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SRT Motorsports Thursday Practice Notes

Twelve Hours of Sebring at Sebring International Raceway

March 12, 2014, SEBRING, Fla. - SRT (Street and Racing Technology) Motorsports ran through a thorough and complete schedule of testing Thursday with its Viper GTS-R teams at Sebring International Raceway in the opening day of practice for Saturday's 62nd annual Mobil 1 Twelve Hours of Sebring Fueled by Fresh from Florida.

Placing an emphasis on team execution and pre-race preparation rather than an all-out pursuit for top speed, both the No. 91 SRT Viper GTS-R and drivers Marc Goossens, Dominik Farnbacher and Ryan Hunter-Reay, and the sister No. 93 SRT Viper GTS-R of Jonathan Bomarito, Kuno Wittmer and Rob Bell, were put through their preliminary paces of the weekend. The SRT entries posted their respective fastest laps of the day in Thursday's morning practice session in which the No. 93 clocked in at 2:00.763 (111.491 mph) and the No. 91 lapped at 2:01.321 (110.978 mph).

In total, the six drivers on the SRT lineup have a combined one victory, four podiums and nine top-five results in 22 career appearances in the 12 Hours of Sebring. Hunter-Reay co-drove to a victory in the LMP2 class in the 2011 edition of the endurance race and was the class runner-up last year. Both Farnbacher and Goossens have appeared on the podium at Sebring.

This weekend's race at Sebring marks the one-year anniversary of SRT Motorsports' return to major-league sports car racing in last year's 12-hour classic. Sebring kicked off the first full-season schedule for SRT Motorsports after a four race partial return to competition in 2012. The No. 93 Viper GTS-R qualified fifth and the sister No. 91 entry finished fifth in the race, which were both career-best showing for SRT Motorsports in just their fifth race. The team went on to win one race and scored five podium finishes during the 2013 season.

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

This was your first chance to run at Sebring this year. How did it go?

"I haven't been here for the test so it's important for me to get some quality time in the car, but it's very hard to get that time when there's so many red flags in such a short amount of track time. So we try to improve the car at the same time as adjusting to the conditions. Today it was very cold and we didn't expect that, so we're trying different tire compounds and we found it's important to really get in that window when the tires work but sometimes finding that window is difficult. It's really difficult conditions and on top of that it's very greasy. There are all types of different compounds from the last tests and past races. I think it was important also that Ryan got some track time. He has not been here in the Viper. He just drove a few laps and he had some problems with the traffic. So it really comes down now to the final two practice sessions. We're smart enough to find something that works fine for us. We've already looked at the data and we know what we have to improve."

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

Was it a night and day difference from the test and your practice here today?

"It sure was this morning because the track obviously was a lot colder. There was no grip at all, this morning. I think less rubber on the track and the temperatures made for very poor grip, but then this afternoon when the conditions were different and the track was warmer, I only did like two laps before that red flag came out. We didn't want to lose time on our schedule of things that we were trying, so I didn't have a read on the car in the afternoon, but what I hear from my teammates was still a very poor grip level. What I'm hearing from other people too is that they're all complaining about low grip. It's just that I think we're a little farther off than where some people are so we'll keep working on the setup and I'm pretty sure that by tomorrow we'll fix it. Conditions are very different than when we tested here but at least we went through all of our test items and through the list of things we wanted to try. We're trying to find performance and at the same time we're working on the reliability of the car. We're looking forward to a 12-hour race, not a sprint race. It's not all about lap time over one lap, but right now we don't feel 100-percent comfortable with the car but we have a couple of things to try that will help us."

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

How many laps did you get on Thursday?

We got about a handful of laps. They were my first in a GT car around this place since 2003, so it's a big difference. I'm used to the prototype braking points and how a prototype feels around here, so there's a little bit of a transition but the SRT Viper feels really solid. I was just out there getting my wits about me with some old tires."

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

How is the track different from when you tested here last month?

"The track is quite a bit different from what we've seen so far. I drove the first session and we worked on some setup stuff. Balance-wise we're not bad. We're not far off. We're a little bit hesitant to chase the track right now. We think it still has a ways to go, and it's going to change some more overnight, but overall it has a little less grip than when we tested a few weeks ago."

How did the weather influence practice today?

"The weather was cooler than we anticipated but it's supposed to heat up the next few days and race day will probably be more like we had when we tested here. So hopefully the track will come back to us a little bit. Overall, I think we have good race cars. The team is doing what we need to do. Good preparation and we're getting all the drivers sufficient lap time in the car so everybody feels comfortable and confident."

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

You weren't among the drivers testing here last month but how does the track compare to last year?

"The track is very, very different from last year's race in 2013 and that's just due to the fact that the track is very, very green. The cold weather, the wind coming through, it's blowing a lot of dust on the track so we're looking for some grip right now. The cars themselves are running really well. The team is doing a great job getting everything to the pit lane and back off so everything is running according to plan. We'd just like to see the track come in and rubber in a little quicker."

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

Only driving in the afternoon practice so far, did you get enough laps?

"I just did a little bit on some older tires and then went to some better tires at the end and then there was a red flag. To be honest, I'm just finding my feet, getting used to the car again. I've been back in Europe driving other cars so I'm kind of getting used to where all the buttons are, but so far so good. We've got a decent grip level, so we've just got to work on trimming it out and tuning it a little. That's session was more just to get me up to speed. Unfortunately, there were three of four red flags so we didn't really get where we need to be, but we got the next sessions to do and everything seems like it's going to plan at the moment."

Next up for SRT Motorsports and Thursday's Sebring schedule is night practice that will conclude at 9:30 p.m. EDT.

SRT Motorsports Team Lineup for Sebring International Raceway

No. 91 SRT Viper GTS-R

Driver: Dominik Farnbacher (Germany)
Driver: Marc Goossens (Belgium)
Driver: Ryan Hunter-Reay (United States)
Lead Engineer: Bill Riley

No. 93 SRT Viper GTS-R

Driver: Jonathan Bomarito (United States)
Driver: Kuno Wittmer (Canada)
Driver: Rob Bell (United Kingdom)
Lead Engineer: Matt Bejnarowicz

Race Information

Name: Twelve Hours of Sebring (race two of 11 for GTLM)
Date: March 15, 2014

Time: 10:15 a.m. EDT for 12 hours
Track: Sebring International Raceway in Sebring, Fla.

Broadcast Information

The television broadcast will begin on FOX Sports 1 at 10 a.m. EDT/7 p.m. PDT and will move to [IMSA.com](https://www.imsa.com) at 1 p.m. EDT/10 a.m. PDT where the broadcast will continue to feature the FOX announcers. FOX Sports 1 will feature a three-hour highlight show on Sunday, March 16 at 8:30 a.m. EDT.

For more information, go to [DriveSRT.com](https://www.driveSRT.com) or [IMSA.com](https://www.imsa.com).

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