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

September 27, 2014, Alton, Va. - SRT (Street and Racing Technology) Motorsports and its Dodge Challenger SRTs ran as high as second with a best result of 12th in the Trans Am Series' 10th event of the 2014 season at Virginia International Raceway (VIR) on Sunday afternoon.

Tommy Kendall piloted the No. 11 Dodge Challenger SRT to a 12th-place result in the TA2 class, while Cameron Lawrence finished 15th in the No. 1 Dodge Challenger SRT in the 31-lap contest on the 3.27-mile VIR circuit.

Lawrence started second in the No. 1 Challenger and maintained the position through the event's first 10 laps before an engine issue forced the driver to pit on lap 16. With no available remedy in the pit stall, the 2013 TA2 champion returned to the track shortly thereafter, but the engine expired four laps later ending Lawrence's race.

With his 15th-place result on the Virginia track, Lawrence retained the TA2 class points lead with a scant one-point advantage over the second-place driver, Adam Andretti, with just November's season finale at Daytona International Speedway remaining on the 2014 schedule.

Kendall, a four-time Trans Am champion (1990, 1995-97) qualified fifth for the event, but a mechanical issue forced the driver to miss the beginning of the race. The vehicle started after pit road changes and the Trans Am legend returned to the 17-turn track, but was then hampered by a flat tire and relegated to a 12th-place finish.

The VIR race marked Kendall's third series start in 2014, his first Trans Am season since last racing in the series in 2004. VIR was the fourth series start for SRT Motorsports and its two Challenger entries.

The Miller Racing Dodge Challenger SRTs next compete in the 11th-and-final round of the 2014 Trans Am Series schedule at Florida's Daytona International Speedway on Saturday, Nov. 15.

SRT Driver and Team Quotes for VIR

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

What ended your race?

"We didn't finish the race because we had engine issues. We're not exactly sure what happened, but we were running second, pretty solid and we had something electrical or a sensor issue somewhere. We were never more than a half a second off the leader, so it's frustrating. It started to layover and missing pretty badly, so we came in to see if anything was wrong. There was nothing obvious, so we went back out and tried to do as many laps as we could. After a few laps, it just died on us and stopped running altogether."

How do you assess what happened to the engine?

"The final race is in mid-November, so we'll take it back and work with Arrow (Racing Engines) and Dodge and take the motor apart and see if there's anything wrong and just go through the whole electrical system. The guys will have the car basically all the way apart checking everything from the motor to wiring and stuff like that. We've got six weeks, so they have time to go over every little detail. We'll put a new motor in it and I have no doubt we'll be good to go for Daytona. It's just going to be a long six weeks making sure we've got that reliability for one more race."

How will you approach the Daytona race?

"We should have a one-point lead going to Daytona. We've just got to beat Adam (Andretti). Qualifying will play into it a little with the bonus for that, but it will basically come down to who beats who in Daytona."

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

Why did you miss the start of the race?

"The car wouldn't start and we're not quite sure what it was. We changed a bunch of stuff and nothing seemed to work and they replaced the crank trigger sensor, put the old crank trigger back on and it started. We were changing all kinds of things at once, so we're not quite sure what fixed it. Once I got out there, I was running along and making some laps and then I got a flat."

How did the Challenger feel leading up to the race?

"It was frustrating mainly because the Challenger ran so well all weekend. We had a full test on Thursday and the car felt great. It was the best I felt in the car and I was really looking forward to the race and it was anticlimactic. It died on its way to the grid and we spent the whole pre-grid period trying to trouble shoot it and pretty soon it was clear we were going to miss the start. It was a real buzz kill for such a great weekend. VIR is sensational and these cars on VIR are a lot fun. I thought we were going to mix it up with the front guys and have a shot. Such is racing – it's a tough one."

How do you feel headed to Daytona?

"I wish we could go right away. I'm feeling more comfortable and have a better understanding of what the car wants with every lap, every session. I'm just going to have to be patient and wait for Daytona. It's going to be a hell of a shootout with Cam (Lawrence) and Adam (Andretti). They're pretty close to tied up going into the last race. We need to go down there and support Cameron and ideally get a good finish for ourselves."

Mike Miller, team owner, Miller Racing

How was today's race?

"It was a rough day for us. We had some electrical problems that caught us off guard. Unfortunately, it cost those guys what I thought was going to be a good finish because the cars were running well all weekend. We just ran into some of those electrical gremlins that will get you every once in a while. We have to go back and do some work to figure out what to do to make sure it doesn't happen again."

How do you address the engine issue?

"The first step for us is to take it back and run a diagnostic on it to figure out what exactly the problem was, find the root cause and correct the root cause so it never happens again. We're still sorting out some of the growing pains associated with the new control system and engine. The team and SRT will be working really hard to get this figured out. We're going to head to Daytona and try to cap off a championship. We've got a slim, one-point lead in the points for Cameron Lawrence and we don't want to give up that championship, so we're going to work hard between now and November when we go to Daytona for the finale."

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

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