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SRT Motorsports Daytona Post-Test Notes & Quotes – Jan. 5, 2013

- The SRT Motorsports Viper GTS-R teams participated in eight practice sessions over three days at Florida's Daytona International Speedway from Jan. 3 through Jan. 5.
- The No. 91 SRT Viper GTS-R set its fastest time of 1:46.043 during Friday's second session, while the No. 93 SRT Viper GTS-R recorded a fast time of 1:46.134 in the same practice.
- The No. 91 SRT Viper GTS-R set the quickest GTLM lap in final practice on Sunday (1:46.596) and ranked 15th overall in that session.
- New driver Rob Bell joined the No. 93 and 2012 IndyCar champion Ryan Hunter-Reay rejoined SRT Motorsports in the No. 91, with both drivers quickly acclimating themselves to the SRT Viper GTS-Rs for the Rolex 24 At Daytona.
- The SRT Motorsports entries mark Chrysler Group's return to the Rolex 24 At Daytona since claiming an overall victory in the event in 2000 with the Dodge Viper GTS-R.

Ryan Hunter-Reay, driver, No. 91 SRT Viper GTS-R

How is the car performing in practice?

"I think it's pretty good. The car has been really pleasant to drive – it's been fun. I'm having a great time with this team. I feel like I'm coming home when I'm with SRT and (Bill) Riley (Vice President and Chief Engineer, Riley Technologies). I'm definitely optimistic for the 24, but I'm sure things will change a bit by the time we get here for the race. We're taking one foot in front of the other and I'm pretty happy with the group we have."

Are you excited to work with SRT again?

"It just fits, you know? Bill (Riley) and I always talk. I've raced for him plenty of times, so when it came time to go racing again we naturally picked up dialogue and I've got a great relationship with the folks at SRT and it all made sense. I'm really happy to be here and the race suits look really good to."

What makes this event special?

"I enjoy this event – everything about it. It's the right way to kick off the year. I'm just so glad that both series are here together now. It's really cool to see the ALMS (American Le Mans Series) GT category and the DPs (Daytona Prototypes) out there and the ALMS prototypes out there together – this is how it should have been many years ago."

Dominik Farnbacher, driver, No. 91 SRT Viper GTS-R

How did practice go?

"Pretty good. We're trying to get the pit stop strategy a little bit into order so that all the mechanics and all the drivers get into rhythm for the race. This is very important for our race outcome because it's a team effort and if the pit stop does not go well, we'll not do well in the race. We tried to simulate it a little bit for the race and it looked pretty promising. We finalized a little bit of testing, tried out different setups again and it worked out very well. I think now we can analyze it after the test and see where to go for the race. We know what we have to work on and we'll try to figure that out and come back strong for the race."

How are the new drivers acclimating themselves to the team?

"Perfectly. There's no weak link in the team and it's just brings a whole new momentum into the team when you go to a race and you know you can trust everybody. Whoever sits in the car is quick and whoever sits in the car it performs at its best, so there's no worries, nothing. Rob (Bell) and Ryan (Hunter-Reay) are top-notch drivers. There's nothing to be worried about."

Marc Goossens, driver, No. 91 SRT Viper GTS-R

Has practice gone well?

"It's pretty good. We were here for some private testing before and came back here to continue what we were doing then. We took it to another level and everything seems to be working just fine, no issues. The car is good. Of course, the weather has changed a lot over the three days – we've had very cold, a reasonable day and now today it feels like a real Florida day – so it's good to be able to test and try out tires in different weather conditions to see which tire is working at its optimum. This was a great opportunity to get all the new drivers like Rob (Bell) in the 93 car and Ryan (Hunter-Reay) in our car to give them the mileage to get used to the car. They were right up to the pace of the other guys, as expected. I don't think there are any complaints."

Does your team have championship aspirations?

"I think we do, and even if you look at the driver lineups and look around in the paddock, I think it's one of the strongest ones among all the cars – not just one car, but in both Vipers. We've said it so many times before, Bill Riley is really good at finding the right people and putting them all together and making them gel. If we don't run into trouble – and that's a big question mark on this track with 65 cars – I can't see any reason we can't be on top."

Jonathan Bomarito, driver, No. 93 SRT Viper GTS-R

How was practice?

"Good. Everything has gone according to plan really. Our GTS-Rs, both cars have run flawlessly – lot of laps, logged a lot of miles, lot of data, all the drivers are getting seat time – everything is going well. The crew is working well together. There are a lot of new rules for pit stops so they're starting to adapt to those and practicing. The test has been really productive."

When do you start getting excited for the race?

"I was excited for this race right at the checkered flag of Petit Le Mans last year. It's an awesome race to be a part of. Anytime you're doing a 24 hour race, especially at Daytona, it's a lot of fun. There's just so many elements that you need to have right to have success here and the team is doing a good job putting all those pieces together."

Jonathan Bomarito, driver, No. 93 SRT Viper GTS-R

How significant is it to have this new, combined sports car series?

"When you walk up and down pit lane and you see all the cars and different manufacturers and the fans already here for the Roar, it's very exciting. I think it's something special already and I think everybody that comes out to watch will see that."

Kuno Wittmer, driver, No. 93 SRT Viper GTS-R

How much has this team grown?

"I believe that the road and the journey that this team has started to take is not over yet. It's still a long ways to go and a result like a 24 Hour win is something so glorious, so spectacular. We need to accomplish that and I wouldn't think of anybody else to do it with other than the SRT team under the Viper banner."

What experience do you have at Daytona International Speedway?

"On two occasions I've won here in touring-type cars – so front drive cars, not GT cars – and the only GT car 24 Hours start that I took was in 2013 in the Rolex 24 At Daytona. It didn't go that great, but it was a good experience here at Daytona to see how the weather conditions change throughout the night with having a track so close to the ocean side. It's very, very vital to stay on top of the conditions. I think the car right now in 2014 with the Viper is far superior to what I drove last year, so I feel pretty good."

Rob Bell, driver, No. 93 SRT Viper GTS-R

Have you enjoyed the test with the new team?

"It's been fantastic so far – actually really good to be here. I felt really welcome in the team and it's nice to be a part of the family. I'm getting up to speed with the Viper now and I've done enough running to know that we've got a good base car and I feel pretty at home already."

Why do you enjoy this race?

"Well, it's brilliant for us coming from Europe – it is nice weather in January, which is always cool – and I like this

atmosphere. You're going to have a good crowd here during the race and it's just so competitive. All of that entwined means it's just great for us to be here. We're all here to get the (Rolex) watch because it's quite a cool thing. Just the level of competitiveness – everyone is fighting really, really hard and it puts pressure on us drivers, but if you do a good job it's even better.”

Bill Riley, Vice President and Chief Engineer, Riley Technologies

How was the practice?

“I think they went pretty good. When you end up being the fastest car in the last session that kind of tells you where we are. We checked off a lot of boxes today – stuff that could happen to you during the race when you have a rough race – so I'm glad we got all that stuff checked off. I really don't usually have the opportunity to get that all done before the race weekend and we got all six drivers through the cars and they're all extremely comfortable. I think we're ready.”

What are the next steps before the race?

“We've got a lot of work to do. You're never ready for this race. At this point, it's prep and execute from here on out. Car prep I'm not concerned about. It's more the prep of the spares just because the guys will do a good job on getting the cars done, which they always do. We had no issues again this weekend. It's more prep of the spares to make sure that's all set and then with the rules here make sure we're doing the pit stop choreographed properly and we can get it all sorted out correctly.”

Are you excited to compete in this combined series?

“It's nice to come back and do Daytona and Sebring again. Maybe I was younger and had more energy, but that always seemed magical to do that – to come do both races and the big Florida swing. It's nice to be able to do that again.”

Beth Paretta, Director – SRT Brand and Motorsports Marketing and Operations, Chrysler Group LLC

Are you ready to kick off the 2014 season?

“We're excited about the new series certainly. We think it's going to be better than the sum of its parts so we're expecting some great things ahead. I think it's good for all of us, all the manufacturers. It's nice to see everybody back. It was a very short off-season – there was really none. It was kind of neat to see everybody again and everyone putting their best foot forward.”

How important is this race for SRT?

“This race is a big deal for us. We haven't raced with this team at Daytona. The last time we were here in 2000 we won overall. We certainly have quite a legacy to live up to. In fact, the car that won overall we still have in our collection. It's never been cleaned so it even has all of its race patina on it, so we're reminded of it all of the time. We know that the Viper, in particular, has quite a legacy. That is not lost on any of us.”

Up next for the SRT Motorsports program: The SRT Motorsports Viper GTS-R teams will next compete in the Rolex 24 At Daytona that begins on Saturday, Jan. 25 at 2:30 p.m. EST. Practice and qualifying for the event begins on Jan. 23.

For more information, go to DriveSRT.com or IMSA.com.

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