

Contact: Matthew Simmons

Adam Saal

Bill Klingbeil

SRT Motorsports - 24 Hours of Le Mans - Tommy Kendall Diary - Entry 2

June 21, 2013, LE MANS, France - Tommy Kendall will pilot the No. 93 SRT Viper GTS-R this weekend in the 24 Hour of Le Mans. He is teamed with Kuno Wittmer and Jonathan Bomarito and will be making his second start in the event.

This is the second of a four-part series as Kendall gives a behind-the-scenes look at Le Mans through the driver's eyes.

The schedule here is so unique. The first on-track activity Thursday was at 7 p.m. – 7-9 and 10-12. That left a lot of free time during the day. I got up early Thursday morning, earlier than normal but I wanted to get to physio (physiotherapy). We have a masseuse and a holistic physio (physiotherapist) here. He did some measurements and testing and identified some issues pretty common with the changing of food. Luke (masseuse) gave me a deep tissue massage. I call him Edward Scissorhands because it feels like he's got knives on the ends of his fingers. It was the most painful thing that you would ever do voluntarily but it helped. That's how I started my day Thursday.

We had some running around to do before practice Thursday, different PR appearances and so forth. Some of the things are obligations but showing up at the unveiling of the new (Viper) GT3-R was a delight. We were as excited to get a look at it as the media covering the event. It's cool to see the Viper GTS-R cars evolve. (The GT3-R is the latest generation of the Viper GTS-R, designed and developed by Chrysler Group's SRT – Street and Racing Technology – Motorsports team). It shows how serious they are about this and it's central to what they're doing going forward. You can't fake things on the race track.

I actually came to Le Mans in a Viper in 2006. We were filming a test drive near the Eiffel Tower. We had a permit but it wasn't exactly for what we were doing. My producers told everyone, 'Hey, let's get setup but don't make it obvious what we're doing until right before we do it.' Just as we were getting ready to shoot the scene, these two French policemen wandered up. We couldn't hide the stuff. We froze. They were so excited to see a Viper, not only did they not bust us but my producer, who has a way with this stuff, convinced them to sort of hold traffic and let us do a big, drift, doughnut circle right under the Eiffel Tower (laughs). As I was doing it, I'm saying 'We have no permit, we have no permit.' My point is the French loves this car and that was the predecessor. In a short time, the Viper has become a really iconic car, not just in America but especially in Europe because of its success at Le Mans. It's cool to come back with the GTS-R and see the GT3-R unveiled.

We've had a lot of challenges this week at Le Mans but, so far, nothing as difficult as sitting in front of a box of Belgian chocolates that (teammate) Marc Goossens brought and not dive in.

The weather has been an issue all week. Rain ate into our track time on Wednesday and again on Thursday. With the track time that we did get, we probably have as many new questions as we have answers. That's one of those things you've kind of got to go with the flow. For the teams that have run here a lot, it's difficult to quantify the advantage. In our situation where we're here for the first time in several years, we have to go on hunches and some of that stuff. They've got a bigger book to pull from. The weather has made it a little bit of a challenge for us.

The theme of the week seems to be interrupted practice sessions. It isn't the weather, it was cars going off the track. I think it was a case of teams pressing harder to accomplish what they need to get done. I've never seen so many cars off the track, one after another. Those delays make it difficult to get a rhythm but more important for us, evaluate two different directions with the car. I'm not sure we have a clear-cut decision but that's the nature of it. We'll put our heads together and come up with a direction and go for it.

Practice is complete. We've had no issues whatsoever with the cars, drivers. Everyone is doing a good job. The excitement builds. Now, it's do the final preps and get after it – race.

NOTE: The race starts Saturday at 9 a.m. (EDT) with SPEED providing live coverage of the 24-hour event with only brief interruptions for other motorsport updates.

-- 30 --

-###-

Additional information and news from Stellantis are available at: <https://media.stellantisnorthamerica.com>