

Lux ready to flex Viper V10 muscle in Utah

BY TOM MOORE

NayKid Racing

TOOELE, Utah — Cindi Lux and Mopar combined in impressive form at their Grand Prix of Long Beach debut in April. Now, the sophomore SPEED World Challenge racer and the parts division of Chrysler will try again to flex some Detroit V10 muscle at Miller Motorsports Park in Tooele, Utah, on May 18.

Fresh off her highest career finish of ninth at Long Beach, the 1999 American Le Mans Series-sanctioned Women's Global GT Champion enters the event with high, but realistic, expectations. Joining the high spirits of the program, the experience of the Team Mopar driver at the course and the Dodge Viper's inherent characteristics, the Utah Grand Prix looks to blend all the ingredients for a strong weekend for the No. 2 Mopar machine.

Lux, of Aloha, Ore., her NayKid Racing team and Mopar all approached the

California event with conservative expectations. The race marked Lux's first of the year, but the SPEED GT Series regulars had already raced at Sebring in March. With little testing prior to Long Beach and a full race distance and testing already in the bag for her rivals, the program hoped to capture just a top-20 finish on the streets of Long Beach. The top-10, brought on by Lux's racecraft and a daring setup call, ignited higher expectations for the Oregon-based operations entering the Salt Lake City event. However, Lux, ever the professional, is mindful that an entirely different set of circumstances exists for this event.

The track differs greatly from that found in Southern California. The 3.048-mile and 15 turns of the Miller Motorsports Park dwarf the tight confines of the Long Beach street course. The natural terrain facility has long, full-throttle straights for the Viper's front-mounted V10 to blast down and its turns are wide and sweeping, maximizing the overall design of America's premier supercar.

When one adds Lux to the mix, the potential to best her previous career high is good. However, the track, surrounded by the sands of Utah, can often throw unsuspected complications into the setup.

Unlike 2007, SPEED GT will utilize a different part of the track. Known as the "Outer Loop," the '08 configuration is shorter and the turns quicker than last season. These changes mean little to Lux, who works as a driving instructor at Miller Motorsports Park when not racing the No. 2 Mopar Dodge. What she gives up to the drivers who raced at Sebring, she regains in personal knowledge of the configuration that will be new to many. In 2007, here at Miller, Lux earned the Piloti Rookie of the Race Award in only her second career SPEED GT.

The GT race of the Utah Grand Prix can be seen on SPEED Channel at 1 p.m. (ET) May 28. Live timing and scoring can be found at www.World-Challenge.com.

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