

MICHELIN PRECISION, CONSISTENCY KEYS AT LIME ROCK'S NORTHEAST GRAND PRIX

LAKEVILLE, Ct., July 16, 2018 — Michelin and its technical partner factory teams from BMW, Corvette, Ford and Porsche will look for near perfection as the 2018 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship heads to the Northeast Grand Prix at Lime Rock Park, July 21.

At just 1.5 miles in length, the seven-turn Lime Rock Park circuit is the smallest track and features the shortest lap time (49 seconds) of the season.

Short Lap Magnifies Every Detail

“Racing at Lime Rock, you fight for every single inch on corner entry, under braking and putting the power down. Everything is magnified on such a short lap,” said Ken Payne, technical director motorsport, Michelin North America.

“The race laps here last year were in the 50-51 second range but could grow by 2 or even 3 seconds depending on traffic. Our GTLM class factory teams ran 60 or 65 laps on a full stint for 50-60 minutes.

“You can’t hide any weakness on the car’s set-up, balance or tire performance when you are hitting the same corners that many times in a stint, so consistency over the entire run is essential.”

Going for the Overall Win

The Northeast Grand Prix at Lime Rock Park, CT is the first of two GT category-only 2018 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship events (Michelin GT Challenge at VIR, August 19).

The factory backed GT Le Mans (GTLM) cars from BMW Team RLL, Corvette Racing, Ford Chip Ganassi Racing and Porsche GT Team are expected to fight for the overall win. All have chosen Michelin as their technical partner in the only IMSA class featuring open-tire competition.

The strong GT Daytona (GTD) class entries, which compete on a Pro-Am basis, will add to the challenge.

“Last year, the two-hour 40-minute race ran caution free and the race winners did 181 laps, which is rather stunning for a 160-minute race,” said Payne.

“The GTD cars are very quick in certain sections and can be hard to pass, especially when their Pro drivers are aboard. Our GTLM cars need to be able to run different lines and make passes under braking because of the traffic.”

All four GTLM manufacturers led the 2017 Lime Rock race, which Porsche GT Team’s Patrick Pilet and Dirk Werner won.

At the most recent WeatherTech Championship race at Canadian Tire Motorsport Park, seven of the eight GTLM cars entered led the Canadian race at various stages.



This race is also the 50th race for the GTLM class since the 2014 merger that brought together the American Le Mans Series and GRAND-AM Rolex Series under the IMSA umbrella.

To the Point

With just four 2018 WeatherTech Championship events remaining after Lime Rock, the 2018 manufacturer, driver and team championships are all very hotly contested.

The two Ford GTs from Chip Ganassi Racing have combined to score three wins in the first six races. Ryan Briscoe and Richard Westbrook won at CTMP and took over the championship lead. Defending class champions Jan Magnussen and Antonio Garcia sit second for Corvette Racing six point behind, while Ford's Dirk Mueller and Joey Hand are two more points back in third.

Ford holds an eight-point lead in the Manufacturer championship over Chevrolet. Porsche is third and is one point farther back.

The Northeast Grand Prix will be broadcast on Saturday, July 21st at 4 :00 pm on FS1.

About Michelin

Dedicated to the improvement of sustainable mobility, Michelin designs, manufactures and sells tires for every type of vehicle, including airplanes, automobiles, bicycles, earthmovers, farm equipment, heavy-duty trucks and motorcycles. The Company has earned a long-standing reputation for building innovative premium tires. In addition to tires, the Company also publishes travel guides, hotel and restaurant guides, maps and road atlases. Headquartered in Greenville, S.C., Michelin North America (www.michelinman.com) employs more than 20,000 people and operates 19 major manufacturing plants. Forbes magazine has ranked Michelin No. 1 on its annual survey of "Best Large Employers in America" for 2018.

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