

MERRITT, MONGO RACING FINISH FOURTH AT TERRIBLE'S TOWN 250

BUT THAT'S ONLY PART OF THE STORY

Dear Paul Harvey.

The following would be great material for your "The Rest of the Story" radio segments.

What we already know is that Parker, Ariz., driver Randy Merritt and Mongo Racing notched a fourth place finish in the Full-Stock Truck Class at the 9th annual Best In The Desert "Terrible's Town 250" off-road race outside Pahrump, Nev., on April 29.

But what people don't know, or as Paul Harvey would say, the rest of the story, is how agonizingly close the team came to posting its first win of the 2006 season.

Shortly after taking the green flag, Merritt and navigator/technician Chris Golding had battled their way to the front of the field, and for much of the race traded the lead with other top-contending trucks.

At one point Merritt enjoyed a 3 1/2-minute lead over the field, and was even treated to an adrenalin-packed, NASCAR-like pit stop that got the Mongo Racing KC Hilites Ford F-150 in and out with a full load of fuel in under a minute, to protect his lead. As the saying goes, track position is important; the Mongo Racing team knew this and they delivered.

But, at mile marker 199, just over 50 miles from the finish, and with a win nearly in sight, it all came to a grinding halt with a broken rear-end.

The Mongo Racing crew had to wait patiently while another racer graciously towed their stricken truck to Pit 8. There, although any chance of taking home a win had vaporized in the desert air, the crew worked feverishly to make the needed repairs because championship points were still on the line.

And following an agonizing 1 1/2-hours of downtime, during which the crew replaced the rear-end assembly and a brake line, Merritt roared back onto the course, now riding in fifth place.

However, before the crew could finish packing up, Merritt radioed in that the drive shaft had twisted in two, but he and Golding would be down only a few minutes as they changed it out. This allowed the sixth place truck, to catch and overtake Merritt.

When Merritt finally got back under power, it was clearly a drag race to the finish line. And over the final 30 miles, Merritt proved he was up to the challenge. He put on another chilling driving display, got up on the wheel and brought the KC Hilites Ford F-150 across the finish line in fourth place.

It was then clear to everyone that the finish-at-all-costs effort was worth it, because Merritt earned enough points to maintain the No. 2 position in the Best In The Desert Full-Stock Class. And more importantly, the points earned were enough to keep the Mongo Racing KC Hilites Ford F-150 in contention for the coveted season championship.

The finish also did not tarnish Merritt's excitement about the 2006 season. Prior to the taking the green flag, during technical and contingency inspection the day before the race, the veteran driver stated in an interview with Jason Cobb of True Flow Air Filters, "This has been the best time for our team, with KC Hilites, Goodyear Tires and True Flow here supporting us."

After the race, Merritt said, "We were close, and although it would have been easy to just call it a day out there, we never gave up. We knew that finishing fourth was important, because of the points. And we couldn't have done it without the support we received from our sponsors, who have made this year so special for Mongo Racing."

Indeed. During Saturday's race, the crucial and quick fuel stop at a crowded Pit 6 was made possible at the Goodyear Tires support trailer, with assistance from the Goodyear Tires crew.

Also during the technical and contingency inspection the Mongo Racing KC Hilites Ford F-150 was showcased in the KC Hilites display, where fans and curiosity seekers could get an uninterrupted, up-close and personal look at the truck.

Fans can get another look at the Mongo Racing KC Hilites Ford F-150 when the team heads to the third stop in the 2006 Best in the Desert championship series, the "Vegas to Reno" event, scheduled Aug. 24, 25, 26, 2006.