



AJ ALLMENDINGER
Walldinger Racing, Inc.

AJ ALLMENDINGER READY FOR NEXT CHAPTER OF CAREER TO BEGIN

-Shell-Pennzoil Dodge Driver Making Second Career Shootout Start In Saturday Night's Battle-

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DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. (Feb. 15, 2012) – AJ Allmendinger is eager to get the next chapter of his career under way this weekend at Daytona International Speedway. His debut driving Penske Racing's No. 22 Shell-Pennzoil Dodge comes in Saturday's non-points Budweiser Shootout on the famous 2.5-mile tri-oval track.

"It'll be a huge moment in my career when I take the green flag there on Saturday night as a driver for Roger Penske," said Allmendinger, the 30-year-old Los Gatos, Calif., native. "We've been looking forward to this occasion for several months now and it'll be great to finally get the 2012 season under way.

"We were out at Shell and Pennzoil's headquarters in Houston last week and our sponsors were quick to let me know that their car has won the Shootout three out of the last five years. So there's absolutely no pressure at all going into Saturday's race," chuckled "Dinger," as he's come to affectionately be known by the media and fans alike. "Seriously, they all know what racing on the restrictor-plate tracks involves, so there's not really any additional pressure on us.

"Sure, we'd love to be able to kick the season off with a win in the Shootout there on Saturday night and we'll be trying our best to do that," Dinger said, "But, our Shell-Pennzoil Dodge Team already has the big picture in mind even before Daytona Speed Weeks begin. We definitely hope to start the schedule off with a lot of success, but everyone knows how much luck comes into play at Daytona and Talladega

"I've had so many media guys ask me if I thought this would be the best shot I ever had of winning at Daytona. Like I've told them, I don't necessarily feel like this will definitely be my best opportunity at Daytona, but I know it will be my absolute best shot at winning races at all the tracks."

Allmendinger will be racing in only his second career Shootout on Saturday night. He started 18th and drove to a fifth-place finish in the 2009 edition of the special event.

"In all the seasons before, it was a race where the past year's pole winners were in the field," said Dinger. "We had won the pole for the spring race at Phoenix in 2008, but that didn't have any bearing at all. Instead, it was a situation where the top six teams from each manufacturer were invited.

"I had moved over to drive the No. 44 car for Petty and they were with Dodge," Dinger explained. "Ganassi had switched from Dodge to Chevrolet when they merged with DEI (Dale Earnhardt Inc.), so there was quite a bit of jockeying around to see who made the field and who didn't that year. We were able to get into the race as the final Dodge – their wild card for the race – and had to go last in the draw for our starting spot. We drew 18th.

"In the race, the car had been really fast and right before the break, we were battling for the lead with Jimmie (Johnson)," Dinger recalled. "I felt pretty confident, but at the end there were a lot of accidents. I remember coming through (Turns) 3 and 4, there was a big wreck and I made it through, but got shuffled back to finish fifth."

Once again, Saturday night's Shootout's distance will again be 75 laps (187.5 miles), which will consist of two segments, 25 and 50 laps. Both green-flag laps and yellow-flag laps will count. In between segments, there will be a 10-minute pit stop allowing drivers to pit to change tires, add fuel and make normal chassis adjustments. Crews will be permitted to work on cars and be allowed to perform functions they would do on a normal pit stop in a regular NASCAR Sprint Cup event. All work must be performed on pit road or in the garage with the changing of springs, shock absorbers or rear-ends not permitted.

"The format doesn't really bother me," Dinger offered. "I think maybe the second segment should be shorter to make it more exciting. I think everybody is just going to try and play it cool until the last 10 or so laps and then just go all out."

Allmendinger and his Todd Gordon-led No. 22 Penske Racing Team will be utilizing their "PRS-641" Shell-Pennzoil Dodge Charger in this weekend's action at the World Center of Racing. It will mark the first race for this chassis.

Daytona Speed Weeks 2012 action gets under way this Friday with Budweiser Shootout practice scheduled from 5:00 p.m. till 5:45 p.m. The final "happy hour" practice for the Shootout is set from 6:30 p.m. till 7:30 p.m. SPEED-TV will cover the practice sessions live as well as the "draw" for starting positions (delayed broadcast starting at 8:30 p.m.) Saturday's action includes Daytona 500 practices from 11:00 a.m. till 1:00 p.m. and from 2:00 p.m. till 3:45 p.m. Saturday's Budweiser Shootout, a 75-lap battle consisting of a 25-lap segment and a 50-lap segment with a 10-minute break in between, features live coverage by FOX-TV, MRN Radio and Sirius-XM NASCAR Channel 90 and is set to begin at 8:10 p.m. ET.

Qualifying for the front row (Coors Light Pole Award and outside pole) for the 54th annual Daytona 500 is set for Sunday at 1:05 p.m. FOX-TV will provide live coverage.

The first of Thursday's (Feb. 23) "Gatorade Duels" 150-mile qualifying races gets the green flag at 2:00 p.m. ET. Live coverage of all the action will be provided by SPEED-TV and MRN Radio. The Sunday, Feb. 26 Daytona 500 has a scheduled 1:00 p.m. ET starting time here

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at Daytona International Speedway. FOX-TV, MRN Radio and Sirius-XM NASCAR Channel 90 will provide live coverage of all the action.

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About Walldinger Racing, Inc.: Walldinger Racing was formed in 2006 to support AJ Allmendinger's motorsports career by developing commercial opportunities and partnership programs.

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