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TEAM DUPONT ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE POCONO PUZZLE

LONG POND, Pa. (June 2, 2009) - Want a challenge? Jeff Gordon believes a change to the track in 2008 has only added to the puzzle that is Pocono Raceway.

The 2.5-mile track with three unique corners has always provided a challenge to the teams and drivers. A strip of pavement added to the track last year in turn 3 has increased the level of difficulty in preparing the No. 24 DuPont Chevrolet Impala SS.

"Pocono has always been a challenge because of the three very different corners," said Gordon, who is second in the point standings entering Sunday's Pocono 500. "We were always concerned with setup changes and how the adjustments might help you in one corner but hurt you in another. But the strip of pavement in turn 3 has taken it to another level.

"For years, the preferred line was around the bottom in that corner. Now, we're running three grooves up in that corner on the newer pavement. That area is smooth with more grip compared to the rest of the track, which is pretty bumpy with less grip.

"When you already have three unique corners and you throw that into the mix, it makes it a real challenge to set the car up."

In 32 starts at the Pennsylvania track, Gordon has four wins, two poles, 15 top-fives and 22 top-10's. His last win here occurred in this race in 2007 – in the "older" Chevrolet Monte Carlo.

(more)

“The new car has added to the challenge,” said Gordon. “We don’t have the travel in the front end with the Chevrolet Impala like we did with the Monte Carlo. The track is fast and flat but really rough, and we don't have a lot of travel to be able to handle big bumps like that.”

The flat corners and the long track, coupled with a 500-mile race, means the event is likely to be completed in just under four hours. According to the four-time NASCAR Cup Series champion, the race will be even longer because it begins on Friday.

“Track position is very important during this race, so we’re hoping to have a solid effort during qualifying on Friday,” said Gordon. “Qualifying well can make the race a little bit easier to manage.

“But there are many strategies that come into play here. Because of the long lap times, it’s possible to make a pit stop without losing a lap. Or you can take only right-side tires or pit off-sequence.

“There are several strategies that can be used to put yourself into position to win here.”

All parts of a puzzle that, if figured out, could have Team DuPont celebrating their fifth win at Pocono.

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