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MAX ANGELELLI & RICKY TAYLOR

SunTrust's 'Bounty Hunters' Out To Get Their Men in Southern Virginia

ALTON, Va. (May 10, 2011) – Welcome to “GRAND-AM’s Most Wanted,” also known as the Bosch Engineering 250 on Saturday afternoon at Virginia International Raceway (VIR) in Alton, for round four of the 2011 Rolex Series championship.

SunTrust Racing co-drivers Max Angelelli and Ricky Taylor will not only be out to get their team’s third victory in eight outings at the scenic 3.27-mile, 17-turn road circuit located just a stone’s throw north of the Virginia-North Carolina state line, they’ll be playing the role of bounty hunters as they and their Rolex Series counterparts will be out to get sports car racing’s newly declared “outlaws” – Scott Pruett and Memo Rojas in the No. 01 Chip Ganassi Racing with Felix Sabates BMW Riley.

Pruett and Rojas have reeled off six consecutive Rolex Series victories dating back to the Crown Royal 200 at Watkins Glen (N.Y.) International last August. And last year’s Rolex Series champions have won an incredible 12 of the last 15 Rolex Series events dating back to the Grand Prix of Miami in March 2010 at Homestead-Miami Speedway.

Last week, GRAND-AM posted a \$25,000 bounty – complete with an Old West-style wanted poster – for the first team to stop team owner Chip Ganassi and his driving duo. And the first in line to claim that tidy little bonus prize would be Angelelli and Taylor in the No. 10 SunTrust Chevrolet Dallara of Wayne Taylor Racing, who’ve clearly been the “best of the rest” since Pruett and Rojas began their Rolex Series domination some 14 months ago.

VIR is quite the appropriate circuit for the SunTrust duo to bring an end to the Ganassi team’s winning ways. Since joining the Rolex Series in 2004, SunTrust is the only team other than Ganassi to claim multiple victories there. Angelelli and now-team owner Wayne Taylor co-drove to the race win in their very first visit to the track in 2004. The Italian veteran followed that up with a victory alongside co-driver Jan Magnussen in 2007, and he and the elder Taylor added fourth- and second-place finishes in 2005 and 2006, respectively. Last year, Angelelli and Ricky Taylor finished third at VIR to score the younger Taylor’s first career Rolex Series podium en route to second place in the 2010 championship behind the Ganassi duo.

If recent history is any indication, it will take a perfect race for Angelelli and Taylor as they stalk Pruett and Rojas for two hours and 45 minutes around the country club-like VIR layout. But if all goes according to plan, they’ll have custody of a first-place trophy, some celebratory magnums of champagne, and an extra little bounty in their wallets by sundown on Saturday.

Practice for Saturday’s Bosch Engineering 250 begins Friday morning with qualifying set for 3:45 p.m. EDT. Race time Saturday is 3 p.m. with SPEED providing the television broadcast on a two-hour delay beginning at 5 p.m. Live radio coverage will be provided by the Motor Racing Network and Sirius Channel 94 beginning at 2:45 p.m. Live timing and scoring during all on-track sessions can be found at www.grand-am.com, and now on mobile devices at m.grand-am.com.

Max Angelelli, Co-Driver of the No. 10 SunTrust Racing Chevrolet Dallara:

GRAND-AM has posted a \$25,000 bounty for the first team that can end the Ganassi team’s win streak. How do you feel about that, and what will it take to beat the Ganassi team at VIR?

“I feel good about it because I’ve always believed in prize money. I hope this is just a beginning, and I’m looking forward to having GRAND-AM adding one zero at the end of the figure the next time they offer a bounty (laughs). Prize money is a good thing, and it can only be a boost to our car counts. What it will take to beat them? We really need to push them. We all need to do it, and I will try, for sure.”

You and Ricky co-drove to his first career podium last year at VIR. It was a good day for the SunTrust team. What do you remember about that day, and why is the SunTrust team typically so good at VIR?

“It was a very special day, that’s for sure, and we were able to do one better at the very next race at Lime Rock. All I wish for is to have many other special days, beginning Saturday at VIR. As far as the track is concerned, yes, we have had some very good success at VIR, but we have had some bad luck there, too. But, based on our current situation, with a new tire manufacturer this year and various other factors, what’s happened in the past is almost useless for us, this year. We basically started over from a clean sheet of paper this season. The good news is that we have had a very good car at each of the first three races, so far, and it’s a good bet that we will have a good car, once again, at VIR this weekend.”

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GRAND-AM also recently announced that fuel tank capacity would be downsized from 24 to 20 gallons to necessitate an added pit stop for all teams, and mandated a slower fuel fill rate to facilitate an additional driver change. What are your thoughts on that?

“We need to have all the drivers and teams happy to compete in the series. We need all drivers to be capable of having a shot at race wins. So, that is the reason for all the things that GRAND-AM is trying to do in order to help level the playing field even more. In my opinion, those are all good things and they are welcome. At the end of the day, the best teams and drivers always win, regardless of all the help from sanctioning body, but at least the teams who don’t win will not have so much to complain about.”

Ricky Taylor, Co-Driver of the No. 10 SunTrust Racing Chevrolet Dallara:

You earned your first career Rolex Series podium finish at VIR last year. How special was that for you and the team?

“It was really special. If you take the podium out of it, we had a good race and we had a possibility of winning the race, so that would have been even better. It all just came down to how the race went at the end. The track position just wasn’t there for us. This weekend, we’ll really need to take advantage if we have a really good racecar, again, and close the deal once and for all.”

What do you think of the bounty offered by GRAND-AM for beating the Ganassi team?

“We’re already pushing 100 percent, so I can’t see how it can make us push any harder. It might make some of the other teams push a little harder and take risks. Anything we or anybody else can do to take points away from them, all the better. If we both have perfect days, it’ll be really close. I don’t think we’re far behind, at this point. It’s just a matter of putting everything together and not making any mistakes. It’s really tough to bet against them, but I think we’re pretty strong.”

Can we expect to see any changes in the way you and Max and the team go about your race strategy with the smaller fuel tank?

“It makes it really close with that extra stop that it will require. Our strategy will be similar to what it’s been, though. Most of the big teams, without the gentleman drivers, won’t change much, if at all. It’s just a question of how many of the pro-am teams will actually try and take advantage of it. I think, still, the best cars are going to win the race. Our reference point is – at least for me – I really, really just want to beat Ganassi. If we beat them, we’re doing a really good job. Even if one of the pro-am team beats us and we beat Ganassi, it’s still a good result for us, because we’ll actually be racing on the same terms.”

Wayne Taylor, Team Owner of the No. 10 SunTrust Racing Chevrolet Dallara:

What do you think about GRAND-AM’s \$25,000 bounty for the first team to beat the Ganassi car?

“It seems to be getting attention, that’s for sure. It’s not like we’re racing for \$25,000. We try to win every race, no matter the prize money. Whether it’s \$25,000 or \$250,000, we go about it the same way. We only race to win. We’ve never gone racing just for the prize money. And we all recognize the fact that we need to start winning, here. The (No.) 01 (Ganassi) car winning all the time does have to come to an end. VIR has been an OK track for us. It’s not been our best, but I think we’ll have a good car, again, like we’ve had at the first three races this year. Unfortunately, we just haven’t been able to put all the pieces together at any given race. The last one in Alabama (13th place) was really bad for us, result-wise. But we’ve been testing and leaving no stone unturned.”

Do you expect the new, smaller fuel tank rule will have a big change on race strategy?

“We’ve done some tests to make sure we’re picking up every drop of fuel right from the bottom of the tank, so there should be no issues there. Sure, it’ll make it a little more exciting for the fans. I’m not exactly sure how it’s going to pan out. We’ll just have to see what happens at this next race. The new rule is clearly aimed at helping the teams with the pro-am drivers, so that leaves me a little confused as to why there are so many changes on their behalf, like extra sets of tires. They already have their own championship within the series with the Trueman-Akin Award. The point is, it’s a professional series and we have two professional drivers. We love the pro-am guys, but it’s recognized they have something they’re already competing for with their own championship.”

- SunTrust: The Official Bank of Motorsports -

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