

2018 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship  
Round 1: Rolex 24 at Daytona

***Ford Chip Ganassi Racing dominates at Daytona, while  
Corvette Racing claims podium honours in Florida***

Chip Ganassi Racing's two Michelin-equipped Ford GTs dominated the GT LM class at the Rolex 24 At Daytona, opening round of the 2018 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship.

Despite fierce competition from Ferrari, Porsche and BMW, as well as constant pressure from Corvette Racing's brace of cars, Ryan Briscoe, Richard Westbrook and Scott Dixon steered the N°67 Ford GT to the weekend's win, finishing 11.166 seconds clear of team-mates Joey Hand, Dirk Mueller and Sébastien Bourdais in the N°66 sister car.

The two Ford GTs led for all but nine of the 783 laps (4,486km) completed by the fastest GT Le Mans cars around the 5.73km track to beat the distance record for the class that had stood since 1992.

It was the third victory in a world-class 24-hour endurance race for the Ford GT after its previous successes at Le Mans in 2016 – the year of the car's launch – and at Daytona last January.

The result also saw Chip Ganassi Racing (CGR) notch up its 200<sup>th</sup> race victory (IndyCar, NASCAR, IMSA, FIA WEC, etc.) following a perfect weekend for Mr. Ganassi himself who was named Grand Marshall for the 56<sup>th</sup> running of the Rolex 24 at Daytona.

"Twenty-four-hour races always present a wide range of challenges, both known and unexpected, and this race was no exception," said **Chris Baker**, Director of Motorsport, Michelin North America. "Also, the depth and quality of the field at Daytona is always very high, as we saw again this year. The 50-strong entry list featured 13 manufacturers or marques and to see the GT LM winners break the former distance record is a clear indication of the race's pace."

Further evidence of the high standard of the teams' and drivers' preparation for the Florida classic was the fact that 42 of the 50 starters reached the finish of what proved to be a particularly intense contest, with very few interruptions.

Michelin provided its LM GT partners with so-called confidential tyres from its MEDIUM endurance racing range, namely the MEDIUM Cold and MEDIUM Hot.

In the end, Florida's relatively cool January weather saw them essentially use the MEDIUM Cold for both the night-time and daylight phases of the race, even though the air and track temperatures were the warmest on record for at least a decade.



## Detroit carmakers shine at Daytona

The signs around the track said Daytona International Speedway, but the sharp end of the GTLM leaderboard at the flag turned out to be an all-Detroit affair, since the two Ford GTs were chased over the line by the N°3 and N°4 C7.Rs of pole winners Jan Magnussen/Antonio Garcia/Mike Rockenfeller and Oliver Gavin/Tommy Milner/Marcel Fassler respectively, providing Corvette Racing with a strong start to the celebrations of its 20<sup>th</sup> year in motor racing.

The top five was rounded out by the Risi Competizione Ferrari 488 GTE of Toni Vilander/James Calado/Davide Rigon/Alessandro Pier Guidi, while the N°912 Porsche 911 RSR (Vanthoor/Bamber/Bruni) and the new N°24 BMW M8 GTE (BMW Team RLL, Krohn/Edwards/Catsburg/Farfus) were sixth and seventh. The N°911 Porsche (Pilet/Tandy/Makowiecki) and N°25 BMW (Sims/De Phillippi/Auberlen/Eng) were both delayed by technical issues.

The next round of the 2018 IMSA WeatherTech Championship will take teams to nearby Sebring, Florida, for the Mobil 1 - 12 Hours of Sebring on March 17.

