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SRT Motorsports Post-Race Report - Trans Am Series at Brainerd

August 31, 2014, Brainerd, Minn. - SRT (Street and Racing Technology) Motorsports and its Dodge Challengers recorded a runner-up finish and fifth-place result in just the team's second race in the Trans Am Series in Sunday's 26th Annual Muscle Car Shootout at Minnesota's Brainerd International Raceway.

Trans Am legend Tommy Kendall drove the No. 11 Dodge Challenger to a second-place result at Brainerd, while his teammate, TA2 class points leader Cameron Lawrence, piloted the No. 1 Challenger to fifth.

With qualifying rained out on Saturday, the field was set by points – giving Lawrence the pole position – and Kendall was forced to start 11th. However, the veteran racer was able to consistently improve throughout the 40-lap race and turned his best circuit on lap 36 as he worked his way up to second.

For Kendall, the runner-up result came in just his second Trans Am start following a 10-year hiatus from the series. Prior to August's race at the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course, Kendall last competed in the Trans Am Series in 2004.

With his fifth-place result, Lawrence's maintained his lead in the TA2 class point standings and now has a 14-point advantage over the nearest competitor.

After starting from the pole, Lawrence went off track early in the race due to debris on track in Brainerd's carousel and suffered front-end damage. However, the 22-year-old driver was able to recover and rally for the fifth-place showing.

The Brainerd race marked the second Trans Am Series start for SRT Motorsports and its two Dodge Challenger entries. In the team's first race at Mid-Ohio, Lawrence finished 10th and Kendall took 19th.

Prior to the Mid-Ohio race, SRT Motorsports announced a partnership with Miller Racing to field Challengers in the Trans Am Series' TA2 class for Kendall and Lawrence.

SRT Motorsports next competes in the Trans Am Series at Connecticut's Lime Rock Park on Sunday, Sept. 20, for the ninth-of-11 races on the 2014 schedule.

SRT Driver and Team Quotes for Brainerd

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

What was it like on the track today?

"The race went well. I went off track around lap five. There was something on the track – dirt or water – and that took the front splitter off. That hurt us early and we ended up fifth. We're still in good shape and we didn't lose too many points. We still have a decent lead and the cars are coming along really well. We had a really good car today. We're getting better and we'll be in good shape at the end."

How do you feel moving forward?

"Even with the short amount of time the team had between races, they got a lot of work done. The more time we have with the cars, the better they're going to keep getting. We were pretty high up on the charts almost every session this weekend, so the potential is there and the team has the ability to get the cars up front and make them fast. It will just take a little more time."

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

How was your race today?

"I'm still learning what I want the car to be like at the start and what the arc of the race is, and how much they

change from fuel and tires and all that. Cam (Cameron Lawrence) and the team have been telling me, 'Our cars are second half cars,' and it seemed like it was heading that way at Mid-Ohio before then we had a problem. The car felt good. When I got into fourth, they said, 'You're 18 seconds back,' and it held for like three laps in a row and I almost relaxed and settled in, but I said, 'You know what? The car's getting better and better,' so I just put my head down and started digging. The times started coming down a little bit and then they started coming down in chunks and Adam (Andretti) I guess hurt his splitter. First, they were giving me minutes left and I thought I had time and then they switched to laps and they said, 'It's only five laps to go.' Things worked out perfectly. I've got to give a shout out to the team. It's been a six-week thrash on both sides and there's quite a bit of involvement with guys from Dodge that are working on the car as well. For all those guys, this is a nice payback. To get on the podium – first time I've been on one in 10 years – feels pretty good. With the 11 having a good showing and Challenger back on the podium – obviously, we're gunning for first, but at this point I'm more than happy with second – it was a good day."

How did it feel to race with the leaders?

"To be honest, I was so focused on Adam (Andretti) that I didn't realize (Bob) Stretch had come back and so I thought I finished third and I said, 'Who was first and second?' And they said, 'You're second.' I said, 'What do you mean? That was Stretch,' but he had a problem as well. I've only been in two of these (races), but the amount of stuff that happens at the end of them, I think it pays to just keep digging. I'm happy to give the series a little bit of a lift and a little bit of a spotlight if I can, but I can tell you in the two weeks this has been announced and we've been running, I've heard from a lot of people that say, 'Those things (Challengers) look bad ass,' and obviously the price point is something that has everyone's attention. The proof is in the pudding and the grids are growing and I think that's going to continue. We've got our work cut out for us and we need to keep getting better and better because I have a feeling there are some more good cars coming."

Are you encouraged moving forward?

"I'm very encouraged. We know the areas where we need to get better and we can get better. We're not the fastest car by any stretch, but we're running decent on pace and we're better on race pace than we are with qualifying pace. It's exciting. This is where you would have liked to have been going into the first race. I've got to applaud everyone involved and everyone is working on this small team and it's a total throwback. We're really trying to help Cameron along for the championship and see what happens for next year."

Gary Johnson, racing manager, SRT Motorsports

How was today's race?

"It went pretty well. We had a podium finish with TK (Tommy Kendall) finishing second after starting in the 11th spot. He had a very solid run. He was running quicker and quicker each lap. For Cameron, I think on the fourth lap he went off on the carousel and damaged the front of the car. Considering the damage to the car, he actually ran a solid race too and was able to hold on with a valiant effort."

How was Tommy Kendall able to run quicker laps as the race progressed?

"To some extent, it's about how the car is setup and how Tommy is so good at managing equipment and tires. I think we were about 10 seconds out of third place with five laps to go and I looked at Mike Miller and I said, 'I think we need two more laps in this race.' The P2 and P3 cars were battling and Tommy saw an opportunity and took advantage of the battle and he ended up making the pass on the P2 car."

Does this result make you excited to move forward?

"For sure. The issue this race was we qualified based on points with Tommy back in 11th place, it was not going to be easy for him to get up front. I think if we have a more typical situation where we can run some qualifying laps and get him up towards the front, we'll be even stronger the next couple races."

Mike Miller, team owner, Miller Racing

How was today's race?

"We started the two cars with one on the pole and one back in the pack. With the qualifying session rained out, we started on points and that put Cameron Lawrence on pole for TA2 and it put Tommy Kendall back. The race started and Cameron was leading for about four laps and made a rare mistake when he clipped the dirt a little too much and the car went off and knocked the splitter off the car. We had to finish the race with limited front downforce. At the same time, Tommy Kendall did a fantastic job and ran up to second. The two Dodges really did a great job today and the two drivers did a great job. We're happy with the points that we got and we have the points lead and we learned

a lot more about the Dodges.”

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

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