

Celebs Get “Racey” For Charity Stars And Pros Are Revved Up For Race

(NAPS)—You might think that having an Olympic medal, an Emmy or a Grammy sitting on the mantel would be the ultimate prize, yet many celebrities also crave the action of real race car competition. Each year, a select few actually get a chance to “get racey” and fulfill that fantasy, at the Toyota Pro/Celebrity Race, while helping to raise funds for charity—and a few participants, such as Frankie Muniz, Patrick Dempsey and Jason Priestley, have even gone on to succeed in professional racing.

The Toyota Pro/Celebrity Race has grown into the largest, longest-running, corporate-sponsored celebrity racing event in the world. One of six main event attractions to take place during the 35th annual Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach in California, this historic, 10-lap race will take place on a 1.97-mile circuit through the streets of downtown Long Beach. The race continues to appeal to stars of film, television and sports, not only for the adrenaline rush and physical challenge it offers, but because of its generous support of “Racing for Kids,” a national organization that benefits children’s hospitals.

Over the years, Hollywood luminaries such as Cameron Diaz, George Lucas, Clint Eastwood, Woody Harrelson, Ashley Judd and Queen Latifah, to name a few, have tested their skills against a veritable “who’s who” of notables from an eclectic range of



Actor and racing enthusiast Patrick Dempsey is one of the many celebrities who has gotten “racey” for charity.

fields, including astronaut Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin, Olympic swimmer Dara Torres, boxer Laila Ali, NBA stars Karl Malone and John Salley, NFL quarterback John Elway, International Tennis Hall of Famer Martina Navratilova, radio personality Robin Quivers and over 500 others.

Some have even found chasing the checkered flag in the Toyota Pro/Celebrity Race so exhilarating that they’ve gone on to take their chances on the professional tracks. Lorenzo Lamas, Perry King,

Alfonso Ribeiro, Sean Patrick Flanery, Mark-Paul Gosselaar, Donny Osmond, Robert Hays, Gene Hackman, Bruce Jenner, Josh Brolin, Paul Williams and Walter Payton are among the stars who have taken a shot at pro racing, thanks to their experiences in Long Beach.

“This is a race that’s thrilling for everyone—the celebrities, the pros and the fans—because it offers the high-speed challenge of real racing combined with a worthwhile charitable benefit,” said Les Unger, national motorsports manager at Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A. “And you can be sure the stars show up on race weekend with much more than a camera-ready smile. Every participant commits to eight days of charity involvement, including an intensive four-day training session that teaches the drivers how to manage their race-ready Scion tC on a street course circuit.”

The Toyota Pro/Celebrity Race is a nationally televised event held annually before a cheering crowd of tens of thousands. Aside from participating in a practice run and qualifying race, the star-studded group also visits a local hospital to spend time with critically ill children. On behalf of the race and its participants, Toyota has donated over \$1.7 million to various children’s hospitals.

For more information, contact Toyota Motorsports Public Relations at (310) 874-2513.