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Five AAS Drivers Picked for 2010 NASCAR Drive For Diversity Program *Harraka Heads List, Brunelli, Pitta, Bell and Hagar Also Make the Cut*

By Jeannie Brousal

Roseville, CA - (October 26, 2009) - The competition has always been tough at All American Speedway in Roseville. On any given Saturday night you'll find some of the best drivers on the West Coast competing on the .333 mile asphalt oval.

This was proven last week when five drivers who have previously raced regularly at AAS were chosen for the 2010 NASCAR Drive for Diversity Program after the D4D Testing and Evaluation Combine in Charlotte, North Carolina and Motor Mile Speedway in Virginia, October 16-20.

2008 NASCAR Whelen All-American Late Model champion at All American Speedway Paulie Harraka is at the top of the list.

Harraka has raced in the D4D program for the past three years for Bill McAnally Racing. In 2007 he won Rookie-of-the-Year honors and finished second in the Late Model division at AAS. In 2008 he upped his game by winning 11 races and was the 2008 NASCAR Whelen All American Series Late Model champion at AAS, the first NASCAR championship for a D4D driver.

Harraka went on to race in the NASCAR Camping World West Series for BMR this past year where he became the first ever D4D driver to win a Camping World Series race. His victory came August 15 at the NAPA/Toyota 150 at Colorado National Speedway. Then in stunning fashion, he won his second race on September 26 at All American Speedway.

"There was a talented group of drivers from All American Speedway at the Combine," Harraka said. "We raced door-to-door in Legends cars and it was a blast. We raced Late Models and CWS cars too. It was a hectic week."

Harraka said he has been very lucky to have raced for McAnally because he's always gotten good cars that he could win races in. He also said not everyone has been so lucky, and with the new D4D cars all coming out of the same shop next year, it may produce a more equal playing field.

Jessica Brunelli, who competed in the Modified Division at AAS this past year, also made the cut. Brunelli had 10 top-5 and 13 top-10 finishes this year. She also raced her first Late Model race in August at AAS. Brunelli is a well-rounded driver who finished sixth in points in USAC Ford Focus in 2008.

"The combine was not like I expected," said 16-year old Brunelli. "You hear about it, but you don't really know what its like till you get there. I was really glad to be able to drive all the different types of cars. There was definitely a large amount of talent at the Combine."



"I am very happy to have been selected. To see all the familiar faces that I've been driving against at AAS and who are some of the best NASCAR drivers was comforting."

Juan Pitta earned his second consecutive D4D spot this year, after having raced Late Models for BMR this year at AAS. Pitta had one win and 12 top-5 finishes this season.

"All the driver's invited to the combine this year were first class," Pitta said. "I hope to move forward with the D4D program and follow my dream to race at the top levels of NASCAR."

Also on the list is Mackena Bell, another returning D4D driver. Bell raced this past season at Toyota Speedway in Irwindale for Position One Motorsports. She finished eighth in the points standings with 1 top-5 and 10 top-10 finishes. Bell raced the 2008 season in Late Models at AAS fielding her own car with Mackena Bell Motorsports.

"It was great going to the Combine this year and seeing all the drivers from AAS," Bell said. "We have all worked very hard to get to this point and we west coasters are making a statement."

Last, but not least is Katie Hagar. Hagar raced as a D4D driver in a Late Model for Golden State Racing this year at Madera Speedway and Stockton 99 Speedway. Hagar holds the track record for Late Models at Stockton 99. In 2008 she raced in the D4D program for BMR in the Late Model division at AAS.

"I am truly blessed to be apart of the Diversity program and Revolution Racing for next year," Hagar said. "It's extraordinary to have an opportunity like this."

"After moving 3,000 miles, I can honestly say that I have learned a lot about different aspects of racing while being in California, and I can take that with me wherever I go, in whatever I do."

30 drivers were selected to participate in the D4D Testing and Evaluation Combine presented by Sunoco. From there, the 10 were chosen for the program.

The D4D program gives minority and female drivers opportunities to advance their racing careers, has undergone some major changes for 2010. The drivers will all relocate to Charlotte, NC and participate in an academy-style living arrangements. The 909 Group, which took over operations for D4D in 2009, will own and operate all 10 teams under the Revolution Racing banner.

We spent most of the season thinking about ways to expand opportunities available to the drivers and crew members involved in Drive for Diversity, said Max Siegel, Chief Executive Officer of The 909 Group, which manages the Drive for Diversity program.

To better assess and develop talent, we are putting the drivers under one roof and in identical cars for 2010. This new standardized structure will also create more meaningful sponsorship opportunities that will in turn provide resources necessary to compete at the highest level with the goal of getting drivers to NASCAR's premier series.

A television series called "Changing Lanes", that chronicles the D4D drivers beginning with their time spent at the Combine will air in early 2010 on BET.

To have five out of ten drivers who made the D4D cut come from All American Speedway is a testament to the caliber of drivers and the racing the Speedway attracts.