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## **SRT Motorsports - Keys For Success - Michigan**

June 15, 2012, Brooklyn, Mich. -

Saturday, June 16, 2012

Denny Darnell

Scott Sebastian

Jimmy White

Quicken Loans 400

SRT Motorsports

Michigan International Speedway

NASCAR Sprint Cup Series

Keys For Success

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### **KEYS FOR SUCCESS: QUICKEN LOANS 400**

BROOKLYN, Mich. (Saturday, June 16) – Each race weekend, selected SRT Motorsports Engineers, Penske Racing engineers and crew chiefs, drivers or engine specialists give their insight on the 'Keys for Success' for the upcoming race. This week, Howard Comstock, SRT Motorsports Engineering, provides the keys for Sunday's Sprint Cup race.

Track: Michigan International Speedway (Race 15 of 36 in the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series)

Race: Quicken Loans 400 (200 laps / 400.00 miles)

Trivia Question: In addition to Michigan International Speedway, how many other Michigan tracks have hosted NASCAR's premier series? (Answer Below)

HOWARD COMSTOCK (SRT Motorsports Engineering)

Tires: "Obviously the biggest problem is going to be the change of left-side tires. After all of the tire testing we did, all of the testing that we did on Thursday and all of the practice that we had on Friday, the left-side tire is still a problem. The left-side tire won't give up the heat and we saw several instances of blistering on the left-sides. It's not unprecedented but NASCAR has decided that we're going to change the left-side tires not for qualifying but for the race. An extra practice session has been scheduled after the Nationwide race. It's disappointing that after nine hours of track time, we have to change the left-side tire and we'll only get an hour to adapt to it. Figuring out that new left-side tire is going to be a big key.

"The fact that we've spent so much time trying to adapt to the tires that were provided and now there's going to be a different tire, that's a big change. We have computer programs that design suspensions to deal with specific tires and their characteristics. We model the tires, we study the tires, we think we understand the grip level of the tires and all of the suspension simulation is built around the tires. Now to change the left-sides for the race, it's a big deal. It's not an insurmountable problem but it's a big deal."

Engine Durability: "Obviously we've changed the gearing to bring the RPM back down even with the advance speeds. The thing that gets the engine here is the fact that you stay on the throttle for so long, the only time the engine gets to breathe is when you lift off the throttle. With so much on-throttle time because of the grip in the corners, that's the problem that teams have to consider with the engine. We've been able to control the RPM levels by changing the gearing but the amount of on-throttle time is going to be a problems for durability."

Fuel Economy: "Fuel economy is always an issue here at Michigan. It's always a challenge to figure it out. It always seems to come down to a fuel economy race at the end. At the speeds that we're seeing, we're making more power. The throttle is open more all the way around the racetrack which means we're using more fuel. We've got fuel injection this year, so a combination of faster speeds, more wide-open throttle time, fuel injection, that's a lot of variables to throw at everybody. We've just got to conquer all those issues.

"It's going to be a test of calculating fuel economy because we've never run speeds like this before. We've certainly never run speeds like this with the fuel injection. How is that going to turn out? I think the teams will have to be conservative early in the race and make sure you don't run out of fuel. If you ran out of fuel on the backstretch, you could coast to the pits but you'll lose a lap in the process. You can't afford that. I've already heard teams talking about backing up their first pit stop a lot. I would say that you'll see pit stops in the 30-40 lap range."

TRIVIA ANSWER: In addition to Michigan Int'l Speedway, three other Michigan tracks hosted five NASCAR Sprint Cup Series events in the 1950s – Grand River Speedrome (Grand Rapids), Michigan State Fairgrounds (Detroit) and Monroe Speedway.

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