

NEWS RELEASE



Jan. 7, 2009

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SPORTS INDUSTRY NOT RECESSION PROOF

-Team Hammonds Feeling Effects of Not Having Sponsor-

(HOLT, Fla., Jan. 7, 2009) - - The nation is experiencing a recession that normally does not effect the sports industry. Unfortunately, the recession is doing just that; from the NBA cutting 9% of its work force to the Arena Football League cancelling its 2009 season, it proves to be no different for NHRA Pro Stock Team owner/driver Tom Hammonds, who is having difficulty securing sponsorship for his Race for Achievement Chevy Cobalt for the 2009 NHRA season.

"Everybody is out there looking for potential partners, and we are no different," passionately states Tom Hammonds. "We need a partner like all other race teams in order for us to be competitive and to keep moving forward with our Race for Achievement program."

"Realistically, to have a chance for the Chase for the Championship, we need to have a sponsor before the first race in Pomona, Calif. If not, then, we may not be moving forward."

Hammonds has competed in an abbreviated schedule for the past two seasons due to non sponsorship, and without sponsorship for the 2009 season, his team is in jeopardy of not racing.

"We are not in the position financially to compete on an NHRA 24-race circuit right now, and we have such a tremendous product that we can put on the race track, as well as we can cross promote between the NHRA and the NBA, so any sponsor would be pleased with our program."

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Neville Waters, president and founder of Washington, DC based sports marketing consulting firm The Waters Group, Inc., who has consulted NFL, Nike, and JW Marriott, agrees Hammonds' sponsorship program is a marketer's dream to assist in growing or promoting consumer brands and the sponsorship program has a lot to offer.

"Tom Hammonds offers a comprehensive sponsorship package that provides touch points to brands via grassroots community involvement, direct consumer outreach, advertising and cross promotional opportunities. Mix, match, and modify as you see fit."

"In today's economy smart marketers are searching for ways to maximize their investment and leverage partnerships for their full benefit. [Tom] Hammonds Racing has developed marketing platforms to fulfill the needs of brands to reach their customers in a cost-effective manner," continues Waters.

Waters goes on to say the recession has hit everyone, but no matter how difficult the economic climate is, there are still brands that consumers will use out of necessity and marketers should jump at the chance to partner with Team Hammonds, who is run by a former NBA player.

"The cross promotional benefits with the NBA that are available through Tom Hammonds Racing are unique. The action environment appeals to young audiences while the NBA reinforces the message of vitality, excitement and activity. This value-added opportunity opens the door to expanding upon your target audience to encompass greater diversity in the marketplace. Yet, with Tom Hammonds Racing as the foundation, the marketing message can remain consistent and strong."

Hammonds was drafted 9th overall in the 1989 NBA draft and enjoyed his career with Washington, Denver, Charlotte, and Minnesota, where he completed his career and made a triumphant return to full-time drag racing at the NHRA Gatornationals, Gainesville Raceway in March 2007. With his basketball success, it is often a misconception that Hammonds does not need sponsorship dollars like other race teams.

Hammonds explains, "I thank God that he has blessed me to play basketball and start this racing program, but at the same time this is a business. We have to run it as such! Though I have done well financially, we still need sponsorship dollars to be just as successful as other teams."

But, like other professional race teams, his team is no different; without sponsorship, his performance on the track is limited, as well as off the track. For the 2008 season, Hammonds raced in a total of 13 races for the season and finished in 24th place with 173 points and hosted only four of his signature education programs Race for Achievement, whose mission is to build positive behavior towards education, self-esteem and confidence that build strong students and ultimately good citizen.

"I equate speed and team community involvement with money. The more sponsorship dollars our team has enables us to try different things on the dyno, through our engine department and racing program, as well as test our Chevy Cobalt on the track. That enables us to get more data, which enables us to make better decisions. The consequence is a quicker ET."

"We started the Race for Achievement program last year and it runs in conjunction with our NHRA schedule. Sponsorship dollars enables us to have a program at all 24 races. This allows us to make a grassroots connection in all the race markets."

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While sponsorship dollars will allow Team Hammonds to run more efficiently on the track and off, Raymond Sauer, Professor of Economics at Clemson University and founder of popular sports economics blog, *The Sports Economist*, agrees that marketers should think in terms of exposure that starts now and carries forward over the long term will pay off when the economy turns around.

“Sponsorship investments that start now should be viewed as generating their payoff a few years down the road. But since today's exposure generates tomorrow's returns, not making such an investment today means the returns won't be there tomorrow. In Tom's case, a sponsor has the ability to leverage racing with a well known ACC and NBA basketball player.”

While he believes no sponsorship is recession proof, marketers should view a sponsorship partnerships as a long term investment. Sauer says, “Sure, some firms are paring back budgets because of financial pressures. But growing firms need to see past 2009's downturn and plan ahead. Their sponsorships can take advantage of the vacuum left by firms that are cutting back.”

Confident a sponsor will come, Hammonds is adamant about not wanting to race an abbreviated season or totally not racing. He is hoping a brand will follow-up with him so the team can get started preparing for the season. Until then, his marketing staff and he will continue to search for the money that is needed to move forward.

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About Tom Hammonds Enterprises, LLC (THE)

Tom Hammonds Enterprises, LLC (THE) is located in Holt, Fla. and was formed in 2005. THE takes pride in promoting high performance and safety in the sport of drag racing. Housing such programs as Tom Hammonds Engines, a program specifically for performance drivers to rent custom built engines, and Tom Hammonds Race for Achievement, a school program dedicated to revving the engines of education through student achievement, the company's mission is to make an impact on the sport of drag racing. THE is the only African American owned and driven team in professional motor sports.