



THE STIG TO STAR IN EPIC 'GRUDGE MATCHES'

A series of epic 'Grudge Matches' will provide fans with some memorable edge-of-the-seat entertainment as cars compete head-to-head during this month's four-day Top Gear Live extravaganza at the NEC, Birmingham (25-28 October).

The Grudge Match action forms an integral part of the thrilling Track Performance, one of three major attractions at Top Gear Live. It is staged alongside the Arena Show – basically a live version of Top Gear hosted by Jeremy Clarkson, Richard Hammond and James May but with the added excitement of stunts and special effects plus an interactive Exhibition featuring a host of familiar props from the Top Gear studio.

Grudge Matches will kick off with a duel between former F1 driver Tiff Needell and the legendary Stig, Top Gear's tame racing driver. When the dust settles, Needell will join fellow TV motoring show presenter Vicki Butler-Henderson to co-host the on-going show which will feature a host of regular BBC Top Gear favourites and an impressive line-up of A-list stars all driving the 'Reasonably Priced Car'.

After the dramatic opening shoot-out a series of other Grudges Matches will follow. The cream of the world's latest generation of hot hatchbacks will be pitched into battles –competing pocket rockets include the new Vauxhall Astra VXR, Ford Focus ST, VW Golf GTI 35, RenaultSport Megane 265 Cup; Skoda Fabia vRS and the Citroen DS3 Racing. As television viewers will know, the Citroen is a confirmed Top Gear champion and was whizzed around the Monte Carlo Grand Prix track by Jeremy Clarkson.

The crowd pleasing Japspeed Drift Team returns for another of these Grudge Matches with former Boyzone star Shane Lynch taking on the newly crowned British Drift Champion Paul Smith. A mouth-watering selection of rally cars will be recreating many of the sport's Grudge Matches from the 1990s, an era when British champions Colin McRae and Richard Burns ruled the world. Flame-spitting turbo cars confirmed include Escort Cosworths, Subaru Legacies and Imprezas, Toyota Corollas and Lancia Integrale.

"Last year we introduced a longer in-door track to allow us to brew up some faster and more dramatic action. Now we've made the track slightly wider so, for the very first time, we can set up these side-by-side Grudge Matches," explained Jim Wiseman, Top Gear Live Track Producer. "The Stig will set the scene taking on Tiff – not a man who likes to be beaten – and what follows will be every bit as spectacular with lots more massive reputations at stake."

Other highlights of the Track Performance are power laps by The Stig in supercars, a special half-car race plus an elimination race between a grid of two-third scale NASCAR racers where the last car across the finishing line the at the end of every lap is knocked out until there's only one winner left standing.

"The elimination cycle races during the Omnium at the Olympics were a real hit and now we're going to generate the same kind of fun and games, only this time with cars," continued Wiseman. "Adding to the frenzy, all the cars will be painted in special liveries to rev up support among the crowds. We're not saying exactly what these colours will be just yet but the idea is to get everyone involved and cheering for their own particular favourite."

All tickets give access to the three elements of Top Gear Live and full details can be found on the official topgearlive.co.uk website. Adult prices start from just £49* with a 'Kids Go Free' promotion available for accompanied children (aged between 5 and 15 years old) on Thursday and Friday and special 'Family Tickets' available for both Saturday and Sunday. Tickets can be booked from the website or by calling 0871 230 5588 – fans are advised to book in advance as certain tickets for selected shows are already sold-out.
