



Drivers Use Race Cars to Raise Awareness of Colon Cancer

Press Release: DAYTONA, Florida, January 29, 2009 – On February 7th, 2009, ARCA drivers will display the **Blue Star Symbol** – the colon cancer symbol of hope – on their race cars to show their support for fellow driver **Tim Mitchell**, a five-year colon cancer survivor. Mitchell was diagnosed with colon cancer in 2003 and underwent treatment at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN. After surviving the disease, he decided to race one more time – and has been behind the wheel ever since.

While many people are supportive of Mitchell as a driver and cancer survivor, he realized that many of his fans are unaware that colon cancer is preventable, treatable and beatable. So Mitchell teamed up with the **National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable (NCCRT)** of which UOAA is a member, an organization co-founded by the American Cancer Society and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to raise awareness about the important role of screening and early detection in the fight against colon cancer. Regularly scheduled screening can not only detect cancer at an early and more treatable stage, but can also prevent cancer from developing by removing precancerous polyps before they become cancerous. Mitchell and his colleagues hope to spark that awareness among race fans by prominently displaying the Blue Star on their race cars.

“Racing is my passion, and my fans are always a source of encouragement,” said Mitchell. **“By displaying the Blue Star on our cars, we hope to raise awareness about the importance of getting tested for colon cancer – a disease that I fought and won – and encourage our fans to get screened.** I am pleased that the other drivers have agreed to join me in celebrating my survivorship and conveying this very important message.”

Colon cancer is one of very few cancers that can actually be prevented through screening. Colon cancer almost always starts with a polyp, a small growth on the lining of the colon or rectum. Many screening tests allow doctors to find precancerous polyps and remove them before they turn into cancer. Yet, studies show that only about half of the U.S. population aged 50 and older has been tested recently for the disease. Colon cancer is the nation’s third-leading cause of cancer-related deaths in men and women, with almost 50,000 deaths expected in 2008.

“We’re excited to see the racing community getting involved in the fight against colon cancer,” said Robert Smith, PhD, director of cancer screening for the American Cancer Society. “It is our hope that seeing the Blue Star on the race track will inspire fans to get the lifesaving screening tests that are so critical in preventing colon cancer.”

The American Cancer Society recommends routine screening for men and women starting at age 50, and earlier testing for those at higher than average risk. Regularly scheduled screening can not only detect cancer at an early and more treatable stage, but can also prevent cancer from developing by removing precancerous polyps before they become cancerous.

To learn more on how to prevent colon cancer and reduce risk, contact the American Cancer Society at 1-800-227-2345 or www.cancer.org/colon, the National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable at www.nccrt.org, or the United Ostomy Associations of America at www.uoaa.org.

The race at Daytona is ARCA’s biggest race of the year, helping to kick off DirecTV SpeedWeek, a series of auto races held at the Daytona International Speedway in Daytona Beach, Florida, every February. The events lead up to and include the NASCAR Daytona 500.

The National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable (NCCRT) is a national coalition of public, private, and voluntary organizations whose mission is to advance colorectal cancer control efforts by improving communication, coordination, and collaboration among health agencies, medical-professional organizations, and the public. The ultimate goal of the roundtable is to increase the use of proven colorectal cancer screening tests among the entire population for whom screening is appropriate. For more information, visit www.nccrt.org.