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For Immediate Release

An Open Letter on Better Racing Safety from Jim Downing

To: Drivers, Track Owners and Motor Racing Media
From: Jim Downing, co-founder of HANS Performance Products
Subject: Safety on U.S. short tracks and drag strips

Atlanta, Ga. (Aug. 22, 2013) — It's a sad fact the number of fatal accidents in motor racing is worse than people realize. We know, because it's been part of our responsibility as a safety company to keep up with injurious accidents to learn what we can for future reference.

From April of this year through August, there have been at least 20 fatal accidents around the world where a driver or co-driver has been killed due to a racing incident. By any standard, it's been a disastrous season. But there's another statistic that's even worse. The rate of fatal accidents on short ovals and drag strips in the U.S. continues to get worse. Since Dale Earnhardt's fatal accident at Daytona, there have been at least 149 drivers killed in crashes on short tracks and drag strips – despite all the new safety improvements available. This data comes from the landmark safety study by the Charlotte Observer, SFI and current media accounts.

This tragic trend among weekend warriors has been evident in the past two seasons. In April through August of last year, four drivers were killed by crashes on short ovals and two were killed on drag strips. With several months remaining in the season, this year five drivers have been killed on short ovals during this same time span and three drivers have died in drag racing accidents.

We can do better than this in U.S. motor racing. This letter is a plea for drivers and track owners to take steps that can immediately improve safety on short ovals and drag strips. Four pieces of equipment can make a vital difference in cockpit safety: Head Restraints, full containment seats, head surrounds and side nets.

Of the eight fatalities on short ovals and drag strips this year, we believe the proper use of this system of cockpit safety equipment could have resulted in more favorable outcomes in five of the crashes.

Weekend warriors can install this equipment at a reasonable cost without waiting for track owners to build expensive solutions that may not be feasible.

It's a matter of drivers realizing that the sport of racing will always be dangerous no matter what type of track or car is involved or how high or low the speeds. When it comes to speed, last December at the IMIS Safety and Technical Conference, we

demonstrated that a Delta V (sudden decrease in velocity) of 42 mph can result in a fatal head or neck injury.

At the IMIS conference, we also cited statistics about the deaths of weekend warriors on short ovals and drag strips increasing since the death of Earnhardt. Sadly, that trend appears to be continuing. In honor of those racers who have been killed and with an eye on the future, we hope that as a respected member of the motorsports community you will join us in making racing safer and help raise awareness about improving safety for weekend warriors.

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