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What's Up Doc? Looney Tunes Invade Richmond This Weekend

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Who would've thought that Bugs Bunny and his friends would be the showcase of perhaps the biggest NASCAR-related promotion ever around a single race? But this weekend in Richmond, Warner Bros. Consumer Products is teaming up with Chevrolet, Action Performance and Richmond Int'l Raceway (RIR) for their second annual Looney Tunes promo, this one titled, "Looney Tunes — The Rematch." The effort is tied to Chevy's entitlement of tomorrow night's Winston Cup Chevy Monte Carlo 400 at RIR. Chevrolet Monte Carlo Assistant Brand Manager Terry Dolan said, "Many companies that buy race entitlements stop their marketing at that particular juncture, but Chevrolet has built a fully integrated marketing campaign around the race." This year's race will feature 11 Team Monte Carlo drivers — nine in Winston Cup and two in the Busch Series — who will be piloting cars with Looney Tunes characters emblazoned on them. Action Performance will produce merchandise around the promo, including die-cast cars, shirts, caps, Christmas ornaments and driver towels. Action CEO Fred Wagenhals was pleased with last year's results, as the merchandising revenue approached \$30M. But Wagenhals added, "We've made The Rematch a little more exciting, ... and this year's revenue should be over \$30[M]." The objective of this campaign is simple — for Chevy and Warner Bros., it's to build brand awareness; for Action, it's to sell merchandise; and for RIR, it's to sell tickets — but the activation and execution of the effort is complex, with each of the four properties complementing each other.



[View All Of The Looney Tune Cars](#)

SPONSORS: Wagenhals said that obtaining space on the race cars, rights for which primary sponsors pass through to one-race partners like Warner Bros., wasn't difficult because Warner Bros. is a "quality third party." Wagenhals: "These sponsors are probably going to get a lot more for their dollar than if they'd just have a standard paint scheme." An added incentive is that team sponsors will share in the merchandise revenue. Warner Bros. Consumer Products VP/Promotional Marketing Dave Hedrick said, "We try to work with the sponsors on other value-added programs, such as having costumed characters make appearances at some of their internal events or at their hospitality suites during the race." Meanwhile, because of Dale Earnhardt Jr.'s tie to Budweiser, Warner Bros. was precluded from involving the driver in the Winston Cup part of the promo. But Chevy and Action stepped up to back Earnhardt's car in tonight's Busch Series Funai 250. The chart below details the character/driver/sponsor combinations this weekend.

CHARACTER	DRIVER	NO.	SPONSOR
Bugs Bunny	Jeff Gordon	24	DuPont
Tasmanian Devil	Kevin Harvick	29	GM Goodwrench
Daffy Duck	Jeff Green	30	America Online

Marvin The Martian & K9	Bobby Hamilton	55	Schneider Electric
Pepe Le Pew	Robby Gordon	31	Cingular Wireless
Yosemite Sam	Mike Skinner	4	Kodak Max Film
Road Runner & Wile E. Coyote	Terry Labonte	5	Kellogg's
Tweety & Sylvester	Jimmie Johnson	48	Lowe's
Speedy Gonzales	Joe Nemechek	25	UAW-Delphi
Gossamer^	Dale Earnhardt Jr.	8	Action/Chevrolet
Yosemite Sam^	Kerry Earnhardt	12	Jani-King

^ = Busch Series

PROMOTION: In the run-up to tomorrow's premiere event, Chevy promoted the race through a national "Pick the Winner, Pocket the Car" sweeps, which launched in May and ended September 3. The sweeps dangled the Grand Prize of an '03 Monte Carlo. To tie in with Looney Tunes, each sweeps player had to pick a driver/character pair, such as Jeff Gordon & Bugs Bunny, that they predicted would come closest to winning the Monte Carlo 400. From the players that picked the top pair, Chevy will draw for the Grand Prize winner. The Grand Prize will be awarded in Charlotte, where the winner will be escorted in his or her new car by Jeff Green, who drives the AOL-sponsored No. 30 Chevy, to Richard Childress Racing in Welcome, NC, for a tour of the facility. Chevy and Action promoted the sweeps via various platforms, including Web sites and print ads in racing, trade and mainstream publications. The two companies have cross-promoted each other in their ad. As part of an arrangement between Warner Bros. Consumer Products and Time Warner Cable (TWC), Chevy is running the bulk of its TV spots on TWC. Hedrick said, "It's based on a barter relationship we have with (TWC) in exchange for some advertising usage of the characters, and they made this time available to us to support our various marketing initiatives." Meanwhile, AOL is supporting the program with the AOL Keyword: Monte Carlo 400, and Warner Bros. Online, including LooneyTunes.com, is participating in the event and providing a link to Chevy.com. Turner's NASCAR.com is also highlighting the campaign and its merchandise through a special Looney Tunes schematic.

REACHING THEIR MARKET: While the night races at RIR routinely sell out the 100,000-seat facility, RIR Senior Dir of Marketing & Sales Roger Curtis admits having the Looney Tunes has been beneficial to marketing the September event. One of those benefits is the use of the likenesses and voices of the Looney Tunes characters, which RIR has incorporated into all of its advertising. Also, to boost attendance at last night's Craftsman Truck Series Virginia is for Lovers 200 and tonight's Busch race, RIR is giving a limited-edition Bugs Bunny bobblehead doll to each fan who purchased a ticket to both events. RIR's most aggressive marketing push was through various regional promos with its media partners. Nine winning families are attending today's festivities at the track, with each family paired with a driver and that driver's Looney Tunes character, and they'll have a meet-and-greet and photo op. Curtis: "We did it last year, and it was probably the most successful promotion that we've ever done, and I think it will be even bigger this year."

ON-SITE EFFORTS: The effort in Richmond this weekend is as aggressive as the lead-up marketing. The Looney Tunes are the centerpiece of RIR's annual Fan Fest, which includes show cars and Looney Tunes characters, as well as a giant slide, simulators, a moonwalk, a rock climbing wall and entertainment. In addition, Warner Bros. has invited licensees to sample products at Fan Fest. Warner Bros. will also stage its Taz Atti-Tour, a 19-stop extreme sports national event series, in Richmond this weekend. Also, this morning, Chevy entertained fans with a golf cart race featuring the drivers, who were at the wheel while their respective Looney Tunes characters rode shotgun. To keep it competitive, Chevy loaned the winning driver a new '03 50th Anniversary Corvette for a month. In attendance for the golf cart race were children from the Richmond chapter of the National Association of Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE), and Chevy made a donation to SAVE in each driver's name. Keeping with the Warner Bros. tie, the race was simulcast live on NASCAR.com.

SHOP AT HOME: After good results last year, QVC once again televised a special hour-long show last night to tout Action's merchandise. The live broadcast from RIR featured Green, Robby Gordon and Kevin Harvick, as well as a live audience. Wagenhals said last year's show accounted for well over \$1M in

merchandise sales, and he expects equal success this year.

PART III? Will there be a sequel to this sequel? Hedrick: "We're talking about it. The big initiative for us next year will be the Looney Tunes movie, which will be released in November '03. So we need to make sure what we do from a promotional and marketing standpoint plays into that. We'd like to find a way to be involved in NASCAR, because it has a tremendous fan base." Dolan added, "We've pulled off a fun event two years in a row, and I don't know what direction we want to go forward with for a replay a third time out." Wagenhals said, "I'm certain we're going to do something next year. What we're going to do, I don't know yet" (*THE DAILY*).
