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PRESS RELEASE

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Toyo Tires® and Robby Gordon's Team Dakar USA Prepare for Dakar® 2009  
Veteran French Driver, Eric Vigouroux Joins Team to Drive Second Hummer H3

CYPRESS, CALIFORNIA – Toyo Tires, Robby Gordon and Team Dakar USA will once again take on the Dakar rally. The 2009 event will cross the continent of South America from January 3 – 18. Beginning in Buenos Aires, Argentina, the race will cross over through Chile, then back to Buenos Aires for the finish. Once again, the sophisticated Hummer H3 racers will be equipped with 37X13.50R17 Toyo® Open Country M/T®-R tires while Andy Grider will serve as navigator for Gordon.

The team of Gordon and Grider has been a force in endurance off-road racing. In addition to winning the 2006 Baja 1000 while driving a Chevrolet trophy truck outfitted with Toyo Open Country M/T-R tires; the duo piloted their Monster Energy/Toyo Tires Hummer H3 to a Stage 6 win during Dakar 2007. The team also won the Open Class of Dakar 2007 and finished eighth overall. During 2008, they competed in the Central Europe Rally through Hungary and Romania. The team had an impressive showing, running second in the Car Class during Stage 1, then winning "specials" during Stages 5 and 6.

For Dakar 2009, veteran French driver, Eric Vigouroux with his long time navigator, Alexandre Winocq, will drive Team Dakar USA's second Hummer H3 racer. Vigouroux was first introduced to the Open Country M/T-R tire during Dakar in 2006 when Gordon was forced to drop out of the event due to a badly damaged radiator. Vigouroux's Chevrolet trophy truck was struggling for traction and speed in the desert, so Gordon provided his unused Open Country M/T tires for the remainder of the race. Vigouroux was impressed with the performance of the tires and soon after he joined Team Toyo as a sponsored driver in Europe.

Once again, Ramses Perez, project manager of events for Toyo Tire U.S.A. Corp., will travel with Team Dakar USA throughout the race chronicling the team's exciting journey. Check out the adventure on his blog *Ramses' Rally Journal* which can be accessed by logging on to [toyo.com](http://toyo.com). Toyo Tires manufactures and distributes a complete line of replacement tires for high performance cars, luxury vehicles, light trucks and SUVs as well as tires for commercial trucks, buses and off-road and construction applications.

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