

MEDIA INFORMATION

Daytona Beach, January 29, 2017

Rolex 24 At Daytona

Ford scores another big 24 hour race win with Michelin

Michelin “Customer Racing” wet tires come through at Rolex 24 At Daytona

The 55th running of the Rolex 24 At Daytona, the opening race of the 2017 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, threw an endless array of challenges at the stellar field, but Michelin and its technical partner teams met every challenge.

After starting from positions 18-28 in the 55 car field, the Michelin-fitted GT Le Mans (GTLM) class entries from BMW Team RLL, Corvette Racing, Risi Competizione Ferrari, Porsche GT Team, and Ford Chip Ganassi Racing dispatched all but four of the lighter, faster, more aerodynamic Prototypes to claim eight of the first twelve overall race positions in the 24-hour race.

The GTLM class victory for the CGR Ford GT comes just 12 months after the car’s competition debut here in 2016 – a season highlighted by its historic class victory at the 2016 Le Mans 24 Hour race.

There was a familiar feel to the opening hours here at Daytona, as Ford’s Le Mans-winning trio of Dirk Mueller, Joey Hand, and Sebastien Bourdais frequently swapped the lead with its arch-rival, the Le Mans runners-up and 2016 season-ending Petit Le Mans-winning Risi Ferrari of Giancarlo Fisichella, Toni Vilander and James Calado.

Saturday’s nightfall brought rain and the exciting new Porsche 911 RSR of the Porsche GT Team (with drivers Patrick Pilet, Dirk Werner and Frederic Makowiecki) moved forward along with Corvette Racing’s Jan Magnussen, Antonio Garcia and Mike Rockenfeller and BMW joined the fray at the front.

As the track gradually dried for the final hours on Sunday, it appeared that a Ford–Ferrari rematch was in store, but Corvette Racing took advantage of great pit stops to claim the lead twice.

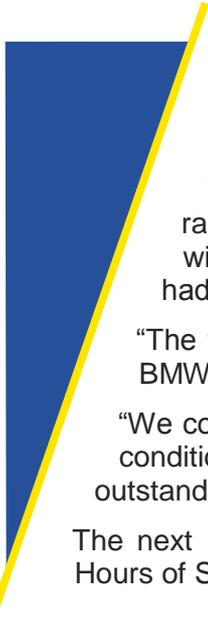
On a late restart with 48 minutes remaining it was Porsche’s Patrick Pilet who emerged to pass both the Antonio Garcia’s Corvette and Calado’s Ferrari and take the fight to Mueller’s Ford. In the final hour the Porsche drew alongside on several occasions to set up a dramatic Ford, Porsche, Ferrari, Corvette finish in a brilliant match of speed and driving skills.

Michelin “customer racing” wet tires deliver

With nearly 10 hours of the race run in wet conditions, tire performance was critical and the Michelin GTLM wet tires delivered.

But these Michelin wet tires were not the exotic, highly proprietary wet tires used in winning the overall race at Petit Le Mans in 2015 (and the overall race pole at the 2016 Rolex 24), but rather, the Michelin “customer racing” wet tires that club and vintage racers can buy!





“Our Michelin ‘customer racing’ wet tires are available ‘over the counter’ to pro-am racers and are designed to deliver a broad operating window by performing well in a wide variety of ‘damp’ to ‘full-wet’ conditions, including a drying track, and we certainly had all of those here,” said Chris Baker, director of motorsport, Michelin North America .

“The tires have certainly performed exceptionally well in a variety of wet conditions on the BMW, Corvette, Ferrari, Ford and Porsche GTLM cars here this weekend.

“We congratulate all of our Michelin teams; they certainly performed well in both wet and dry conditions in a tremendous race in often difficult conditions and we look forward to an outstanding season of competition in the WeatherTech Championship.

The next race in IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship season is the Mobil 1 Twelve Hours of Sebring, March 18, at Sebring International Raceway.

