

SPORTS NEWS & NOTES

Fast And Famous Females Make Racing For Charity More Fun

(NAPSA)—When the race debuted in 1977, there was nary a woman in the field. These days, however, a bevy of fabulous, fast and famous females are proudly giving their male counterparts a run for their money—for charity, of course.

One of six main event attractions to take place during the 34th Annual Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach in California, the Toyota Pro/Celebrity Race has grown into the largest, longest-running, corporate-sponsored celebrity racing event in the world. As its popularity has increased, so has the number of female stars of film, television and sports donning their helmets and strapping their seat belts in race-ready Scion tC's for this historic, 10-lap race on a 1.97-mile circuit through the streets of downtown Long Beach to support "Racing for Kids," a national organization that benefits children's hospitals in Southern California.

Jayne Kennedy Vs. Clint Eastwood

The first woman to participate in the Toyota Pro/Celebrity Race was sportscaster Jayne Kennedy, who, in 1979, competed against the likes of Clint Eastwood, James Brolin, Al Unser (who won the pro category), Rick Mears and Olympian Bruce Jenner (who came in first among the celebrities).

By 2002, Olympic swimmer Dara Torres (celebrity category) and professional racer Danica Patrick (pro category) made history, becoming the first and only two female race winners in the event's history. And in 2007, for the first time ever, eight women dominated the field and included International Tennis Hall of Famer Martina Navratilova; radio personality Robin Quivers; actresses Kelly Hu, Kathryn Morris, Emily Procter and Aisha Tyler, plus Kendra Wilkinson, best known



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as one of the three live-in girlfriends of Playboy founder Hugh Hefner in the E! reality TV series "The Girls Next Door."

Cameron Diaz And Gene Hackman

Over the years, fan favorites such as Cameron Diaz, Ashley Judd, Lil' Kim, Melissa Joan Hart, Laila Ali, Kim Alexis and Queen Latifah have tested their skills against celebrities like Frankie Muniz, Patrick Dempsey, George Lucas, Donny Osmond, Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin, Gene Hackman, Woody Harrelson, Karl Malone, Kelsey Grammer, Jay Leno, John Salley, John Elway and many more.

Whether male or female, stars competing for victory lane show up race weekend with much more than a camera-ready smile. Participants commit to eight days of charity involvement, including an intensive four-day training session that teaches stars how to manage the complexities of a street course circuit. After training, the celebrity participants hit the street course in Long Beach for a practice session, followed by

the actual race (scheduled this year for Saturday, April 19), which rips and roars to a cheering crowd of tens of thousands, as well as on national television.

"The excitement and competition is fierce," said Les Unger, national motorsports manager at Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A. "Traditionally, we've found that women are some of the more competitive drivers, but—win or lose—this is a race that's thrilling for all the celebrities and pros alike because it offers the high-speed challenge of real racing combined with a worthwhile charitable endeavor."

\$1.6 Million Donated

In addition to learning the tricks and trades of competitive racing, the star-studded group visits a local hospital to spend time with critically ill children, evoking smiles, laughter and inspiration. On behalf of the race and its participants, Toyota has donated close to \$1.6 million to various children's organizations since 1991.

For more information, visit www.toyota.com/motorsports/pro_celeb.