

THE INSIDER

The Inside Story from Team HUMMER

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TEAM HUMMER OPENS THEIR 2008 RACING SEASON WITH WINS IN STOCK-FULL AND STOCK-MINI AT SCORE 'LAUGHLIN DESERT CHALLENGE'

Laughlin, NV - January 27, 2008: For the second consecutive year, Team HUMMER opened their season with wins in both the Stock-Mini and Stock-Full classes at The SCORE 'Laughlin Desert Challenge', held Jan.26-27, in the Southern Nevada resort town of Laughlin. Although this is the only closed course desert race on our schedule, **Team HUMMER** rose to the challenge to win both Stock-Mini and Stock-Full production classes, duplicating their result from last year's event, although in a dramatically different fashion. The action started in Laughlin Events Park, where the racing began in a motocross style infield. The race wound through a variety of switchbacks and jumps before heading out onto a six mile desert course and ultimately returned to the grandstand area. A total of 17 different classes of cars and trucks were divided into five (5) groups. **Team HUMMER** had three entries in the production class group (#2) and ran five laps of the course on Saturday, Jan 26th and again on Sunday, Jan 27th. The total times for both days of racing were combined to determine the winners in each class.

This was only the second race for Chad Hall in the new #861 H3 Alpha Stock-Full SUV, which won the 40th Annual SCORE 'Baja 1000' last November in it's racing debut. Saturday, Chad Hall finished second, one minute, 38 seconds behind John Griffin in the #860 Ford F-350 Pickup. A broken weld on a strengthening tube, installed to support the upper shock mount, forced him to slow the truck down early in the race, to minimize any damage, allowing Griffin to take the lead on the day and hold it. Starting in the same group, it was business as usual for defending champion, Rod Hall, as he breezed to a win over Steve Kovach in the #761 Ford Ranger, winning by over 16 minutes. Josh Hall, in the #862 H2 SUT was sidelined after three laps with a mysterious electrical problem somewhere in his wiring harness. Back at the main pit after the race the crew made repairs to the H3 Alpha in preparation for Sunday's race but could not isolate the intermittent problem which took the H2 out of competition on day one.

The weather turned bad sometime on Saturday night and we awoke to steady rain and a washed out race course. Off-road racing doesn't stop for variations in weather so all three **Team HUMMER** entries answered the 9:00 AM starting time wearing their foul weather gear. Chad Hall in the #861 H3 Alpha left the line first among the Stock-Full class trucks and jumped out to an early lead closely followed by



Chad and Josh Hall battle for position



#860 Ford and #861 H3 Alpha at the start

Griffin's #860 Ford and Josh Hall in the #862 H2 SUT, who was using Sunday's race in an attempt to determine the nature of his electrical problem. Just as on Saturday, the H2 went 3 laps and the engine died, once again, retiring the truck. Rod Hall was next off the line in the #760 H3 Stock-Mini but as he started up the first hill to head out into the desert, the vehicle was rocked by an exploding sound from the transfer case and all forward motion on the truck was abruptly

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halted, leaving Hall and co-rider, Emily Miller, stranded half way up the hill in harms way. He put it in reverse and was able to back it out of the path of traffic and after testing the various options to see if the truck had any gearing left, found at least one setting that appeared to be working. "We're going to drive it as long as we can" radioed back Emily Miller and off they went, in pursuit of the leader, Kovach in the #761 Ford Ranger. This entire situation, from explosion to backing off the hill to troubleshooting the gears and getting back in the race did not take very long because at the end of the first lap, Hall was only 12 seconds behind the leader and the H3 seemed to be running well.

The rain was falling in a light to medium intensity and the course was littered with pools of slimy mud, causing the race cars to fishtail wildly each time they blasted through one of the mud pools at speed. You could avoid a few of them but had to deal with the majority of the puddles making the event seem more like an extended mud bog than an off-road race. Cars and trucks were littered everywhere along the course adding the elements of an obstacle course to the fray. On the face of it, Laughlin would seem like an easy event, considering that our trucks only had to run 5 laps (30 miles) each day in their group, but the strategy of many racers is to go wide open throttle from the moment the green flag drops and not let up until the race is over, about an hour later. This sort of mentality, while it may seem unavoidable in such a short race, adds to serious carnage on raceday and is compounded by the fact that five heat races are contested over the same six-mile stretch of desert



The #760 H3 and the #761 Ford race for the lead

each day. The ditches and ruts that began on Saturday only 6" deep wound up on Sunday being three-foot deep pools of slime. While it took the H3 Alpha just over 52 minutes to cover the five lap heat race on Saturday, it took over 67 minutes to complete the same course on Sunday. Of the 141 entries that started the race, only 40 would finish which amounts to a 28% finishing rate. Even the toughest desert race can expect a finishing rate of 50% or better. Winning at Laughlin is more a question of survival than of strategy.

By the end of the second lap Chad Hall and the #861 H3 Alpha had built up a 4 1/2 minute lead over Griffin's #860 Ford F-350. The four-wheel drive and the more nimble footprint of the Alpha gave it a distinct advantage over the heavier two-wheel drive Ford, particularly in the muddy pools. Chad extended his lead to five minutes, 45 seconds by the time they arrived at the finish line. After doing the math, it took Chad three minutes, seven seconds less time to cover the ten laps, on both days, giving the #861 **Team HUMMER H3 Alpha** the win at Laughlin.



The Team HUMMER H3 Alpha Takes on the Mud

After building up a 16 minute lead on Saturday, Rod Hall merely had to stay somewhere on the same lap with Kovach to win the event but Rod was determined to catch the # 761 Ford and beat him to the finish. By the end of the second lap, The #760 **Team HUMMER H3** had trimmed the Ford's lead down to 9 seconds and passed him on lap #3 adding 27 seconds to his lead by the start of the fourth lap. The #761 Ford turned in a good time on lap #4 and the two trucks went out on the 5th and final lap in a dead heat. Hall never backed off and brought the #760 **Team HUMMER H3 SUV** across the finish line 33 seconds in front of Steve Kovach and the #761 Ford Ranger, winning the his second consecutive 'Laughlin Desert Challenge' and both heat races.

Back at the shop, after the event, a faulty wire was located in the middle of the wiring harness, near the engine, and was determined to be the cause of the electrical problems on the H2. After replacing the wire and testing the truck, it was cleaned up and shipped to Parker, Arizona for *Best in the Desert Racing Association's* season opening 'Parker 425', the following weekend. -grt

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TEAM HUMMER DRAWS THREE OF A KIND AT *BEST IN THE DESERT'S* SEASON OPENING BLUE WATER RESORT & CASINO 'PARKER 425'

Parker, Arizona - February 2, 2008: *Best in the Desert Racing Association's* Blue Water Resort & Casino 'Parker 425' got underway for **Team HUMMER** shortly before 9:00 AM on Saturday, Feb. 2nd. 295 Cars and trucks left the starting line in Downtown Parker and by the end of the day only 137 would finish, which will give you some idea how demanding it was to run multiple loops around this 138 mile-long stretch of Arizona desert. Class 8100 (Josh Hall) was scheduled to drive three laps around the course, while Class 4100 (Chad Hall) and Class 3100 (Rod Hall) only had to go around twice. The race got off to a shaky start, with problems dogging two of the **Team HUMMER** race trucks on the first lap of the event. About 105 miles into the race, Josh Hall, in the #8111 H2 SUT suffered a broken, driver's side tie rod end, a part that rarely fails. It took about 15 minutes to replace the tie rod assembly with our onboard spare only to have the passenger side tie rod end fail in a similar way about 20 miles further on. There was no apparent reason for either of these failures and the replacement tie rods lasted for the duration of the event. The fact that we had no further tie rod failures lead us to conclude that we would need to take a closer look at the broken units after the race to determine if the original tie rods had been faulty in some way. Meanwhile, the tie rod repairs had put the #8111 **Team HUMMER** H2 about 30 minutes off the pace but it was still early and the truck was running well, once again.



Heidi Mrkulic Photo

Josh Hall at the end of Lap One

Rod Hall got off to a good start in the #3111 **Team HUMMER** H3 SUV and was enjoying a comfortable lead until shortly before race-mile 40 when the center bolt on the rear passenger side spring pack sheared off, forcing the H3 to stop at Pit #2 (RM 54) where Jeff Buffmeyer and Dave Williams were waiting to make the repair. The fix was labor intensive, requiring almost two hours to complete, before the #3111 H3 was back in the race. Rod stopped at the end of the first lap, almost two hours behind the leader and Mike Winkel took over behind the wheel. Winkel ran a trouble-free final lap and brought the #3111 **Team HUMMER** H3 SUV in for a second place finish shortly before 8:00 PM.



John Pappenfort

Our crew inspects the spring damage on the H3

Chad Hall ran both laps, in the #4111 **Team HUMMER** H3 Alpha SUV, with Thad Stump in the navigator's seat. Chad had no troubles on the course but the new Alpha still needs some fine tuning to the running gear and suspension before we can realize the truck's full potential. Marc Stein in the #4102 Ford Expedition had a flawless race and beat us to the finish by 27 minutes. The H3 Alpha came away with a second place finish which is a good start to the BitD season.



John Pappenfort

Chad Hall and the H3 Alpha on second lap

Although the new H3 Alpha has run three races with great reliability and success, achieving the true potential of an off-road race vehicle is an ongoing process. It's a testimonial to driver Chad Hall as well as Matt Laramie and his team at the GM proving Ground, who built the truck on a very tight schedule, that the H3 Alpha has done so well right out of the box. Armed with the new information we learn from each event, Laramie and his crew will continue to make adjustments until the full potential of the truck is realized. Much of what we learn from this process will ultimately find it's way onto the production line improving the safety, quality and performance of every product that HUMMER sells.

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Josh Hall had moved the #8111 H2 into second place at race-mile 32, on the third and final lap, just 12 miles behind the #8106 Ford, driven by Larry Tunnell, Jr. of Parker, Arizona. The H2 had run perfectly since the tie rod problems on the opening lap and was gradually reeling in the class leading Ford, coming within a mile of him when he passed through Pit #4 (RM 104). Unfortunately the H2 had worn out all the linings on the brake pads half way into lap three and although the H2 was faster on the graded sections of the course, he could not keep up in the rough terrain, where the use of brakes are critical. Equally unfortunate was the fact that the final 30 miles of the course was very technical (rough) terrain, so Josh had to slow it down and settle for our third 2nd place finish on the day. The good news was that this was the first finish for the H2 and it was a solid one, coming in just 23 minutes off the class win. We'll analyze the brake pads back at the shop and come up with a more durable solution in time for our next race which is the SCORE 'San Felipe 250, March 14-15 in San Felipe, BC, Mexico.



Hall/Cothrun/Miller at the finish in the #8111 H2

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TEAM HUMMER TAKES BOTH PRODUCTION CLASS VICTORIES AT TECATE/SCORE 'SAN FELIPE 250'

San Felipe, Mex - March 15, 2008: On a wind-swept Baja California day, **Team HUMMER's** three entries ran a virtually trouble-free race at the Tecate/SCORE 'San Felipe 250', finishing first and third in the Stock-Full production class and also winning in the Stock-Mini production class. After taking an early lead in the Stock-Full class, Josh Hall led the race



Josh Hall grinds his way through the silt in the H2

all day in the #861 **Team HUMMER H2 SUT** with chief mechanic Sam Cothrun in the navigator's seat. Hall gradually extended his lead over the competition throughout the afternoon and was out in front by eight miles when he passed through Checker Pit #1 at race-mile 55. Other than a brief stop to take on fuel at RM 109, the only time he stopped came after he had drifted into a spiny bush which had, as it's defense mechanism, golf ball sized clusters of needles on the tips of it's branches, several of which became embedded in Josh and his driver's suit. This called for an immediate stop to carefully remove the offending pin cushions, left behind in the wake of the impact, before getting on with his race.

About ten miles back, Chad Hall and Thad Stump, in the #863 **Team HUMMER H3 Alpha**, were locked in a drag race with the #860 Ford F-350 driven by John Griffin and the #878 Dodge Ram 2500 driven by Kent Kroeker, both worthy adversaries. About ten miles into the race, the #863 H3 Alpha developed an electrical problem, causing many of the truck's electronic and fuel systems to behave erratically. Thad Stump seemed to think it had to do with the onboard computer so they pulled over and briefly disconnected the battery, allowing the systems to re-boot. After a short time, Chad restarted the truck, which ran perfectly from that moment on and got back in the race. By Pit #1 (RM 55), the #863 H3 Alpha had caught up with the pack and was running in fourth place. The battle here was for second place since Josh, in the H2 SUT, had an eight-mile lead and was in apparent control of the Stock-Full race. The #860



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Ford, the #878 Dodge and the #863 H3 Alpha were all within a mile of each other and seemed evenly matched on this particular day. At the BFG pit (RM 109) the #860 Ford pulled in for fuel and a driver change but had some problem taking on fuel and the extra time they spent in the pit allowed the Dodge and the H3 Alpha to get by him.

Chad had moved into third and was running in the dust of the big Hemi powered Dodge but the Alpha had broken a leaf on his rear spring-pak early in the race and was having trouble getting by him in the miles of sandy, rolling terrain that made up most of the course between RM 55 and RM 149. Chad stayed right on the Dodge's bumper and both trucks were dueling it out until RM 136 when Spirkoff, now driving the #860 Ford, caught up and passed them both. Shortly after making his move into second place, the driveline on the big Ford F-350 broke, relegating him back to fourth place while he repaired the damage. The #861 H2 SUT remained in the lead and had extended his lead to 12 miles over the second place truck while all this was taking place.



Chad Hall and the H3 Alpha in Matomi Wash

At this point, Rod Hall, with Damien Michelin in the second seat, was running about 20 miles behind the #861 **Team HUMMER** H2 in his #760 H3 Stock-Mini truck. The 2006/07 SCORE Stock-Mini Class Champion was running in the class lead and only had to finish for the win given that his competition had all sustained damage in an effort to keep up with the veteran Hall. The H3 pitted at RM 149 for a driver change and Mike Winkel got behind the wheel for a trouble-free race to the finish with Jake Povey in as navigator. This is the second consecutive SCORE Stock-Mini victory for the H3 and team owner Rod Hall, this year, and puts him firmly in the lead for his third consecutive SCORE Stock-Mini points championship. Chad Hall has the H3 Alpha in the points lead in the Stock-Full points chase by two points over John Griffin, in the Ford F-350. After the faulty wiring problem at Laughlin put him out of the race, Josh Hall's winning effort in San Felipe has moved him into third place in the SCORE Stock-Full Points standings and the H2 SUT seems to be getting sorted out. A new brake compound and some adjustments to the ABS brake system seems to have fixed the brake pad wear problem the H2 experienced at Parker as there was no significant brake wear after the race in San Felipe. After three second place finishes at *Best in the Desert Racing Association's* first event, the 'Parker 425', all three HUMMERs stand second in points heading into *Best in the Desert's* second race of the season, 'Terrible's 250 at Primm', April 18-20.



Winkel/Povey and the #760 H3 at the Finish

Team HUMMER is off to a good start after the first three events of the 2008 racing season and the team is confident that our HUMMERs will continue to run out front for the remainder of the racing season. Of course, none of our success would be possible without the help we receive from our various partners and we want to thank them all for their support. The Second Quarter edition of the **Team HUMMER Insider** will be out in mid June and will cover the upcoming *Best in the Desert* 'Terrible 250 at Primm' and the SCORE 'Baja 1000', May 30 - June 1.

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