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SRT Motorsports Pre-Race Report - Lone Star Le Mans at Circuit of The Americas

September 15, 2014, Austin, Texas - SRT (Street and Racing Technology) Motorsports returns to Circuit of The Americas (COTA) with championship implications on the line during the penultimate round of the 2014 IMSA TUDOR United SportsCar Championship, the Lone Star Le Mans race weekend, Sept. 18-20.

Having finished ahead of the GTLM class leader in each of the last three races, the No. 93 Dodge Viper SRT GTS-R, with Jonathan Bomarito and Kuno Wittmer, comes to Texas second in the championship and just six points out of first with two events remaining. Dominik Farnbacher and Marc Goossens are tied for third in the No. 91 Viper GTS-R and sit 20 points behind the leader.

The championship battle now turns to COTA, a track where both Vipers showed speed in 2013 – and where Bomarito and Wittmer finished second – in their first visit to the Texas track.

After struggling with the combination of setup and tire compound during Wittmer's opening stint at COTA last year, Bomarito climbed into the No. 93 Viper for the final leg of the race as pit changes made the car come to life. In the final stint, Bomarito nearly overcame a 20-second margin and raced to as high as second, but he was unable to catch the leader before the race ended.

The No. 91 Viper with Farnbacher and Goossens finished fifth at COTA in 2013.

The Lone Star Le Mans, the 10th-of-11 events for the GTLM class on the 2014 IMSA TUDOR Championship schedule, will take place at 11:35 a.m. CDT at Circuit of The Americas on Saturday, Sept. 20. The race will be broadcast live at 12:30 a.m. EDT on FOX Sports 2.

SRT Motorsports Storylines for Circuit of The Americas

VIRGINIA FINISH: The Dodge Viper SRT GTS-Rs finished fifth (No. 93) and sixth (91) in the most-recent IMSA TUDOR Championship race at Virginia International Raceway (VIR) in August. By finishing ahead of the GTLM points leader at VIR, the No. 93 Viper is now just six points back in the standings. In an event that featured just the GTLM and GTD classes, both Farnbacher (29 laps) and Goossens (22) led race laps at VIR.

COTA COMEBACK: In the 2013 race at COTA, the No. 93 Viper and Bomarito made a mad dash to catch the race leaders and finish second. Bomarito overcame a near 20-second deficit during his run to move up to second. At the time, the second-place result in Texas was the No. 93 Viper team's best finish.

STRIKING DISTANCE: With just two races remaining in the 2014 IMSA TUDOR Championship, the Viper teams rank second (No. 93) and tied for third (No. 91) in the GTLM team and driver championship point standings with 264 and 250 points, respectively. Bomarito and Wittmer are second in the driver standings with 264 points and sit just six points out of first, while Farnbacher and Goossens are tied for third with 250 points. After nine-of-11 races for the GTLM class, SRT is third in the manufacturer standings with 273 points, just three markers behind first.

ANOTHER STREAK: With their fifth-place showing at VIR, the No. 93 Viper team recorded its fifth-consecutive top-five finish, the longest such streak in the team's history. However, Bomarito and Wittmer finished two positions shy of their fifth-straight podium result, ending a four-podium streak that was also the longest in SRT Motorsports' three seasons of competition. The run of top threes included two dual-podium finishes (New York's Watkins Glen and Canadian Tire Motorsports Park).

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 one win, one pole position and six 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. The team will continue to utilize the classic livery throughout the 2014 season.

SRT Motorsports Quotes for Circuit of The Americas

Dominik Farnbacher,driver, No. 91 Dodge Viper SRT GTS-R
How was last year's race in Texas?
"The 93 did well with its first podium there and the Viper felt good on the track. The track is really nice and it's a proper Formula 1 track. Everything is very wide and it's safe. With all the colorful curbs, it really looks like the Paul Ricard circuit in France. It's a cool race track and it has everything – fast corners and it's really technical. You have to find the combination between the slow corners and fast corners, a good setup and you have to have speed for the long straightaway. I'm really looking forward to it. It's important for us to finish towards the top in every race now."

Marc Goossens,driver, No. 91 Dodge Viper SRT GTS-R
Do you enjoy racing at COTA?
"We struggled a bit last year at COTA, I think it can be a good track for us, but we'll need to make the car perform better this year. The 93 car was very strong there, which Jonathan proved at the end of the race trying to catch the leader. It's a great infrastructure and a big event last year, I'm looking forward to going back there."

Jonathan Bomarito, driver, No. 93 Dodge Viper SRT GTS-R
What do you think of last year's race at COTA?
"COTA was good and was a really exciting race. We came on strong at the end of the race, ending up second. That was our best finish up to that point. I think if I would have had another lap or two, we would have had something for the win there, but it was a good result. We like the track and it suited our Vipers and we had a good setup. Hopefully we can go back and make some more progress."

How important are tires at COTA?
"Huge. Anywhere you go; tire wear and the compound play a big role and it was a hot weekend. There are so many corners there, so you're abusing the tires pretty hard. The right tire choice and good tires at the end of a stint is crucial. I think that race was green the whole time, so we had no chance to cool tires down and save them. It was flat out and we saw some tires going away on some cars more than others. Fortunately, the engineers on the 93 Viper made some changes before my last stint and we were really good at the end."

What makes COTA challenging?
"I think not losing a lot of time in traffic is very challenging; turn three through 10 are a bunch of switchbacks. It's very fast and you get to the corners really quick in between, so you don't have a lot of time or opportunity to pass slower traffic. If you catch a car exit of turn two and you can't pass them, you can lose three or four seconds before you have an opportunity to pass that car again. Traffic can play a huge role at COTA and that's an area where we made up time last year. When you're leading the race, you can't afford to take some of those risks and for us we we're just catching up and doing everything we could and you can take bigger risks. That is a track where you can make up or lose a lot of time."

Kuno Wittmer,driver, No. 93 Dodge Viper SRT GTS-R
How was last year's race at COTA?
"Last year, I think we could have won. It was a short race and the same as this year – two hours and 45 minutes – and last year the team did a really good job preparing for an event that no one knew how it would turn out. There was a lot of pressure for that event. It's the event before Petit Le Mans, so you don't want to put the car at risk with Petit being a 10-hour race. The cars have to be ready. Last year once I handed the car over to Jonathan; it was just a matter of tire choices. I remember last year, the track temperature just skyrocketed and we had to change tires – different compounds – and that might happen again this year. It's a hot one down there in Austin. This year, we're winding down the season. We're in a better position with the championship. The priority is the championship versus a win there."

Is tire choice critical at COTA?
"Tire choice is a large factor. All the corners there are really, really high-speed. There's a lot of tire deterioration and you have to plan for a hot race. You have to plan your specific rubber you want for that race. If it were a six-hour race, it would be pretty darn difficult. As a driver, it's also a very physical track, but it's also one of the nicest tracks on the calendar. It's great to drive, the paving is beautiful, the run-off area is safe and the corners are very challenging. If you mess up in corner three or four, you're not going to have the speed coming out of six because everything is tied together. I think it's very technical compared to some of the other tracks."

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 at Circuit of The Americas (race 10 of 11 for GTLM)
Date: Sept. 20, 2014
Time: 11:35 a.m. CDT for two hours and 45 minutes
Track: Circuit of The Americas in Austin, Texas, 3.427-miles, 20 turns
TV Broadcast: FOX Sports 2 at 12:30 a.m. EDT

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