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RALLY/OFF ROAD

Groff Bros., Toyota, BFG Team Up for Offroad Effort

Northridge, Calif., Dec. 6 — Developed as an exciting new entry into the sport of off-road racing, Groff Motorsports and the Rennsport Group today announced plans for fielding a highly visible Class 1 open-wheel unlimited car at select long-distance desert events in 2002. The newly created team, which features Indianapolis 500 drivers Mike and Robbie Groff, will carry the familiar corporate logos of legendary off-road tire manufacturer BFGoodrich Tires and Toyota, another name long associated with the sport, as well as a select list of quality associate partners.

While its four-race 2002 schedule has not been finalized, Groff Motorsports has confirmed its participation in the Best-In-The-Desert (BITD) Nevada 1000 in June and the renowned SCORE Baja 1000 in November. The new state-of-the-art, open-wheel Class 1 car will be driven by both Mike and Robbie Groff, best known for their highly-successful CART, IRL and Indy Lights careers. The BFGoodrich Toyota Class 1 concept also incorporates a unique public relations platform to be executed by the Los Angeles, Calif.-based Rennsport Group to help raise the sport's awareness to local, national and international media outlets. Agency founder and long-time desert racer Marty Fiolka will also drive next season.

Also slated to make a 2002 guest-driver appearance will be 1996 CART FedEx Championship Series champion and Indy 500 veteran Jimmy Vasser, a longtime friend of the Groffs and an enthusiast of open-wheel desert racing.

The Groff Motorsports entry will revolve around a brand-new two-seat chassis being prepared by Jimco of Santee, Calif. The potent open-wheel vehicle features more than 22in of wheel travel, the latest BFGoodrich off-road racing tires and a powerful fuel-injected, FAT Performance-prepared, 3.2-liter aluminum Toyota V6 that is based on a Camry production engine. The car will feature a new, highly creative graphics treatment by Molly Sanders, perhaps best known for his work with Toyota Motorsports, Toyota Racing Development (TRD) and

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"BFGoodrich Tires is very pleased to be part of this program with Groff Motorsports and our longtime colleagues at Toyota," said BFGoodrich Tires director of motorsports Herb Johnson. "The Groff Motorsports program reflects a very creative approach in combining racing with promotion and public relations. We are looking forward to participating in all of the unique components that the project incorporates."



"Desert racing, especially events like the SCORE Baja 1000, are an important part of our fabric at Toyota Motorsports," added Les Unger, national motorsports manager at Toyota Motor Sales USA. "We are very much looking forward to seeing our V6 Camry engine being part of a new relationship with BFGoodrich Tires and Mike and Robbie Groff."



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The 2002 Groff Motorsports campaign is also being supported by a long and impressive list of associate corporate partners. In addition to BFGoodrich Tires and Toyota, parts support will come from TRD, Fox Racing Shox will provide the all-important shock absorbers, Bosch the fuel injection and spark plugs, and Eibach the suspension springs. The car will also feature the latest in Global Positioning Systems (GPS) courtesy of Lowrance.



The Groff brothers both began their racing careers in quarter-midgets before going all the way to Indy Lights machines – all fielded under the Groff Motorsports banner. Five-time Indy 500 driver Mike Groff got his first taste of off-road driving at the 1998 SCORE Baja 1000, where he joined Fiolka in a second-place finish in the SCORE Lites division. Robbie joined brother Mike and fellow open-wheel star Roberto Guerrero in last year's epic SCORE Baja 2000 that ran from Ensenada to Cabo San Lucas.

"The first time I drove an off-road car, I was amazed at just how much fun I was having," admitted Mike, whose first desert experience came only a week before his first race. "These cars are really awesome pieces of racing machinery, with great technology and workmanship. To have the opportunity to build a racing program with such a great list of supporters and a BFGoodrich Toyota car is really something to look forward to. The whole atmosphere at the events reflects the best of what motorsports used to be. Desert racing is still a pure sport." — Speedvision.com staff

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