Contact: Matthew Simmons
Adam Saal
Bill Klingbeil

SRT Motorsports - Weekend Preview - June 7

New Track Surface, New Distance Adds Speed and Drama to Pocono
Travis Pastrana, Dodge Dart in Texas for GRC Event

June 6, 2012, Auburn Hills, Mich. - Pocono Raceway welcomes the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series this weekend with a new racing surface and shorter race distance adding to the drama at one of the most historic and scenic tracks on the schedule.

Pocono Raceway is certainly unique. Its three-turn design includes the longest frontstretch of any track in NASCAR, producing speeds in excess of 200 mph heading a relatively flat Turn 1. All three turns are different, causing headaches for crew chiefs and engineers who must find the right balance for their 3,500 lb. stock cars.

Additionally, for the first time in the track's history, the race is scheduled for 400 miles, down from 500. That adds a new wrinkle in fuel and pit strategy.

Thirty-six NASCAR Sprint Cup Series drivers tested the freshly repaved track surface at Pocono on Wednesday in preparation for this weekend's 400. Thirty-three of them eclipsed the best practice speed from last August's event at the 2.5-mile facility. Testing at Pocono concludes today with a morning and afternoon session.

"Engineers that like fast tracks are going to love Pocono," said SRT Motorsports engineer Howard Comstock. "The complete repave of the facility since last summer is going to lead to incredible speeds on the two-and-a-half-mile, three-turn triangle. With the longest straightaways in Sprint Cup racing, Pocono has always been relatively fast.

"Now, with plenty of grip in the flat corners, speeds are expected to go up exponentially. But with the added speed comes added stress on driveline parts, especially the engine. Engineers that like fast tracks are going to get everything they want and maybe more."

Dodge has seven wins at Pocono Raceway including a trip to victory lane last August when Brad Keselowski claimed the win just days after fracturing his left ankle in a test session at Road Atlanta.

Brad Keselowski (No. 2 Miller Lite Dodge Charger R/T) looks to rebound from last week's sluggish performance at Dover. The hard-charging Dodge driver is currently 11th in the Sprint Cup driver standings, five points shy of the top 10.

Hot on his trail are Carl Edwards (10 points behind), Ryan Newman (34 points behind, one win) and Kasey Kahne (35 points behind, one win).

Keselowski will log more than the race's 160 scheduled laps with the special two-day test session, normal practice and qualifying.

"Our Miller Lite Dodge has had success on the old Pocono surface," Keselowski said. "I'm going to kind of miss the style of racing that Pocono brought to the drivers. I understand the changes are necessary. We have some tire test data from the Goodyear test that A.J. participated in at Pocono. The rest is up to us to figure the new place out."

A.J. Allmendinger (No. 22 Shell/Pennzoil Dodge Charger R/T) represented Dodge at the Goodyear tire test at "The Tricky Triangle" earlier this year and his track time paid off. Allmendinger put down a blistering lap (51.420 sec., 175.029 mph) during yesterday's practice session, trailing only the veteran Mark Martin atop the charts.

“The new racing surface is as smooth as glass; they did a great job in repaving the track,” said Allmendinger about the Goodyear tire test. “What’s so cool is that they kept the distinctive character of the track, but were able to eliminate all the bumps. The speeds are certain to rise and it’ll be really interesting to see how it will race when we get all the cars out there and get after it.”

What You Need To Know:
The Races: FedEx 400 (Race 14 of 36)
The Place: Pocono 400
The Date: Sunday, June 10
The Time: 1:00 p.m. (ET)
The Track: 2.5-mile triangular track
The Distance: 160 laps/400 miles
TV: TNT, 12:30 p.m. (ET)
Radio: MRN, Sirius XM Ch. 90

NASCAR CAMPING WORLD TRUCK SERIES
Parker Kligerman (No. 29 Reese Power RAM) leads RAM into Friday night’s WinStar Casino 400 at Texas Motor Speedway. Kligerman’s consistency behind the wheel of the No. 29 RAM has paid off. He is fifth in NCWTS driver standings, 22 points behind the series leader. Kligerman’s runner-up last week matched his finish in last year’s spring race at Texas Motor Speedway.

“The guys at the Penske Racing motor shop were able to find us some engine improvements over the last couple of months,” said Kligerman. “Hopefully, that’ll help our performance. We’re coming off a great momentum builder at Dover, getting that breakthrough run that we’ve been looking for all year. Texas is one of my favorite tracks and the June race is one of my favorite mile-and-a-half races. It’s fast, it’s got a ton of banking and it’s a place that really rewards a driver that can take care of equipment and take care of the tires over a long run. ”

GLOBAL RALLYCROSS SERIES
Travis Pastrana looks to rebound from his ninth-place finish at the inaugural GRC event last month at Charlotte as the series heads to Texas Motor Speedway for the Saturday- afternoon event. Pastrana has confidence in his Dodge Dart on the seven-turn course that will utilize the permanent tri-oval, pit lane and support roads. The course will include two jumps – table top and gap – as well as a car wash, chicane and short cut section.

A second Dodge Dart from Pastrana 199 Racing will compete in this weekend’s event at TMS. Filipe Albuquerque has been named driver of the second Dodge Dart.

"The Dodge Dart was remarkably fast right out of the box and I was really impressed with how well it handled,” said Pastrana. “I know I can win in this car. We just need to avoid the bad luck we had in Charlotte and we'll be on the box!

“Joel (Christoffersson, crew chief) was really pleased with how every change he made seemed to make the car better. It's a new car that has no processor so Joel has to learn how and what adjustments he can make. So far, he's doing an outstanding job!"

NASCAR NATIONWIDE SERIES
The NASCAR Nationwide Series takes a breather this weekend and a necessary one perhaps as a daunting 16-week run begins next weekend at Michigan International Speedway.

Dodge Weekend Motorsports on TV
(All Times Eastern)
Friday, June 8
12:30 p.m. – Sprint Cup Practice at Pocono (SPEED)
3:30 p.m. – Sprint Cup Final Practice (SPEED)
8:30 p.m. – NCWTS Set-up at Texas (SPEED)
9:00 p.m. – NCWTS “WinStar World Casino 400” (SPEED)

Saturday, June 9

11:00 a.m. – Sprint Cup Qualifying (SPEED)
3:00 p.m. – Global Rallycross Series “Hoon KaboomTX” (ESPN2)

Sunday, June 10
10:00 a.m. – NASCAR RaceDay (SPEED)
12:00 p.m. – NASCAR Countdown to Green (TNT)
1:00 p.m. – Sprint Cup “Pocono 400” (TNT)
1:00 a.m. – Global Rallycross Series (tape-delayed) (ESPN2)

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