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THE *Coca-Cola* COMPANY

Coke Zero Pulls Fast One on Top NASCAR Drivers

Competitors Encouraged To Sabotage Coke Zero's NASCAR Program Because Coke Zero Tastes Too Much Like Coca-Cola New Advertising To Debut During Daytona 500

ATLANTA--(BUSINESS WIRE)--

"Taste infringers" and "soda pirates" are just two of the accusations leveled at Coke Zero and those behind its success in the brand's first-ever NASCAR television ad. The new commercial uses a humorous, unexpected set up to reinforce that Coke Zero has "Real Coke Taste and Zero Calories."

It's not easy to pull a fast one on some of the fastest drivers in NASCAR, but that's exactly what Coke Zero set out to do as 12 of the sport's top stars gathered at Lowe's Motor Speedway in Concord, N.C. to shoot the new commercial.

The ad builds on the Coke Zero campaign launched in 2007, when hidden cameras caught humorous exchanges between improv actors impersonating Coca-Cola brand managers and real-life lawyers. Hoping to "sue" their coworkers who promote the Coke Zero brand, the actors consulted with the attorneys about filing an imaginary lawsuit for "taste infringement," since no-calorie Coke Zero tastes so much like Coca-Cola.

Coke Zero extended the unconventional approach for its new NASCAR spot by filming Coca-Cola Racing Family members during awkward, sometimes baffling conversations with the same actors reprising their roles as Coca-Cola brand managers. Expecting to shoot scenes for a different plot, the drivers ended up starring in an entirely different commercial as the phony brand managers solicited their help to keep Coke Zero from taking the checkered flag and further encroaching on Coca-Cola's turf.

The unscripted give-and-take between the drivers and the improv actors generated lighthearted moments and great reactions, while irreverently underscoring that no-calorie Coke Zero tastes like Coke.

"We know our drivers would never compromise their performance on the track, just like Coke Zero drinkers won't compromise when it comes to demanding real Coca-Cola taste with Zero calories. That's what made the ad even more fun to shoot," said Caren Pasquale Seckler, group director, Low Calorie Colas, Coca-Cola North America. "We think race fans will get a kick out of seeing their favorite NASCAR drivers caught off guard."

In one exchange, the imposter Coca-Cola brand managers say to Mark Martin, "We can't have Coke Zero in the winner's circle, being hoisted for that traditional drink," leading to a perplexed look from the veteran driver. After referring to the Coke Zero brand as "taste infringers" and "soda pirates" during a conversation with Jeff Burton, the brand managers

corner Jamie McMurray outside the Sprint Cup garage and ask, "Would you be willing to throw a race?" A stunned McMurray replies, "I don't think so, no..."

In the final scene with Tony Stewart and Kevin Harvick, an exasperated Stewart says that the fake brand managers' suggestions will "probably get us suspended," to which the quick-witted actor retorts, "Well Tony, come on, you're pretty comfortable with that."

The new Coke Zero ad, which debuts during the FOX broadcast of the Daytona 500 on Sunday, Feb. 17 at 2 p.m., features members of the Coca-Cola Racing Family -- a group of top drivers that includes Greg Biffle, Jeff Burton, Denny Hamlin, Kevin Harvick, Dale Jarrett, Bobby Labonte, Mark Martin, Jamie McMurray, Kyle Petty, Elliott Sadler, Tony Stewart and Michael Waltrip.

"At first, the fake Coca-Cola brand guys came across as really serious, so we were trying to be polite and figure out what they were thinking," said two-time NASCAR Sprint Cup Champion Tony Stewart. "But the more they talked the crazier their ideas became until it got to be pretty unbelievable. While it was an unusual experience, Coke Zero is a fun brand and this was a clever way to shoot this commercial."

Following its debut, 30- and 60-second versions of the Coke Zero NASCAR spot will air throughout racing season on television and in cinemas. Two additional 30-second spots, also featuring drivers being badgered by the faux Coca-Cola brand managers, will be posted at cokezero.com and NASCAR.com. The ads were created by Crispin Porter + Bogusky of Miami. The 60-second version of the commercial will also be available for viewing at a special Daytona 500 ad showcase on NASCAR.com, beginning at 7 a.m. the morning of the Great American Race.

In addition to the new ad campaign, Coke Zero is taking a more prominent role in NASCAR beginning this season, including title sponsorship of the Coke Zero 400 Powered By Coca-Cola, which takes place July 5 at Daytona International Speedway.

About The Coca-Cola Company

The Coca-Cola Company is the world's largest beverage company. Along with Coca-Cola, recognized as the world's most valuable brand, the Company markets four of the world's top five nonalcoholic sparkling beverage brands, including Diet Coke, Fanta and Sprite, and a wide range of other beverages, including diet and light beverages, waters, juices and juice drinks, teas, coffees, energy and sports drinks. Through the world's largest beverage distribution system, consumers in more than 200 countries enjoy the Company's beverages at a rate exceeding 1.4 billion servings each day. For more information about The Coca-Cola Company, please visit our website at www.thecoca-colacompany.com.

Source: The Coca-Cola Company