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SRT Motorsports Pre-Race Report - Trans Am Series at Virginia International Raceway

September 24, 2014, Alton, Va. - SRT (Street and Racing Technology) Motorsports claimed its first victory in the Trans Am Series at Lime Rock Park last Saturday and now enters Virginia International Raceway (VIR) with momentum for the 10th and penultimate race of the Trans Am Series season on Sunday, Sept. 28.

Cameron Lawrence piloted the No. 1 Dodge Challenger SRT to victory lane at Connecticut's Lime Rock Park, marking the first Trans Am win for SRT Motorsports in the group's third series race after Miller Racing began fielding Challengers in the TA2 class in August.

Lawrence and teammate Tommy Kendall, who returns to the No. 11 Dodge Challenger SRT after a one-race absence, compete at VIR on Sunday in an effort to start the Challenger's first Trans Am winning streak and add to Lawrence's TA2 points lead.

The 22-year-old driver has won six-of-nine events in 2014 to hold a 19-point advantage over the second-ranked driver, Adam Andretti, with 262 points to 243. Lawrence, who captured the 2013 TA2 class title, won at VIR last year after starting from the pole and leading the most laps in the class.

The Trans Am field will race on an altered Virginia circuit following upgrades to the facility since the 2013 event at VIR, but Lawrence recently raced on the improved layout. The Florida native finished 13th in the Continental Tire SportsCar Challenge race's ST class at VIR in August; giving Lawrence familiarity with the track's changes for the 10th round of the Trans Am schedule.

Since entering the Trans Am competition in August, SRT Motorsports' results have improved in each event. Prior to winning in Connecticut, the Challenger race cars finished 10th (Lawrence) and 19th (Kendall) in their debut at the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course and placed second (Kendall) and fifth (Lawrence) at Minnesota's Brainerd International Raceway.

In addition to Lawrence's win at Lime Rock, road racing veteran Tommy Archer finished second in the No. 11 Dodge Challenger SRT at Lime Rock, the second-consecutive runner-up result for the No. 11 entry. The longtime Dodge driver made a spot start at Lime Rock for Kendall, who missed the race due to obligations as a motorsports television analyst.

With the Lime Rock triumph, Lawrence has now won 14-of-19 Trans Am races over the last two seasons.

The one-two finish at Lime Rock contributed to a perfect weekend for SRT Motorsports across two races and three classes of competition. The team's Dodge Viper SRT GTS-Rs finished first and second in the GTLM class of the IMSA TUDOR United SportsCar Championship's race at Texas' Circuit of The Americas, while the Dodge Viper SRT GT3-R was victorious in the GTD class in the same event.

With the finish, the No. 93 Viper now ranks first in the IMSA TUDOR Championship's GTLM driver and team championship standings and SRT is tied for first in the manufacturer title standings.

The Trans Am partnership between SRT Motorsports and Miller Racing marked the return to Trans Am competition for series legend Kendall, who won four Trans Am championships in the 1990s (1990, 1995-97). SRT's debut at Mid-Ohio was Kendall's first series start since 2004. The California native ranks third in series history with 28 Trans Am victories.

The 10th round of the 2014 Trans Am schedule will take place on Sunday, Sept. 28 at 12:45 p.m. EDT at Virginia International Raceway for a scheduled 31 laps (101.37 miles) or 75 minutes.

SRT Driver and Team Quotes for VIR

Cameron Lawrence, driver, No. 1 Dodge Challenger SRT, Miller Racing

How will you approach VIR with a 19-point lead?

"Just as we did this last one – we want to win. We're still trying to figure out a lot of stuff with this car and how to make it go faster, but we want to go out and win. We just have to stay around Adam (Andretti, second in points) and keep him in check. Hopefully, we'll be faster than him, stay out front and control our own destiny."

What do you remember about your 2013 victory at VIR?

"That was a really good weekend. We had the fastest car by about a second. Everything went really well and it was a lot of work because you have to worry about the curbing and stuff like that at VIR. We had good luck there last year and hopefully we can do it again this year."

Are you familiar with the upgrades to VIR?

"I ran the Continental Tire race there about a month ago now. The whole track is really smooth and they widened some areas, added some curbing and they made the track really nice and actually a lot faster. A lot of guys have been going three of four seconds faster there this year. They paved the paddock area also, so the crews are really happy."

How has the development gone with the Challenger?

"It's gone really well. The Miller guys have been working nonstop every day, every week on the Challenger to get things better and do some testing to figure out what the car needs. We were 10th at Mid-Ohio, fifth at Brainerd and then we won, so I think the car is getting better. It's pretty close to where it needs to be. It's just those last few tenths and getting it consistent enough."

Tommy Kendall,driver, No. 11 Dodge Challenger, Miller Racing

Do you have much experience at VIR?

"Very little, we tested the Dodge Vipers at that track and I also did a Viper Cup race there. It's a beautiful place and it's quickly jumped up the list of my favorite tracks. It's one of the few that are long and fast and in the old tradition. "

How has the Challenger development come along?

"I think we're still early in the learning curve, I'm learning what the car likes. Obviously, we're not far out and that's a tribute to the effort by Mike Miller and Cameron (Lawrence), the Miller Racing team and all the work by the SRT folks helping to smooth that transition. I think we've definitely benefited from some good fortune."

Do you have any expectations for the final two Trans Am events?

"It's too early for expectations. We've obviously had good finishes, but at least for me I don't know that we have everything figured out just yet. Getting on the podium at Brainerd was huge for me. Cameron looks like he's picked up where things left off. For me, it's just getting more consistency and feeling like we're controlling our own destiny rather than a combination of running well and befitting from some good fortune."

Gary Johnson,racing manager, SRT Motorsports

How does the team feel entering VIR?

"Coming off a great one-two finish at Lime Rock, the team is definitely ready and excited to tackle VIR. I think both Cameron and Tommy Kendall will run a great race in Virginia and hopefully we're looking for another finish like we had last week. Obviously, we have great partners and a team that can adapt quickly in Miller Racing and that's part of what has allowed us to have success so quickly."

Mike Miller,team owner, Miller Racing

How do you approach VIR after your first Challenger win?

"We're extremely excited to head to Virginia after last week's win. I thought we had a good setup for Lime Rock and obviously we were in the ballpark. With the finish we had – first and second – we feel like we're getting really close to the setup we need in the cars. There's still some work to do to give the guys the best possible Challengers, but I think Dodge and SRT have done a great job with their help. The guys that have been working with us have been invaluable. We've got ourselves set for a real shootout in Virginia. We know this is going to be a really tough championship competition with Adam Andretti and we understand there's a driver that we all know pretty well, Tony

Buffomante, that's coming over from World Challenge to run one of the Mike Cope cars. We really going to have our work cut out for us. We have Tommy Kendall coming back and feel really good about that. We've done some things that will hopefully improve the car for Tommy. We're not there yet where we feel like we've given Tommy the best possible car, but we're working on it and making progress. It should be a very exciting weekend in Virginia and if you're in the area you ought to come out because it's going to be a shootout."

Race Information

Date: Sunday, Sept. 28
Time: 12:45 p.m. EDT for 31 laps (101.37 miles) or 75 minutes
Track: Virginia International Raceway in Alton, Virginia, 3.27 miles and 17 turns

For more information, go to GoTransAm.com or MillerRacing.org.

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