

Joe Bacal Captures Second with Marathon Drive in Baja 1000

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Baja 1000

Cancer Survivor Goes the Distance Solo in Punishing Race

ENSENADA, Mexico, November 23, 2009 – After taking an “out of nowhere” victory at the Baja 500 earlier this season, cancer survivor and off-road rookie sensation Joe Bacal nearly stole the show again with an epic 27-hour drive in the Cancer Treatment Centers of America / JTGrey Lexus LX 570 to finish runner-up in the 42nd running of the Tecate SCORE Baja 1000 last Friday and Saturday.

“It’s tough to narrowly miss the big prize, but just crossing the finish line in the biggest off-road race—and doing it after battling cancer—is a victory, both professionally and personally,” said Bacal. “Even after driving straight through the night, I felt good at the finish. I was dialed in and so was my Lexus—this was fun!”

Bacal and navigator Gerald “Smitty” King stormed out of Ensenada at 11:59 Friday morning in the LX 570 and quickly settled into a comfortably quick pace, making good time early on. “King Shocks’ new suspension setup made the LX fast and easy to control,” observed Bacal. But the infamous Baja 1000 lived up to its reputation. Many competitors noted that it was one of the toughest in memory, with dust and visibility a near constant challenge that made passing a precarious process at best. “There were a number of times that I came up to pass slower cars and had to wait a long time because the dust was so heavy and going off course (to pass) was very risky.”

Driving through the dark desert night without the dust presents its own set of visibility problems but Bacal credits the banks of KC HiLiTES on his Lexus for helping him through. “The big KCs really light up the desert,” he noted.

Aside from scheduled stops for fuel, there were few other surprises as Bacal used his considerable off-road skills to keep the big Lexus out of trouble for most of the race. As in his previous races, the BF Goodrich tires never failed, but Bacal did have one mechanical issue that required two stops to finally sort as the pounding desert landscape took its toll. Another unscheduled stop to free the rig after getting stuck briefly and Bacal and King never looked back, arriving back in Ensenada in just over 27 hours.

Their extraordinary effort was only the third race for Bacal and his Cancer Treatment Centers of America-sponsored team, but his consistently high finishes also earned him a remarkable second place in SCORE International’s driver points for the Stock Full class. “I think we surprised a lot of people with our racing program this year,” noted Bacal. “My team, sponsors and family also made huge contributions. Another special mention goes to Long Beach Racers for their excellent race support.” NBC Sports will provide delayed coverage of this year’s Tecate SCORE Baja 1000, currently scheduled to air on December 19 at 2:00 p.m. ET.

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For more information and updates on Joe Bacal, visit www.controlamidchaos.com.

Bacal and the JTGrey team acknowledge the following companies for their outstanding products, services and support:

Cancer Treatment Centers of America (sponsor)

Lexus (LX 570)

BF Goodrich (tires)

Toyota Racing Development (wheels, performance parts)

King Shocks (suspension components)

KC HiLiTES (lighting)
Long Beach Racers (race support)
Head First Design (graphics and marketing support)
Old Man Emu (off road accessories)
Débaufre Swiss Watches
Sparco (seats, safety equipment)
Mechanix Wear
Chet Huffman Motorsports (expertise)
Geiser Brothers Racing (vehicle build and prep)
Powertank (CO2)
Zeal Optics (sunglasses)
IonEarth (global race positioning)

About JTGrey:

JTGrey Performance Driving, LLC was created in 2007 by Joe and Teresa Bacal to provide expert high-performance driving services (on and off-road) to the auto industry and related companies such as parts suppliers, print advertising and marketing agencies and the commercial and feature film industries, among others. The company is based in Phoenix, Arizona.

JTGrey Racing was created by Joe and Teresa Bacal in 2008 to support Joe's off-road racing efforts and is also based in Phoenix.

Note to Editors:

High-resolution images and b-roll are available. Please contact Brad Nelson or Teresa Bacal with your needs.

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