GTLM class champion. However, the team's seven-point advantage represents the difference between just first and fourth-place, a small margin in an ongoing battle that still faces the rigors of a 10-hour endurance contest. In addition to the IMSA TUDOR Championship title battles, the No. 91 and 93 Vipers rank fourth and tied for fifth, respectively, in the NAEC standings. In the four-race championship, the No. 91 trails the leader by just two points, while the No. 93 is three points back.

ENTRANTS FOR ENDURANCE: The two full-time Viper lineups will each be joined by a third driver for the Road Atlanta race – Hunter-Reay in the No. 91 Viper and Bell in the No. 93 vehicle. Hunter-Reay, the 2014 Indy 500 winner and 2012 IndyCar champion, has two prior starts at Road Atlanta, including an eighth-place finish in the No. 91 Viper in 2012 and a fifth-place finish in a LMP2 entry in 2009. Bell, who currently leads the GT Asia Series standings, has made four starts in Atlanta with a best finish of fourth in the LMP2 class in 2013.

STREAKING & STATS: With a victory at COTA, the No. 93 Viper team recorded its sixth-straight top-five finish, the longest such streak in the SRT Motorsports' history. During the first four races of the stretch, the No. 93 Viper also recorded consecutive podium finishes marking the longest podium run in the Viper's three seasons of competition. SRT has tallied 10 podium finishes through 10 races in 2014, twice as many as the team's five podiums in 2013. With 10 finishes of third or better this season, the Viper team has four more podium finishes than the second-ranked team, who has six podium finishes.

STRIKING DISTANCE: With just the final race remaining in the 2014 IMSA TUDOR Championship, the Viper teams rank first (No. 93) and third (No. 91) in the GTLM team and driver championship point standings with 300 and 283 points, respectively. Bomarito and Wittmer are first in the driver standings with 300 points and hold a seven-point advantage, while Farnbacher and Goossens are third with 283 points. After 10-of-11 races for the GTLM class, SRT is tied for the lead in the manufacturer standings with 308 points.

SNAKES SHED SKIN: SRT Motorsports returned to the Dodge Viper's classic livery during the Watkins Glen race weekend to honor the Viper's racing heritage. Sporting 'Viper Red' and 'Race White,' the team has now recorded two wins, two pole position and eight podiums in the same colors worn by Dodge Viper entries that took the overall victory in the Rolex 24 At Daytona in 2000, a GTS class win in the 2000 24 Hours of Le Mans, and American Le Mans Series (ALMS) championships in 1999 and 2000.

SRT Motorsports Quotes for Road Atlanta

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

How will you approach Petit Le Mans with the points lead?

"You have to be a little conservative now. We have a seven-point cushion, so we have to manage that. It's a long race with a lot of attrition and a lot of car-to-car contact, so we have to be really, really smart."

How physically demanding is Petit Le Mans?

"Realistically, you need three drivers because Atlanta is a physical track, but it's almost tempting to do it with two. We have an amazing third driver in Rob Bell and we want him involved and there with us, but all the teams are going to get out of their rhythm a little bit. For the majority of this year since the Twelve Hours of Sebring, all the teams have

had their two full-time guys and this throws another variable into the mix with the third driver. All the teams have to deal with it, so it's just can you get a guy who comes in and transitions smoothly and contributes positively? We're fortunate to have all that with Rob. We're in really good shape there, but it definitely creates a new variable."

Dominik Farnbacher, driver, No. 93 Dodge Viper SRT GTS-R

What are your thoughts heading to Atlanta?

"Now we can win the championship on the driver's side, the team side and for the manufacturer. We're going to be all in for the last race."

Do you enjoy racing at Road Atlanta?

"For me personally, I've always felt very comfortable at Road Atlanta. It's always been one of my favorite tracks in the U.S. The main goal for the race is to always keep the car in one piece and that's what kept us from being in a good position in Daytona and Sebring this year and last year at Petit. In each race, we had one of the fastest cars out there. I think it's about time we get a little bit more luck and the Viper wins one of those long endurance races. The car really shows how strong it is, how competitive it is and how reliable it is every race and our guys deserve to win one of the big races."

Rob Bell, driver, No. 93 Dodge Viper SRT GTS-R

Is there added pressure rejoining a championship-contending team?

"The pressure always builds towards the end of the season, but, yes, there will be more pressure in this case. Jonathan, Kuno (moved to 91) and all the guys on the 93 team are on a great run, but our mindset won't change. We will work as a team and do our best for each other. As ever it will be tough – we are racing some of the best opposition in the world – but we will be up for the challenge."

Is it difficult to jump in an unfamiliar vehicle?

"It will take a bit of time to get familiar with the Viper again, but the guys have always been great with me, helping me get up to speed, comfortable and confident in the car. It's a pretty packed schedule. First, Jonathan and Kuno (moved to 91) will make sure they are happy with the car setup and then I will have time to get my laps in. Sometimes it's the small things that take time to get right, things like remembering which buttons, switches and knobs do what. The problem can be that similar buttons may be placed in different places in the other cars I've been driving all year. So in addition to getting time in the car on track, I will spend some time just sitting in the car in the paddock as well."

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

How will you and your teammates approach Road Atlanta?

"We obviously need to repeat what we did in Texas. The 93 team for sure can win the championship. Right now, we need to make sure that happens and also that we win the manufacturer's title. It's going to be a long race, but anything is possible. The strategy has to be the same as every race – try to get a double podium."

What makes Ryan Hunter-Reay a good teammate?

"I think Ryan has proved many times that he's just a guy that comes in and does the job. We will obviously make sure he gets enough track time to get away from his IndyCar style of driving and gets dialed in on how to drive a GT car again. We know he's very good at it. I don't see any problems there. With the No. 93 car and Rob Bell joining again, the guy just has so much experience in GT racing that it's a no brainer for him too."

Kuno Wittmer, driver, No. 91 Dodge Viper SRT GTS-R

How do you approach Petit Le Mans with the points lead?

"We've got the upper hand. They're definitely going to try to chase us down now harder than ever, but I'd rather be leading going into Atlanta than chasing. It's a 10-hour race and we'll show up with a good car, a good team and we've shown that we're pretty good in endurance events if you look at Daytona, Sebring and Watkins Glen."

What is your mindset competing for the championships in Atlanta?

"It's one of those things where you want to win Petit – it's a big race – but you also have the championships at stake. All the championships come down to that race, but you still want to win Petit clean without a scratch on the car. But you have to step back a little bit, be smart, work with your team and everybody has to be on the same page. This year, we've had success because everybody is on the same page and everybody has the same goal. Everybody is cool as a cucumber right now attacking the race weekend."

Ryan Hunter-Reay, driver, No. 91 Dodge Viper SRT GTS-R

How does it feel to rejoin the Viper lineup?

"I can't wait to get back in the Viper. I've really enjoyed working with the SRT team this season and after coming so close to victory at Daytona, I just hope we can put together another strong weekend. The SRT Viper team is coming off their most successful weekend to date with a clean sweep at COTA and now the championship is on the line. I'm focused on doing my part, which is running strong and consistent throughout the race weekend."

What is it like getting familiar with the Viper again?

"There is a massive difference between the Viper and my IndyCar. However, I've become accustomed to jumping in and out of different race cars over the years so that will cut down on the re-acclimation time. The two cars demand entirely different driving styles. I really enjoy figuring out how to adjust my driving in order to extract the full capabilities of any type of race car. The good thing is I'm good friends with all my teammates so I can lean on them for any advice if needed as well."

Gary Johnson, SRT racing manager

Why did you decide to make the driver swap?

"What we've decided to do is switch the drivers in the Vipers to maximize our championship opportunities. We're going to have Kuno Wittmer move to the No. 91 Viper and Dominik Farnbacher in the No. 93. This will improve our chances to win the driver's title. If the No. 93 car ended up being taken out by another team, this would allow the No. 91 driver – in this case, Kuno – to win the championship or vice versa should the 91 have an issue it then gives Jonathan Bomarito the chance to win the championship."

Was this a foreseeable decision?

"I think it's a smart decision. It doubles our chances to win the championship. If we didn't do that and the No. 93 Viper was taken out of the race, we would look foolish for having not split up the drivers. This puts us in a better position to win the driver's championship, in addition to fighting for the team and manufacturer titles."

SRT Motorsports Team Lineup for Road Atlanta

No. 91 Dodge Viper SRT GTS-R

Driver: Marc Goossens (Belgium)

Driver: Kuno Wittmer (Canada)

Driver: Ryan Hunter-Reay (United States)

Lead Engineer: Bill Riley

No. 93 Dodge Viper SRT GTS-R

Driver: Jonathan Bomarito (United States)

Driver: Dominik Farnbacher (Germany)

Driver: Rob Bell (United Kingdom)

Lead Engineer: Matt Bejnarowicz

Race Information

Name: Petit Le Mans at Road Atlanta (race 11 of 11 for GTLM)

Date: Oct. 4, 2014

Time: 11:15 a.m. EDT for 10 hours

Track: Road Atlanta in Braselton, Georgia, 2.54-miles, 12 turns

TV Broadcast: FOX Sports 2 at 3:00 p.m. EDT

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