

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts: Dara Cothran
212/367-6814
dara.cothran@eurorscg.com

Sharon Noot
714/527-7735
sharon@nootinc.com

Kym Strong
310/874-2513
Kym_strong@toyota.com

Keanu Reeves Wins Celebrity Category of 2009 Toyota Pro/Celebrity Race “King of the Beach” Al Unser Jr. is Overall and Professional Winner

LONG BEACH, Calif. (April 18, 2009) – It was auto racing at its most thrilling as actor Keanu Reeves prevailed over a highly competitive group of stars of film, television and sports to win the Celebrity Category of the 2009 Toyota Pro/Celebrity Race. “The King of the Beach,” six-time Toyota Grand Prix winner Al Unser, Jr., finished first among all drivers and won in the Professional category, followed closely by NASCAR Camping World Truck Series champion Johnny Benson.

Despite enjoying the lead for most of the race, world champion pro skateboarder Danny Way’s hopes of gliding into Victory Circle were dashed when he and Fonzworth Bentley, host of MTV’s “From G’s to Gents,” mixed it up in the ninth lap, giving Reeves the opening he needed to cross the finish line in his race-ready Scion tC only seconds before E! Entertainment Television’s Executive News Editor Ken Baker and comedian Carlos Mencia.

Actress/singer Raven Symoné was the first of the drivers to discover – the hard way – how difficult the 1.97-mile street circuit through the downtown streets of Long Beach can be to navigate, but the plucky Disney star remained as upbeat after the race as the jovial Mencia, who surprised everyone with his third-place finish among the Celebrities.

It was Reeves, however, who claimed to be “in shock” at his triumph. “It is such a great feeling,” said the new celebrity champ after the race. “Bentley and I had been going at it for most of the race, but when I got to the last lap and came around the fountain turn I almost couldn’t believe it. I figured, ‘I’m just gonna go get it.’”

“This field had the crowd cheering through the entire race,” said Les Unger, Toyota Motor Sales USA national motorsports manager. “Each of the celebrities and the pros were hungry to take home the trophy this year, and they brought their best to the show. Throughout training and practice, they were intensely focused but they also enjoyed the experience, which is exactly what the Toyota Pro/Celebrity Race is all about.”

In the Professional Category, Unser overcame the pros' :30-second handicap by the eighth lap and held off the scrappy Benson and Southern California Toyota Dealer representative Tom Rudnai, president of Longo Toyota in El Monte, Calif., who came in third overall. The 2008 Toyota Pro/Celebrity Race winner, ESPN/ABC pit reporter Jamie Little, came in fifth among the Pros.

Mencia echoed the feelings of the rest of the drivers, concluding by complimenting Unser, saying, "It was humbling to be in this thing with a guy [like Unser] who has dominated this track for so many years, and still he made us feel great about being here, smiling and giving us tips. He was always smiling...even when he passed us on the track he was smiling!"

FINAL RACE RESULTS:

Pos	No.	Class	Name	Laps	
1	22	Pro	Al Unser Jr.	10	21:41.273
2	25	Pro	Johnny Benson	10	21:44.001
3	21	President, Longo Toyota	Tom Rudnai	10	21:46.945
4	11	Celebrity	Keanu Reeves	10	21:46.973
5	2	Celebrity	Ken Baker	10	21:49.423
6	18	Celebrity	Carlos Mencia	10	21:50.834
7	24	Pro	Coy Gibbs	10	21:54.021
8	26	Pro	Jamie Little	10	21:56.190
9	14	Celebrity	Tim Daly	10	21:56.296
10	5	Celebrity	Adrien Brody	10	21:56.414
11	1	Celebrity	Eric Close	10	21:56.579
12	19	Celebrity Auction Winner	Annamarie Dean	10	21:59.141
13	16	Celebrity Auction Winner	Doug Fregin	10	22:04.274
14	8	Celebrity	MaryLynn Rajskub	10	22:07.859
15	20	Celebrity	Alex Trebek	10	22:11.287
16	6	Celebrity	Fonzworth Bentley	10	22:14.165
17	9	Celebrity	Danny Way	9	19:54.669
18	17	Celebrity	Raven Symoné	4	10:13.596

Toyota will donate \$5,000 to "Racing for Kids" in the name of each celebrity racer, and another \$5,000 to the winning racer's charity of choice. Racing for Kids is a national non-profit program benefiting children's hospitals in Long Beach and Orange County, Calif. Toyota has donated \$1.7 million on behalf of the race and its participants and various children hospitals since 1991.

Additionally, a \$15,000 donation was made in conjunction with the annual "PEOPLE Pole Award." Sponsored by PEOPLE magazine, the award was given to Danny Way, this year's pole-position winner of the Toyota Pro/Celebrity Race qualifying session. Way selected the Action Sports Environmental Coalition (ASEC) as his charity, to support ASEC's mission of progressive eco-education and empowering people to adopt a sustainable lifestyle. Way is hoping the funds generated by the "PEOPLE Pole Award" will enable ASEC to build a "green" skate park for kids in Hawaii.

The Toyota Pro/Celebrity Race will be broadcast on Speed Channel next month. (See local listings for time and channel.)