

Joe Bacal and Lexus Secure First Off Road Championship

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Victory at Primm 300 Clinches Title in First Full Year of Competition

PRIMM, Nevada, September 13, 2010 – Just 15 months ago, Joe Bacal and Lexus surprised the off-road racing establishment with a trouble-free run to victory in the team's very first race at the 2009 Baja 500. Since that first success, the Cancer Treatment Centers of America-sponsored team has enjoyed an unbroken streak of wins and podium finishes that on Saturday culminated in their first off-road championship with a dominant Stock Full-class win at the SCORE Terrible's Las Vegas Primm 300.

"We came into this racing series as off-road racing rookies but we also came prepared," said Bacal. "We did our homework and were confident the Lexus would be fast and reliable. Of course it helps to have a great team and sponsors behind you, too. Things have worked out pretty well."

Well enough, in fact, that Bacal's JTGrey Racing team is now a Lexus factory-supported effort. Up until recently, the luxury automaker provided help on a limited basis but is now fully behind the team leading into the upcoming Baja 1000, and is committed for the 2011 season as well. "Having Lexus' full support behind our racing program is huge," said Bacal.

It has also helped to have a driver with the grit and determination that Bacal—a Hodgkin's Lymphoma survivor—has brought to the racing program. Thus far he has driven every mile of every race, including the 2009 Baja 1000. Then just days ago, Bacal was preparing for the Primm 300 when he took a wrong step off his trailer and cut his knee almost to the bone, requiring 25 stitches to repair. But the idea of not racing never occurred to Bacal.

"The timing of my knee injury was pretty bad; I could only do a really quick shakedown of some changes we made to the LX the day before the race," Bacal lamented. "We weren't sure how the new BF Goodrich Baja TA KR Project race tires would feel at speed, but they made a major difference—our average speed for the race was really good."

With one race left on the SCORE 2010 calendar, Bacal has managed to secure 249 points in the Stock Full class with 3 wins and 1 second place finish. His nearest challenger has 85 points but cannot score enough to surpass Bacal this year, giving Bacal enough of an edge to claim the class championship.

"It's been an amazing year for us but the mother of all off-road races is coming around again and we'd really like to win it as well as the Toyota Milestone Award," noted Bacal. "THAT would be huge!"

The 43rd Tecate SCORE Baja 1000 kicks off on November 17, 2010.