

AUTOMOTIVE

Lexus supercharges racing competition series with celebrity drivers

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Lexus has a new racing series available on YouTube. Image credit: Lexus

By SARAH RAMIREZ

Toyota Corp.'s Lexus is raising the stakes in a new YouTube series in which famous car enthusiasts compete in street racing challenges for the chance to drive a new vehicle for a year.

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Model Tyson Beckford hosts "Lexus 0 to 60: Supercharged," which debuted its first episode on YouTube this week. Featuring Lexus's high-performance RC F and GS F models, Supercharged broadly appeals to car fans who may not always consider the marque to be at the same racing tier as brands such as Porsche and Ferrari.

Car challenges

The first episode in the Supercharged series pits actor and race car driver Alfonso Ribeiro against NASCAR driver Nicole Lyons.

The competition involves three challenges and two different vehicles. Retired NASCAR driver Scott Pruett helps Mr. Beckford explain each contest: the Slalom, 0-60-0 and the Big Willow Track.

Tyson Beckford hosts the new series Lexus 0 to 60: Supercharged

Mr. Beckford invokes "ladies first," meaning Ms. Lyons should attempt the Slalom challenge first. Mr. Ribeiro playfully whines and Ms. Lyons decides that she wants him to go first.

The "Fresh Prince of Bel-Air" actor weaves through the traffic cones in less than 18 seconds, narrowly defeating Ms. Lyons, who was penalized one second after knocking down a cone. Throughout the episode, both elaborate on their experiences driving the Lexus cars.

In 0-60-0, each driver must accelerate in the RC F and reach more than 60mph before hitting the brakes and stopping in a designated box. Mr. Ribeiro reaches speeds of 65mph to Ms. Lyons' 65mph, extending his lead over her.



Alfonso Ribeiro and Nicole Lyons compete in Lexus 0 to 60: Supercharged. Image credit: Lexus

The competitors switch to Lexus F Sport to compete on a road course. Both reach speeds over 120mph, but Mr. Ribeiro's lead is insurmountable for Ms. Lyons and he wins the overall contest.

Supercharged is the latest iteration of Lexus 0 to 60. Previous series featured prominent drivers participating in individual and team challenges.

Friendly competitions

Competitive challenges and supplemental entertainment content are one way premium automakers show a different side of their brand to drivers.

Previously, Lexus engaged basketball fans as a presenting sponsor of Yahoo Sports' Tourney Pick'em, making its brand an integral part of March Madness.

Along with its sponsorship, Lexus created a custom branded game surrounding the NCAA tournament, GS F The Bracket, which asked participants to pick which games will reach a combined total of 60 points in the least amount of time. By playing the game, entrants gave themselves a shot at a vacation inspired by the GS F ([see story](#)).

Last year, Porsche teamed up with the makers of a top mobile racing game for a docu-series celebrating the brand's 70th anniversary.

The video series, a joint project between Porsche and game developer Zynga, featured well-known Porsche enthusiasts. Players of the popular mobile racing game CSR Racing 2 are also able to get behind the virtual wheel of each car featured in the series, providing an interactive extension of the content ([see story](#)).

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