

MICHELIN TEAMS BEAT THE RECORD HEAT AT WATKINS GLEN

WATKINS GLEN, N.Y., July 1, 2018 — Track temperatures of 140 degrees at one the fastest and most demanding tracks in motorsports presented a strong test, but Michelin and its IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship technical partner teams were more than equal to the challenge today at the Sahlen's Six Hours of the Glen at Watkins Glen, New York.

"Today certainly produced the highest track temperatures that we have experienced at Watkins Glen and we are pleased that our Michelin competition tires proved equal to the needs of our teams," said Ken Payne, technical director, motorsport, Michelin North America.

"It takes a lot of collaboration to meet challenges like those that we faced today. We want to recognize our Michelin engineers and tire designers, our partner teams, drivers and crews and our Michelin engineers whose combined efforts helped us all to manage the heat, high speeds and demands of a very high-speed circuit."

All eight of the factory backed GT Le Mans class cars from Ford Chip Ganassi Racing, Corvette Racing, Porsche GT Team and BMW Team RLL have chosen Michelin as their respective technical partner for IMSA WeatherTech Sports Car Championship competition.

Parity up front

Six of the eight Michelin cars led the fast-paced race at various stages, and three of the four manufacturer partner teams finished on the podium.

It was the No. 66 Ford GT from Ford Chip Ganassi Racing that ultimately prevailed with drivers Joey Hand of California and Dirk Mueller of Germany. They are the fifth different driver pairing to win the class in the first five GTLM races of 2018.

Corvette Racing's No. 3 Corvette C7.R finished second, driven by defending WeatherTech GTLM series champions Antonio Garcia and Jan Magnussen. Completing the podium was the Porsche GT Team, with Patrick Pilet and Nick Tandy sharing the No. 911 Porsche 911 RSR.

Earlier Richard Westbrook of Ford Chip Ganassi Racing became the fifth different driver to claim a GTLM pole in as many races,

Mueller, Hand reflect

"We were on a different tire strategy at the start. Michelin gives us great support and we had different options to use during the race. On the late pit stop, our team manager Mike O'Gara told me we needed my best ever out lap. I jumped ahead of the Corvette," Mueller said, having taken the lead in the final hour of the race.



Hand added, “We asked a lot from these tires today. We drove qualifying laps every lap for an hour, and these tires went the distance. We’re so happy with everything Michelin does for us, with all their development and work in the background. We couldn’t have won this race without them.”

Charting the heat

According to the Michelin engineers embedded with each of the GTLM teams, track temperatures were a comfortable 95 degrees at the 9:45 a.m. start of the race on the 11-turn, 3.4-mile circuit.

The track temperature quickly rose to 117 degrees just 90 minutes later and measured 126 degrees at 12:30 p.m. At 2:00 p.m., with slightly less than two hours remaining in the race, the track temperature peaked at 140 degrees and had dropped only to 137 degrees at the 3:45 p.m. finish.

“Some of our teams took advantage of the relatively moderate temperatures in the early going and used our Michelin ‘medium’ range tires in the opening stints, but as the track quickly heated up most teams finished on our medium construction, high temperature solution for the second half of the race,” said Payne.

Next Stop:

It will be a quick turnaround for Michelin and the WeatherTech Championship teams as the series heads to Canada for next Sunday’s (July 9) Mobil 1 SportsCar Grand Prix at Canadian Tire Motorsport Park in Bowmanville, Ontario. The race will be broadcast at 4 p.m. 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.

For more information contact:

Tom Sullivan
Michelin North America
Cell: 704-222-5488
Email: tom.sullivan@michelin.com

John Love
EMC PR
Cell: 313-506-2114
Email: john@emcpr.com



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