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SRT Motorsports - Nationwide Sam Hornish Jr. Q&A - Road America

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Sam Hornish Jr. (No. 12 Alliance Truck Parts Dodge Challenger)

YOU ARE CURRENTLY FOURTH IN THE NASCAR NATIONWIDE SERIES STANDINGS ENTERING SATURDAY'S RACE HERE AT ROAD AMERICA. HOW WOULD YOU ASSESS THIS SEASON SO FAR? "We need to be better (smiles). I mean, we're fourth in points but I feel like for how we run a lot of the times, the handling that we've had of the car, we just need to be a little bit better. We've had some ups and downs; had some races that we felt like we could have won if we'd have had a little bit of luck on our side or if the yellow had fell at the right time or whatever. We're not consistent enough to think that we can win every weekend. We just need to keep our heads down and do the right things. You come to a couple of road course races in the Nationwide Series and even in the Cup series, it's about staying on the island all day long and not letting somebody use you up but also being smart enough to let 'em go when you know it's somebody that's going to give you problems and generally doesn't care if they finish the race or not.

"I feel good about our progression, how we've been. We've had some good cars; we just haven't been able to capitalize. The good thing is that we've had good reliability out of our Dodge engines and out of our race cars. I think that the two laps that we haven't finished this season, one of 'em was at Daytona where the wheel was turned a little bit and they couldn't get the tire off; they thought it was something else and they held us. We should have been on the lead lap; that would have been about 14 points because they had the big wreck on the last lap. We ended up 20th but we were the first car one lap down. We drove through a bunch of guys that wrecked that we'd have been able to pass that were never going to make it to the finish line but we ended up behind them because we couldn't get a tire off. The other one, I think we were just a lap down somewhere. I can't remember where that was at, but regardless, we don't want to be doing that too often.

"It means a lot to me, you know, how much work that these guys have put into it so far this year and that they're doing really good as far as not having any pieces fall off the car. We're plagued by these little problems that don't cost us laps or races but cost us six or seven spots on a weekend."

YOU HAVE COMPLETED ALL BUT TWO LAPS THIS SEASON. IS THAT THE FIRST STEP TOWARD WINNING RACES? "Well, it's always good to have the reliability, to be able to finish races and do things like that. I don't know that that's necessarily the first step to winning races. Yeah, if you got where you're constantly wrecking or doing this or that, yeah, that's not a good thing to have. At the end of the day, I feel like we need another five percent of speed. We're good if we get out front. It's just we can't pass to get there right now. There's a little bit of work that we need to do with our aero package and our horsepower package to be able to take that to the next level. Guys have been stepping up their pit crew stuff, you know, what we do in the pits. I feel like we're clicking these little things off. It's just taking us a little bit longer to get there. Even talking to Brad (Keselowski) and his win at Charlotte, he said 'We just got in the clean air at the right time' and that's all it took. I feel like at Michigan last week, if we'd have started on the front row of either the last couple of restarts we might have been able to get the job done. The point is that we're not getting to the point."

HOW CRITICAL TO YOUR SEASON ARE THE TWO ROAD COURSE RACES AT ROAD AMERICA AND AT MONTREAL? "You know, it's yet to be seen how Austin Dillon runs on the road courses. I feel like Elliott (Sadler), he's good at certain ones. I know when I raced against him at Sonoma he was able to run well at Sonoma but Watkins Glen, maybe he didn't like it as much or it didn't suit him as well. Neither one of them really suited me that well but I feel like I've always got good speed at Watkins Glen. I've been to these tracks before but it's been 13

years. I might have a little bit of advantage in that I've been there but you know it's been a long, long time in a way different car.

"We'll see how practice goes today. The road course testing that we've done with other cars, I've felt really good about it and that we're going to have a good chance to compete for wins and gain points back on Ricky (Stenhouse Jr.) and Elliott. That's what we need to do: step it up, have good weekends on the road courses. First and foremost keep ourselves out of trouble as best we can and see what happens."

YOU HAVE ONE PREVIOUS NATIONWIDE SERIES ROAD COURSE START AT MEXICO CITY. CAN YOU TELL THAT THE RACING IS WILDER IN NATIONWIDE COMPARED TO SPRINT CUP? "Every time I say that the Nationwide Series is wilder I see Brian Vickers put Tony Stewart up on top of the tire wall for no reason while he's laps down or some other goofy thing happens in the Cup series where somebody loses their mind. We all get to that point where we get tired of certain things and do something about it. This traditionally seems pretty wild up here at this race. It's kind of the same thing at Montreal with the first turn the way that it is (smiles).

"The race that we ran in Mexico City, we had just about everything happen; got involved in an altercation and all that good stuff. I want to have good clean race weekends and do the best that we can, just stay out of trouble because there is a certain amount of being able to control your own destiny. But you get these restarts close to the end and you get somebody that even thinks the pit road goes longer than it does. You can get in problems. It's not an easy thing, the way that things get bunched up here (Road America), to keep yourself out of trouble. It's not being at an oval where you see a couple guys getting racy and you think, I can race these guys later. You don't necessarily get that chance over here."

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