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## DREW LACHEY, JAMIE LITTLE AND MIKE SKINNER ARE VEGAS GAMING EXPERT ANTHONY CURTIS' LATEST PICKS AS FAVORITES TO WIN 2008 TOYOTA PRO/CELEBRITY RACE

### *World-Renowned Handicapper Shakes Up His Predictions After First Practice Runs for Prestigious Grand-Prix-Style Charity Race on April 19*

LONG BEACH, Calif. (April 11, 2008) – Drew Lachey, the second-season winner of *Dancing With the Stars*; NASCAR pit reporter Jamie Little, and NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series Champion Mike Skinner are Las Vegas gaming expert Anthony Curtis' evenly matched 4-to-1 favorites after this week's practice sessions for the Toyota Pro/Celebrity Race on Saturday, April 19, part of the 34th annual Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach.

Curtis, president of LasVegasAdvisor.com and one of the world's most recognized and quoted gambling authorities, has revised his predictions on how the stars of film, television and sports will fare in this historic, 10-lap race for charity, which is conducted in race-modified Scion tCs on a 1.97-mile street circuit through the downtown streets of Long Beach, California. He offers his insights solely for entertainment purposes on [www.raceschool.com/toyotaraceblog](http://www.raceschool.com/toyotaraceblog) and [www.lasvegasadvisor.com](http://www.lasvegasadvisor.com). [There will be no actual wagering on the outcome of the race.]

“Watching the day-long practice sessions on the course where the Toyota Pro/Celebrity Race will be run yielded new information, which has led to the first major change in the odds,” said Curtis. “The most important revelation was the power of the handicap that the drivers in the Pro Category will face. The celebrity field will get a 30-second head-start over the Pros, and in a short race, that's a big spot. This is reflected in the odds changes, where Drew Lachey and Jamie Little in particular have moved up – and *Prison Break*'s William Fichtner and ESPN pit reporter Beccy Gordon also should benefit.”

Here's how Curtis sees the field of 18 shaping up now.

*Stars of Entertainment, Sports, Media and Charity Seat:*

- **Drew Lachey (4-1)** Opening odds: 7-1. His focus and drive, honed during his second-season championship run on *Dancing With the Stars*, looks like it's starting to pay off. Could be the one to take the checkered flag.
- **Jamie Little (4-1)** Opening odds: 7-1. She wants to win, and her practice runs show it. She's learned a lot as ESPN/ABC pit reporter for the NASCAR Nationwide and Sprint Cup Series.

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- **William Fichtner (12-1)** Opening odds: 18-1. *Prison Break*'s FBI special agent Alexander Mahone has raced in this event before and his experience is really starting to show.
- **Bud Gordon (20-1)** Opening odds: 22-1. Fourth time might actually be the charm for the CEO and president of Gordon Automotive Group in Corona; look for Bud to be a spoiler.
- **Daniel Goddard (26-1)** Opening odds: 23-1. He's toned down his excitability considerably on the track – and has charmed the crowd off the track with his affable Aussie personality and soap-star good looks.
- **Brad Lewis (25-1)** Opening odds: 12-1. Although heavily favored at training, could the April 8th announcement that he'll be directing "Cars 2" or an extended Academy Award hurrah for "Ratatouille" hurt his chances?
- **Raymond Cruz (34-1)** Opening odds: 22-1. It was tough enough to rate this star of TNT's *The Closer* and AMC's *Breaking Bad*, but his professional obligations on *My Name is Earl* kept him from this week's needed track-time so his odds have slipped. Don't count him out just yet...spies at training do think he'll be competitive.
- **Craig Barto (40-1)** Opening odds: 30-1. He's in this for fun, having won his spot by being the second \$80,000 high bidder in the Boys and Girls Club charity auction – and he's having the time of his life.
- **Eric Dickerson (45-1)** Opening odds: 45-1. World-renowned for being one of the fastest running backs in the NFL, this Pro Football Hall of Famer has demonstrated the same steadiness on the track.
- **John Salley (48-1)** Opening odds: 35-1. Professional obligations with the NBA's Detroit Pistons kept this NBA-star and experienced Toyota Pro/Celebrity Racer out of practice this week. It's a shame...he's a funny character!
- **Nancy Lieberman (50-1)** Opening odds: 24-1. While off covering the Final Four, she missed an intense and important session in terms of preparing for race day. Not attending may hurt her chances of winning, but her experience as an Olympic Medalist, collegiate and WNBA pro does count for something.
- **Wilmer Valderrama (65-1)** Opening odds: 60-1. The lovable Fez from *That '70s Show* is still the long shot, despite good training reports and some nice practice runs.

*Professional Category:*

- **Mike Skinner (4-1)** Opening odds: 3-1. Despite his concerns about the pros' 30-second handicap, the NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series Champion is still the one to beat!
- **Tony Pedregon (6-1)** Opening odds: 4-1. The NHRA Funny Car Champion only participated in two days of training and perhaps it's beginning to catch up with him.
- **Marty Nothstein (6-1)** Opening odds: 5-1. This professional cyclist and Olympic Gold and Silver Medalist needs to pay close attention in his final practice run on April 18 to make up for the very slight edge he lost. Still a competitor, though.
- **Whit Bazemore (6-1)** Opening odds: 6-1. This two-time NHRA U.S. Nationals Funny Car winner is smooth and steady. No change.
- **Beccy Gordon (9-1)** Opening odds: 11-1. As anticipated, she continues to improve with every minute of track time. She's a racing natural, having grown up in a family of dedicated drivers – plus her day-jobs as a professional off-road racer, NASCAR spokesmodel and ESPN pit-reporter don't hurt, either.
- **Sarena Traver (18-1)** Opening odds: 14-1. Even with her impressive Grand-Am race car experience, the 30-second handicap to the pros could take some shine off the fine jewelry designer's performance. She is one of two Boys and Girls Club charity auction winners who paid \$80,000 (each) for a seat to compete this year.

“This is turning out to be one of our most competitive groups of drivers, ever,” said Les Unger, Toyota’s national motorsports manager, who has seen many celebrities and pros over the Toyota Pro/Celebrity Race’s three-plus decades. “They’ve not only been having a good time but taking the training very seriously – and I think they really like being able to do their part to benefit a good cause.”

Toyota will donate \$5,000 to “Racing for Kids” in the name of each celebrity racer, and another \$5,000 to the winning racer’s charity of choice. Racing for Kids is a non-profit program benefiting children’s hospitals in Long Beach and Orange County, Calif.

Finally, an additional \$15,000 donation is made in conjunction with the 11<sup>th</sup> annual “PEOPLE Pole Award,” sponsored by PEOPLE magazine. The award honors the pole-position winner of the Toyota Pro/Celebrity Race qualifying session on Friday, April 18. On behalf of the race and its participants, Toyota has donated close to \$1.6 million to various children’s organizations since 1991.

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**EDITOR’S NOTE: Celebrity odds are provided for entertainment purposes only. Wagering on the outcome of the race is neither encouraged nor implied.**

ABOUT ANTHONY CURTIS: Anthony Curtis is one of the world’s most recognized and quoted gambling authorities. The president of LasVegasAdvisor.com, he has appeared as a casino expert on “Dateline NBC,” “48 Hours,” A&E, E! Entertainment, Discovery, The Travel Channel, The Food Channel, The Learning Channel, and has been the subject of articles in the *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, *San Diego Union-Tribune*, *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Arthur Frommers’ Budget Travel* and *Discover* magazine. Curtis is author of **Bargain City—Booking, Betting and Beating the New Las Vegas** and **The Art of Gambling Through The Ages**. Considered one of the world’s foremost experts in tournament play, Curtis’ top tournament wins include \$76,000 World Matchplay Blackjack Championship, \$125,000 Atlantic City Craps Championship, \$50,000 Las Vegas Keno Championship, and \$60,000 Las Vegas Blackjack Championship.