



## Press Release

(For immediate distribution)

### RAPHAEL LESSARD ADDS TWO NASCAR TRUCK RACES TO HIS SEASON WITH DGR-CROSLEY

**Saint-Joseph-de-Beauce** (Quebec, Canada) - **June 6, 2019.** Since last January, Raphael Lessard Racing has been assembling a suitable 2019 learning season for Raphael Lessard, to allow him to continue developing as a race driver and to turn his passion into a reality. A further step towards those goals is now added with the inclusion of two NASCAR Gander Outdoors Truck Series races in the Toyota Tundra #17 **Réseau dynamique** | FRL Express truck prepared by DGR-Crosley. That team is affiliated with Toyota Racing Development (TRD), as is the promising young driver. The quick-learner will be on the track at the Iowa Speedway 7/8 mile (1.4 km) banked oval on June 15 for the "M&M'S 200 Presented by Casey's General Store" event. He will also race on the legendary Canadian Tire Motorsport Park (CTMP) road circuit on August 24 and 25.

"I am really happy to participate in these two additional truck races. The DGR-Crosley team has changed several personnel since I last raced with them two years ago. Things do look great, as Crew Chief Kevin "Bono" Manion has an excellent reputation at all levels in NASCAR. In addition, I participated in a test session in Iowa on May 21 and covered 100 laps, which will allow me to drive hard right from the start of the first practice session," explains the driver of the #17 **Réseau dynamique** | FRL Express truck.

"Running at CTMP will be a challenge. I don't have an enormous amount of experience on road courses and driving a truck on such a fast track is going to be very special. The key will be in the preparation: extensive simulator work and in-depth sessions with driving coaches who know the track well. I would also like to thank my partners, especially Réseau dynamique and the people who allow me to have great experiences like these two races."

The addition of these races to Raphael Lessard's calendar is directly related to his brilliant performances so far this season, as his on-track work has not gone unnoticed by the powers that be. Whether driving a NASCAR truck (Martinsville, Virginia | Dover, Delaware), in the K&N series (Bristol, Tennessee) or in ARCA (Pensacola, Florida | Pocono, Pennsylvania), the promising young racer has always demonstrated his enormous on-track talent. In addition to his thrilling driving technique, Raphael Lessard quickly understood race strategies, how to fine tune suspensions in preparation for each race or open practice days and developed his ability to communicate with the crew. In addition, he is consistently the quickest driver on teams that he works with.

"I'm super excited to work with Raphael again. He's a great kid. He won a CARS Tour Championship with us back in 2016 and it's been really fun to watch his progression the past few years. He's done a great job in his first two truck races with KBM. He's put together solid races, ran all the laps and that's what it takes to learn and get better at this level. We are looking forward to getting him over here in one of our Tundras and continuing to help him learn and grow", said David Gilliland, the co-owner of DRG-Crosley.

Raphael Lessard's partners are working towards the 2020 goals: a full-time ride in the NASCAR Gander Outdoors Truck Series, augmented by some strategically targeted races for visibility and experience (ARCA and Xfinity). Raphael Lessard would also love to race in major NASCAR Pinty's Series events, namely the iconic Grand Prix de Trois-Rivières (June 10 and 11) and the Pinty's round held at CTMP on the same weekend as the NASCAR trucks in late August. His participation in these events in 2019 are dependent on the successful outcome to the search for the required budget that is already underway.

**Photo credit:** Nigel Kinrade Photography

**High resolution pictures:** <http://bit.ly/31deAJa>

#### 2019 SEASON

DATE	TRACK	SERIES	TEAM	GRID	RESULT	Notes
March 9, 2019	Five Flags Speedway, Pensacola, USA	ARCA	KBR Development	6th	8th	Led 83 of 250 laps
March 23, 2019	Martinsville Speedway, Virginie, USA	Gander Outdoors Truck	Kyle Busch Motosports	7th	14th	---
April 6, 2019	Bristol Motor Speedway, Tennessee, USA	K&N Pro East	Bill McAnally Racing	17th	9th	Mechanical problem and team penalty
April 10 & 11, 2019	Bristol Motors Speedway	Gander Outdoors Truck	Kyle Busch Motosports	--	--	Practice
May 3, 2019	Dover International Speedway, Delaware, USA	Gander Outdoors Truck	Kyle Busch Motosports	7th	11th	Quickest time in practice session
May 21 & 21, 2019	Iowa Speedway, Newton, USA	Gander Outdoors Truck	Kyle Busch Motosports	--	--	Practice
May 31, 2019	Pocono Raceway, Pennsylvanie, USA	ARCA	KBR Development	7th	4th	--
June 15, 2019	Iowa Speedway, Newton, USA	Gander Outdoors Truck	DGR – Crosley			
June 29, 2019	Autodrome Chaudière, Vallée-Jonction, Québec	ACT	Bilodeau Brothers			
June 29, 2019	Autodrome Chaudière, Vallée-Jonction, Québec	Pinty's	Dumoulin Competition			
July 27, 2019	Autodrome Chaudière, Vallée-Jonction, Québec	ACT	Bilodeau Brothers			
July 30, 2019	Autodrome Chaudière, Vallée-Jonction, Québec	Sportsman Dirt	Autodrome Granby			

			Production JR			
July 30, 2019	Autodrome Chaudière, Vallée-Jonction, Québec	ACT	Bilodeau Brothers			
August 15, 2019	Bristol Motor Speedway, Tennessee, USA	Gander Outdoors Truck	Kyle Busch Motorsports			
August 17, 2019	Autodrome Chaudière, Vallée-Jonction, Québec	ACT	Bilodeau Brothers			
August 25, 2019	Canadian Tire Motorsport Park, Bowmanville, Ontario, Canada	Gander Outdoors Truck	DGR-Crosley			

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#### **ABOUT RAPHAEL LESSARD**

Born on July 5, 2001, in Saint-Joseph-de-Beauce, Quebec, Canada, Raphael Lessard is one of the most promising prospects in North American oval racing. Raphael made his debut in stock-cars in 2013, on local tracks in the Quebec City area. His exceptional talent quickly allowed him to climb the ladder and attract the attention of David Gilliland, a former NASCAR Monster Energy Series driver and now a team owner, in 2015. An agreement then allowed Lessard to participate in the last four races of the season in the PASS North Tour Series; a Late Model series on paved ovals, at the wheel of a David Gilliland Racing team car.

In 2016, his first full-time season with Gilliland Racing, Lessard won the CARS Super Late Model Tour title with four wins, 8 top five and 9 top ten in his No. 99 Toyota Camry, and thus becoming the youngest Canadian driver to win a major stock car series title in the United States. Since 2016, Lessard has been part of the Toyota Racing Development (TRD) prestigious driver development program. To date, he is the only Canadian to have been recruited into this program.

#### **2018 - 16 races - Super Late Model with Kyle Busch Motorsports**

- Two wins, seven top-5s and 13 top-10s
- Wins the U.S. Short Track Nationals race at Bristol Motor Speedway
- Wins the Red Bull 400 at Anderson Speedway
- Leads 60 laps at the famous Snowball Derby in December, before a mechanical problem puts him out of the race with only six (6) laps to go.

#### **2017 - Competed in 20 Super Late Model races and two ARCA series races**

- Two wins and eight top-5 finishes in the Super Late Model category
- A top-10 from two races in the ARCA series
- Voted the most popular driver in North America by Speed51.com
- Voted as one of the top 10 drivers to watch in 2017 by Speed51.com

- Named by Speed51.com Short Track Power Ranking as 7th best driver in the United States

#### **2016 - Participated in 10 races**

- CARS Super Late Model Series Champion
- Youngest Canadian driver to win a prestigious stock-car series in the United States
- Four wins, eight top-5s and nine top-10s in 10 races

#### **ABOUT RÉSEAU DYNAMIQUE**

Working in the industry for more than 50 years, the Réseau Dynamique is a consortium of dealers and associates for the sale of International and Isuzu heavy trucks brand. We also offer after-sales service and the sale of parts related to these brands. We are proud of all our employees, because without them we would not be where we are today.

#### **ABOUT FRL EXPRESS Inc.**

F.R.L. Express Inc. is a general transportation company founded in 2004 by François Lessard. Its main field of activity over the last 15 years is general transport in closed trailers over short and long distances in Canada and the United States. FRL currently have about 50 employees in addition to about ten tow carriers. FRL owners are proud of the progress made in recent years thanks to the FRL team members and wishes to continue on this positive note. "Our employees, customer service and satisfaction are our priorities. We are all proud to be partners in the success and achievements of our son Raphael Lessard," state the proud parents.

#### **ABOUT DGR-CROSLEY**

DGR-Crosley is a race team owned by NASCAR veteran David Gilliland and Crosley Brands CEO, Bo LeMastus. The team specializes in driver development, competing full-time in the NASCAR Gander Outdoors Truck Series, NASCAR K&N Pro Series and CARS Tour, as well running select ARCA Menards Series and late model races with factory support from Toyota. In its first year of operation, DGR-Crosley won 7 of 14 K&N East races, securing a Driver and Owner Championship. The team operates out of two buildings totaling 55,000 square feet in Mooresville, N.C.

#### **ABOUT TOYOTA**

Toyota (NYSE:TM), creator of the Prius hybrid and the Mirai fuel cell vehicle, is committed to building vehicles for the way people live through our Toyota and Lexus brands. Over the past 60 years, we've built more than 30 million cars and trucks in North America, where we operate 14 manufacturing plants (10 in the U.S.) and directly employ more than 44,000 people (more than 34,000 in the U.S.). Our 1,800 North American dealerships (nearly 1,500 in the U.S.) sold nearly 2.6 million cars and trucks (2.45 million in the U.S.) in 2016 - and about 85 percent of all Toyota vehicles sold over the past 15 years are still on the road today.

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