

Bell Returns to Daytona for Rolex 24 and Continental Tire Sports Car Challenge Action

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Daytona Beach, FL (1 February 2011) –While the 2011 Daytona race weekend didn't bring the results that Matt Bell had been hoping for, the event provided some encouraging developments and good experience to build on for the young racer as he kicked off the 2011 GRAND-AM racing season.

Bell was tabbed by two different teams to run two completely different machines in the two races on the weekend--the No. 9 Stevenson Motorsports Camaro GS. R for the GRAND-AM Continental Tire Sports Car Challenge season opener on Friday and then the No. 77 Office Depot Daytona Prototype of Doran Racing in the Rolex 24 At Daytona on Saturday.

Selected to qualify the No. 9 Stevenson Motorsports Camaro on Thursday, Bell once again was up to the task as he led the Camaro contingent with his fast lap time of 1:57.546 seconds netting him 4th on the grid. The race brought even more promise after Bell moved up to podium position just ten laps into the 2.5-hour endurance event. But that early pace was compromised when a mechanical issue slowed the effort, and eventually forced Bell and co-driver Jon Edwards to accept a 28th place finish.



A good night sleep ensued as Bell prepared for the biggest start of his career to date, running in the famed Rolex 24 At Daytona in the top Daytona Prototype class at the home track for the category. Sharing the car with three other drivers, Bell slotted into the line up with the car running in top five position early in the race.

"I did two stints, and in the opening stint I made a small mistake and we ended up locking up the tires and that moved us back," said Bell.

"The second stint was a little bit tougher as I think the car at that point had had contact a few times so it wasn't in the same condition as the first stint. But this was a race that took its toll and we ended up not finishing the race. So I wasn't really happy with how things played out, but I'll come back at the Glen and try again. We have a new direction that I'd like to go with the cars, tuning that we didn't really follow this time."



The next event will see Bell back in familiar competition as he returns to focus on the Continental Tire Sports Car Challenge effort starting at Homestead Miami Speedway, the site of a recent pre-season test for the teams.

“Homestead won’t fully play to the strengths of the Camaro, but we made a lot of headway at the test,” said Bell. “ We’ll do what we always do – it’s a good track for traffic so we’ll try to just work and have a similar strategy as we did here at Daytona-qualify well and try to make the most of running in others draft. Track position will be key because we might not have the outright pace to move up, but we should be strong enough to defend and hopefully we can pick some points up for the championship next month.”

The opening round of the 2011 season will be broadcast on SPEED this Saturday at 3:00 PM ET.

TV:

GRAND-AM 200 (CTSCC)

SPEED

Feb 5,

3:00 PM ET

-ends