

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **TRG/Monster Announce Driver Lineups for Daytona; Team Finishes Test 1-6-11<sup>th</sup> Fastest in Class**



**Daytona, FL, January 5, 2004** – The Racer's Group, overall winners of the 2003 Rolex 24 Hours of Daytona, today announced the driver lineup for the Nos. 67 and 68 Monster Cable Porsche 911 GT3 RS es. The team will field three GT-class Porsches in the race.

Lars Nielsen, of Vedbaek, Denmark, Robert Nearn, of London, England, Harry Burnstine, of Bristol, Indiana and Jim Matthews, of Chapel Hill, North Carolina shared driving duties this weekend in the #67 Monster Cable Porsche 911 GT3 RS for this weekend's test, with Burnstine giving way to longtime TRG driver Pierre Ehret for the 24 hour race. Matthews reflected on his racing career in describing his emotions coming into the traditional testing period. "When I come to Daytona, I feel like I'm coming home," he said. "My whole driving career started here, at Daytona in a Porsche 911. Over the

years, I've driven all sorts of cars, but to get back here in another 911 is a sweet homecoming."

Lars Nielsen spent his initial stint in the car getting used to the track. "I've never driven here before," he said, "so the first couple of times 'round, I was just feeling my way. I found myself offline a couple of times, but I was happy to see that as I got the lay of the land, my times came down significantly. I'm thrilled to be on the track - the banking is so big and the speeds so high - it's a blast of a track to drive on."

Longtime sports car professional Robert Nearn commented on being back at Daytona. "This is the tenth time I've been to this track, and I've finished 2nd before, 3rd before and 4th before. I'm hoping that this is the year that we take the win - you can't be unlucky all the time!"

Car #68 will be raced by faces familiar to sports car fans. Boston-area businessman RJ Valentine returns to Daytona to contest his 19th Rolex race, and returns to a team with whom he's had a good measure of success. Valentine, whose many business interests include F1 Boston, America's premier indoor and outdoor karting facility, was enthusiastic about being back behind the wheel of a Porsche. "I'm ecstatic to be back in a Porsche with The Racer's Group," he said. "I've had nothing but good luck with the marque and the team, and I expect that to remain the same for this race. Having the best equipment to race and the best preparation is a great combination, and I'm thankful for it. This weekend, we're learning even more about the car, and are going to wring out every last bit of performance from these cars, in spite of the stricter regulations. Porsche has a tremendous Motorsports history, and I'm happy to be here with a team that's had historic victories. I'm proud to be part of Porsche's heritage here at Daytona."

Valentine will team in the #68 car for the race by Chris Gleason, another veteran sports car racer. Ian James, of Surrey, England joins Bohdan Kroczek, of Winnetka, IL, and Abraham Zimroth, of New York, NY, both of whom will make their first start in the race. Liz Halliday, of San Diego, California, also joined the team for the testing weekend.

Zimroth, who won the 2002 Skip Barber Eastern Series Championship will run the 24 Hours of Daytona for the first time this year. "It's incredible to be here at Daytona," he said. "I've always wanted to come race here and I've put a lot of preparation into making that happen. The test for me is all about spending as much time as is possible in the driver's seat, getting comfortable with the track and the car. I've got to admit that the banking is a lot less scary than I'd expected," he joked.

Ian James remarked about running with The Racer's Group. "It's great to be with TRG for the race," he said. "When I first came to race in America in 1998, [Team Owner] Kevin Buckler was one of the first people I tried to deal with. The Racer's Group is synonymous with success at Daytona, so I couldn't be happier with my team."

Team owner Kevin Buckler, who tested this weekend with co-drivers Jörg Bergmeister and Patrick Long, commented on the team's performance. "To have all three Monster Porsches finish the weekend

with such strong performances is a fantastic feeling," he said. "And that all three cars finished the test weekend in one piece is a testament to my crew's preparation and the driving skills of our pilots. We've got three cars full of exceptional drivers, and I couldn't be happier with our team's performance this weekend. We're taking all of our equipment back to California, where we'll go through everything from top to bottom, and we're going to come back here at the end of the month ready for the race. With Monster Cable back on board we have all the magic ingredients in place. CDOC, a new partner for us on the race team will be joining for this huge event and we are really happy to have them on board as well.

American Porsche factory driver Patrick Long, who turned his first laps at Daytona International Speedway this weekend, summed up the track thusly: "Daytona is wild," he commented. "It seems a lot more narrow on the banking than NBC makes it look - it's not the most technical track I've driven, but it's a lot of fun. I'm happy that the closing speeds between the DPs and the GT cars isn't as big as it is in the ALMS, which is a lot easier to deal with. We've got a lot of work to do to get ready for the race, but I relish the opportunity to be here racing."

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Safety and performance. That is what we are all about at CDOC, whether it's for a racecar or streetcar. And that's why both amateurs and professionals alike come back again and again. We are known for being trustworthy, knowledgeable and dependable.

The Racer's Group is a manufacturer and distributor of high performance Porsche parts, an engine and chassis building and tuning facility, a full service Porsche prep facility, and a professional race team. Additionally, they provide electrical and mechanical engineering services, driver development and "arrive and drive" services. The Racer's Group is based at Infineon Raceway, formerly Sears Point Raceway, in Sonoma, Calif.

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