

Nick Jones Climbs Patrón GT3 Learning Curve at Monterey

24 May 2010 – Nick Jones took another leap forward in his revived racing career at the second round of the 2010 Patrón GT3 Challenge by Yokohama at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca, ending the weekend with fifth and seventh place finishes which left him fifth in the series' Gold Cup point standings.

A first-lap off in Thursday testing stranded Jones for the entire morning session, putting him at a disadvantage going into official practice on Friday. The 29-year-old Californian steadily improved his times around the sinuous coastal circuit to qualify 15th in the Gold Cup field and confident of more to come in the race. So it proved, as Nick made a strong start and began picking off his rivals, making the most of the race's three safety car periods to claim fifth in class and 13th overall at the checkered flag. Along the way, he bettered his qualifying time by no less than 1.2 seconds.

That performance garnered Jones 10th spot on the grid for race two on Sunday. After a bobble at the green flag set him back a couple of places, Nick once again went on the attack to pass five cars on his way to seventh in class and 16th overall at the finish. In a 45-minute race marked by far less attrition than the previous day's counter, it was an impressive run which also saw Jones set his fastest time of the weekend with a lap of 1m31.609s, fifth best in the Gold Cup class.

"Overall, it was a fantastic weekend and a great pair of results for myself and DragonSpeed," Jones said. "The team gave me with a perfectly set up car, just what I needed to help me shake off the rust after four years out of the cockpit. My crew of Elton, Tim, and Chris did an amazing job and I can't thank them enough. I'm really grateful to our sponsor, the University of California Irvine Orthopaedic Surgery Center, as well. We're on the pace now after just two events and I can't wait to get back in the car!"

DragonSpeed's Elton Julian said, "Nick and our whole team did a great job this weekend, and I couldn't be happier. We made constant progress that delivered two very respectable finishes. Even more important, Nick's speed in race two was fully competitive with the class leaders. He's also shown strong racecraft in all four races he's run with us so far. And best of all, we can see that Nick has plenty of potential still on tap. He'll be one of the guys to watch in upcoming races."

Edited highlights from Laguna Seca will be broadcast on Speed Channel at 1.00am ET on Sunday 20 June. Nick Jones and DragonSpeed aim to return for round four of the Patrón GT3 Challenge at Utah's Miller Motorsports Park on 9-11 July. For more information, please visit www.dragon-speed.net or www.nickjonesracing.com, or contact:

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