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MARK MARTIN

Outrageously Dependable at Las Vegas

HUNTERSVILLE, N.C. (March 6, 2012) – One of Interstate Batteries’ slogans is that its products are “Outrageously Dependable.” For this Saturday’s Sam’s Town 300 NASCAR Nationwide Series race at Las Vegas Motor Speedway, Interstate Batteries found a driver who is certainly outrageously dependable at the 1.5-mile oval.

NASCAR veteran Mark Martin will pilot the No. 18 Interstate Batteries Toyota Camry for Joe Gibbs Racing at Las Vegas and his record at the track north of the famous Las Vegas Strip is nothing short of incredible.

Martin has competed in six Nationwide Series races at Las Vegas and won four of them (1999, 2005, 2008 and 2011), while finishing second (2000) and sixth (1998) in the other two. Martin also captured the pole for the Las Vegas Nationwide Series races in 1998 and 1999.

He has led laps in all six races and led as many as 150 laps en route to victory as he did in 1999, or as few as just one lap when he won last year’s race there. Martin has led 333 total laps at Las Vegas (an average of 55.5 per race) and his average start is 8.5 while his average finish is 2.0.

While the pairing of Martin and Joe Gibbs Racing may certainly provide dividends on the track, it also provides a neat “trifecta” of sorts for Martin. He spent the majority of his NASCAR career driving for Roush Fenway Racing and then spent the last three years competing for Hendrick Motorsports. By driving for JGR at Las Vegas, Martin will have worked with three of the most iconic teams in NASCAR that have each been involved in the sport for at least 20 years.

As anyone who travels to Las Vegas knows, there is no such thing as a fail-safe bet. However, if any driver is close to a “sure thing,” it’s Mark Martin competing in a Nationwide race at Las Vegas Motor Speedway.

Mark Martin, Driver of the No. 18 Interstate Batteries NASCAR Nationwide Series Toyota Camry for Joe Gibbs Racing:

What are your thoughts on competing for Joe Gibbs Racing and Interstate Batteries in the Sam’s Town 300 Nationwide Series race?

“Their Nationwide Series program is one that has had everyone’s attention for years. They’ve won a lot of races and had great cars and they’ve been the premier Nationwide Series program for a few years. So, I couldn’t be more excited to get a chance to work with them.”

Why have you been so good at Vegas throughout the years?

“Some tracks you get around pretty well and others you just don’t. For some reason, Vegas has been a track that has been really good to us and things just work out.”

Talk about driving the Interstate Batteries car, which has been an iconic car in NASCAR for more than two decades.

“Dale Jarrett and Bobby Labonte obviously made the car pretty famous and now Kyle Busch is carrying that tradition on when he runs the Interstate Batteries Toyota. It’s neat for me to get to drive it and Interstate has been involved with JGR and NASCAR for a long time and that’s great for the sport. Norm Miller (chairman of Interstate) will be out there and hopefully we can put them in victory lane.”

Adam Stevens, Crew Chief of the No. 18 Interstate Batteries NASCAR Nationwide Series Toyota Camry for Joe Gibbs Racing:

You’ve worked with Tony Stewart and other great drivers throughout your career. Talk about working with Mark Martin.

“I have been fortunate to work with some great drivers, so it’s fun for me to get to work with Mark, a guy who has that much experience and is still excited about doing what he does. He came by the shop and he could talk racecars 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Having him get behind the wheel and get a read on where our intermediate program is will be huge for us. So, I’m excited about that.”

Mark’s record at Las Vegas is pretty incredible. Does that put any pressure on you?

“You can only do what you can do so, no, not really. I’m glad we’re taking him to a place where we can cut our teeth with him, where he’s 100 percent confident he can get around there and that it’s right in his wheelhouse. If anything, that takes some pressure off.”

What are the challenges working with a driver for the first time?

“Every driver is particular about something and I don’t know what that something is with Mark. I don’t know what buttons to push that are going to get a reaction and what buttons to push that aren’t going to move the needle. So, we have to learn that fast if we’re going to be good. I feel like our intermediate package has changed quite a bit from last year, so now we have more than one variable. It’s not just Mark and I working together for the first time, it’s Mark and I working together for the first time and trying to move our program forward.”

Meet the No. 18 Interstate Batteries / Joe Gibbs Racing Team**Primary Team Members:**

Driver: Mark Martin

Car Chief: Heath Landis

Engine Tuners: Peter Jellen and Roger Purcell

Crew Chief: Adam Stevens

Engine Builder: Mark Cronquist

Spotter: Jeremy Brickhouse

Over-The-Wall Crew Members:

Front Tire Changer: John Royer

Front Tire Carrier: Joe Crossen

Gas Man: Jon Eicher

Rear Tire Changer: Chris Taylor

Rear Tire Carrier: Eric Groen

Jack Man: Jason Tate

Road Crew Members:

Shock Specialist: Joel Weidman

Truck Driver: Tim Clancy

Mechanic: Chris Jones

Tire Specialist: Glen Wheeler

Engineer: Curtis Ratzlaff

Mechanic: Dave Rudy

Mark Martin’s No. 18 Interstate Batteries NASCAR Nationwide Series Toyota Camry for Joe Gibbs Racing:

Chassis No. 18-136: This car’s only race came in November 2011 at Texas Motor Speedway in Fort Worth, where Joey Logano started third, led four laps and finished eighth.

Mark Martin’s Las Vegas Motor Speedway Nationwide Series Box Score

Year		Event	Start	Finish	Status/Laps	Laps Led	Earnings
2011	3/5	Sam’s Town 300	5	1	Running, 200/200	1	\$82,020
2008	3/1	Sam’s Town 300	17	1	Running, 202/202	81	\$94,045
2005	3/12	Sam’s Town 300	25	1	Running, 200/200	29	\$91,501
2000	3/4	Sam’s Town 300	2	2	Running, 200/200	64	\$56,650
1999	3/6	Sam’s Town 300	1	1	Running, 200/200	150	\$87,625
1998	2/28	Sam’s Town Las Vegas 300	1	6	Running, 200/200	8	\$22,400

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