

## **'The Duel in the Desert' – Inaugural 'Dodge Viper Celebrity Challenge' – Premieres on Versus at 3 p.m. (EDT) Sunday, Oct. 9**

- Celebrity race features talented collection of drivers from across the spectrum of Dodge Motorsports' disciplines competing in identical Dodge Viper ACR-X spec cars
- Event at Utah's Miller Motorsports Park raises \$18,000 for various charities
- One-hour special race broadcast kicks off 11 straight weeks of 2011 Dodge Viper Cup series action on Versus

October 5, 2011, Auburn Hills, Mich. - Dodge Motorsports is offering race fans an exciting change of pace during the prime Sunday mid-afternoon viewing slot.

Airing at 3 pm (EDT) Sunday, Oct. 9, on Versus is the first-ever "Dodge Viper Celebrity Challenge." The unique one-race event was held April 13 at Miller Motorsports Park in Tooele, Utah, and featured an impressive lineup of competitors from numerous forms of racing – all united under the Dodge Motorsports and Mopar® banners.

Leading the list of participating drivers was automotive legend and Penske Racing team owner Roger Penske, making a rare appearance behind the wheel. Penske hasn't driven competitively since the mid-1960s following his being named the Sports Car Club of America Driver of the Year by Sports Illustrated. Joining their team owner in the "Dodge Viper Celebrity Challenge" were Penske Racing and NASCAR superstars Kurt Busch, Brad Keselowski and Sam Hornish Jr.

Also participating were Robbie Gordon, driver and team owner of Speed Energy Racing; NHRA pro stock driver Allen Johnson; Hart and Huntington Racing team owner Carey Hart and his AMA Supercross rider Ivan Tedesco; Formula Drifter and TORC driver Samuel Hubinette; Viper factory driver Kuno Wittmer; Viper road-course racing driver/instructor Cindi Lux; monster truck pilot Mark Hall; and ARCA Series racer Maryeve Dufault.

Filling out the racing field were event host Ralph Gilles, President and CEO – SRT® and Motorsports, Chrysler Group LLC; Dodge Motorsports engineer Matt Bejnarowicz and Viper Cup series drivers Connie Bogan, Jeff Courtney, Jason Daskalos, Eric Galerne, Brad Gorrondona, Billy Gropp, Ted Hughes, Todd Nelson and Fred Roberts.

"This was truly a once in-a-lifetime collaboration for us at Dodge Motorsports and Mopar," Gilles said. "Seeing the diverse driving talent on the track was incredible and showed the passion and dedication our group of drivers has for the Chrysler Group and our various racing efforts."

The 24 participants for the "Dodge Viper Celebrity Challenge" were divided into 12 two-person teams. Single qualifying lap times by each of the two drivers were averaged together to determine the order for the standing start.

Teams then plotted their best driver rotation for the 50-minute timed race.

Once the green flag waved, the on-track competition was intense as 12 identically prepared, 640-horsepower Dodge Viper ACR-X spec cars began to speed around the 2.24-mile Miller Motorsports Park layout.

Halfway through the 50-minute race, each team conducted a mandatory timed pit stop and driver change.

"I can't say enough about the generosity and mutual respect shown by each and every participant in the 'Dodge Viper Celebrity Challenge,' Gilles added. "I'm proud to share the same common thread of being racers at heart that can take the time out to not only come together and compete on the same stage, but also raise money for worthy charity causes."

The following charitable donations were made by the top-three finishing teams:

- Haiti Rescue Effort – \$5,000
- National Breast Cancer Coalition – \$5,000
- Shriners Hospital – \$3,000
- Tarrant Area Foodbank, Fort Worth, Texas – \$3,000
- Children’s Rare Disease Network – \$1,000
- National Breast Cancer Foundation – \$1,000

The airing of the “Dodge Viper Celebrity Challenge” on Oct. 9 kicks off 11 straight weeks (through Dec. 18) of Dodge Viper Cup series coverage on Versus. All broadcasts begin on the subsequent Sundays at 3 p.m. Eastern.

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