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SRT Motorsports Post-Race Report - Oak Tree Grand Prix at Virginia International Raceway

August 24, 2014, Alton, Va. - SRT (Street and Racing Technology) Motorsports closed critical ground in the IMSA TUDOR United Sports Car GTLM championship by finishing ahead of the series points leader in fifth and sixth place with the team's Dodge Viper SRT GTS-Rs in the Oak Tree Grand Prix at Virginia International Raceway (VIR) on Sunday.

Jonathan Bomarito and Kuno Wittmer overcame a penalty and off-course run through the VIR grass for a fifth-place finish in the No. 93 Viper. Marc Goossens and Dominik Farnbacher each led in the first half of the race and eventually crossed the finish line one spot behind their teammates in sixth place in the No. 91 Viper.

The fifth-place run for the No. 93 – its fifth-consecutive top-five finish this summer – moved both the team and its drivers to within six points of the GTLM class championship leader, which finished seventh on Sunday. Bomarito, Wittmer and the No. 93 team came into the race in second place in the championship eight points back but erased 25 percent of the gap with just two races remaining this season.

The finish was particularly rewarding considering the No. 93 served a drive-through penalty after a questionable call for avoidable contact with a slower GTD-class entry during Wittmer's opening shift. Bomarito later skirted disaster early in his stint when he wheel-hopped off a curb and nose-dived through the grass. Quick work by the SRT Motorsports crew, and a timely caution period shortly thereafter, kept the No. 93 in the race and the championship hunt.

Bomarito passed Goossens for fifth in the race's final hour and the No. 91 served as the No. 93's wingman to the finish. The track position of the Vipers was particularly key in a late-race restart with just six minutes remaining that saw both Goossens and Bomarito stay ahead of any late challenges by the series points leader, who finished seventh.

Farnbacher charged from third to first on the race's opening lap and joined teammate Goossens in leading a race-high 50 laps in the No. 91 Viper. However, the team mistimed a call to the pits during a full-course caution period, which dropped the No. 91 from the top spot. Despite the incident, the teammates continued to race in the lead pack throughout the race.

SRT Motorsports next competes at Texas' Circuit of the Americas on Saturday, Sept. 20 for the 10th and penultimate event of the 2014 season for the IMSA TUDOR's GTLM class. The race can be seen on FOX Sports 1 at 4:00 p.m. EDT.

The season-ending race will be the Petit Le Mans at Road Atlanta on Saturday, Oct. 4.

SRT Motorsports Driver and Team Quotes

Jonathan Bomarito,driver, No. 93 Dodge Viper SRT GTS-R
How would you describe today's race?
"Wow. That's almost all I can say. Ups and downs for us like crazy. Highs and lows. In the end, I'm counting my blessings that we finished fifth and two spots ahead of the leader. Hat's off to the guys. The only reason that happened is because of the team's strategy and their good pit stops. From the driver's standpoint, we had a rough day – both Kuno and myself – but we made it through. We're really looking forward to Circuit of the Americas and Road Atlanta. Those are two great tracks for us. We're already thinking about that."

What's your mindset moving forward?
"Same as this race – we have to beat the leader no matter what. That's the goal and hopefully we can do that and finish higher up on the podium next time."

Why did the car lift and fly through the esses?
"I didn't do anything too much different than any laps before. Perhaps it had to do with following Marc with less aero on the front. I've been using that curb all weekend and the car just flew and I was just along for the ride. Luckily, it was still fairly straight and not missing too many parts after. We have strong Vipers."

Kuno Wittmer,driver, No. 93 Dodge Viper SRT GTS-R
What did you think of today's race?
"It was a race that was really up and down. In the beginning of the race, I was able to hold on to third place quite a long time, but the BMWs had more straight-line speed and they were very, very strong in the high-speed corners and I think they're a little bit lighter on weight. Given that the Viper is well surrounded by a great team, I think it's really hat's off to them. With the strong pit stops we're doing and the really good setups we're putting on the cars and with the engineering and just smart driving, it's patience and that's how we're going to win this thing in the end. We just gained another two points on first place. It wasn't a big gain, but it's a gain and I think that the leaders are feeling the heat even more than before and that's what we want."

What resulted in the penalty?
"I think it was just a racing incident. The contact between the other car and myself was simple as you can see in the video. I think the stewards agreed and they gave us a minor penalty versus a full penalty. I think it's respectable by both parties. What happened was that the 55 car initiated a pass on the Audi and I followed him and he turned down on me as we were side-by-side. He was offline and he tried to regain his line, but I was there on my line. It was just a racing incident and we touched a little bit and there was no damage to our car."

How were you able to overcome the two incidents?
"I think it was just one of these races where – VIR and the third-to-last round is always going to be important for the championship and something is going to happen. Something is going to go wrong or something will go good, but I think we came out smack in the middle. I think it could have gone a lot worse, but given our team's talent and our ability to make really smart strategy decisions and to work together with the 91 Viper, I think we came out on top over the leader which was the plan."

Marc Goossens,driver, No. 91 Dodge Viper SRT GTS-R
How was your race?
"I think we had a pretty good car. I'd like to say how proud I am of my teammate. What Dominik did in the beginning there was awesome. I never expected us to lead after the first lap and he did and he had a very consistent speed to maintain the gap up front. That was perfect and the pit stop was okay. For myself, I had a little bit of a hard time getting into a rhythm when the tires were cold when I first started and on the restarts. I felt under control there up front and I didn't think anybody was strong enough to get by me, but then unfortunately with strategy, the team called me when I was already past the pit entrance and I couldn't make it in. That's where we kind of lost the race today I think. Obviously, at the end with the way it turned out with all the yellows, we were behind the 93 car and it made sense to not hit each other and do anything risky. I just followed Jonathan around knowing that he needs the points for the championship and I could split him and the leader. It's all about teamwork and I think the 93 car is in pretty good shape for the championship."

Did you think your car could compete for the win?
"It's a shame that I couldn't fight with the BMWs at the end because I think after Jonathan went airborne in the 93, I think his car had some damage. I think I could have gone a little bit faster, but it wasn't worth the risk of overtaking Jonathan and taking away points from him or maybe collide. We tried to do the best we could for SRT Motorsports and it was valuable points in the championship for the 93 Viper. We have two races to go, so we'll see what we can do."

Dominik Farnbacher,driver, No. 91 Dodge Viper SRT GTS-R
How strong was your Viper to start the race?
"The Viper was fantastic today. It was really good straight out of the box. I could dominate the race from the

beginning to get by the BMW in the first corner, and at the esses I forced the 62 car into a mistake and he went off without touching and from that point on I was leading. I was very comfortable with the car and I told Bill Riley and the guys it was an outstanding setup and the car was very neutral, very nice to drive and I was very happy with it. It was very consistent. After one hour, I came to pit and I thought we might be in a very good spot for a victory or even a podium. My teammate did a great job and Bill did a great job, but luck was not with us. There were yellows there that shouldn't have been there and sometimes that's good and sometimes that's bad. We only finished sixth without any problems and incidents, so to finish so far back is a bit frustrating, but it's good because we're making up ground on the leader in the championship. "

Matt Bejnarowicz, lead engineer, No. 93 Dodge Viper SRT GTS-R

How was the race from the pit box?

"That was roller coaster race for us. We finished two positions ahead of the points leader and that's valuable. It wasn't the race we wanted – for sure. We just didn't have the pace of the guys in front of us, but we stayed consistent. We had our own problems – we had a penalty and we went off – so just for the drivers and crew to battle back from that and play the right strategy, I think that was pretty big. We were able to come back and pass a lot of cars. Our final pit strategy to take two tires and fuel to save the time, which earned us two more spots. I think we did the best we could with the issues we had on track. At the end of the day, we're racing for the championship and that's two more valuable points."

Is the strategy moving forward to finish ahead of the points leader?

"No, I wouldn't say that. We're always going to run as fast as we can and try to win races. At this race, we just didn't have the pace of the leaders. I guess in those situations, you look at what you can do and then figure out what's most important. We are going for a championship. We want to win every race, but we have to do what's more important for the championship. You kind of assess how well you can do and then make the best of that. The best we could do today was the fifth position and to stay as far ahead of the yellow car as we could."

Bill Riley, lead engineer, No. 91 Dodge Viper SRT GTS-R

How important was teamwork today?

"Going in to these last races, and when the points get tight, that's what you have to do. You have to work together and try to win the championship. That's what we did today. It obviously wasn't the prettiest of races we've had, but at least we closed the gap from eight to six with two more races to go. If we keep doing that again, we'll be okay."

Beth Paretta, SRT Motorsports marketing director

What is the team's strategy moving forward?

"With two races left to go in the championship, it's all about points at this time. Consistency is key as is staying clean, which we did. We really just had trouble betting on when a yellow would happen and we bet wrong. At the end of the race, I'm happy that we finished ahead of the leaders and we're going in to Circuit of the Americas in contention and we'll bring everything we can for the final two races."

Gary Johnson, SRT racing manager, SRT Motorsports

How did the team perform today?

"It was a pretty solid finish for the team. We had a penalty that hurt us with the 93 car and a pretty scary moment there too, but we made up some points on the yellow car in the end. We'll have to go back and try to get some more speed out of the cars. Hopefully, we'll be up front at COTA (Circuit of the Americas). I think we were struggling a little bit maybe with pace. We just didn't have the fuel economy and the range of some of the other cars and that hurt us a little bit too. We'll go back and find some more speed in the car."

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