



MICHELIN BEATS THE HEAT IN SWELTERING LIME ROCK

Ford CGR, Pfaff Porsche score wins at Lime Rock's "bullring"

LAKEVILLE, Conn. (July 20, 2019) --- Scorching heat and Lime Rock Park's unique 1.474-mile circuit made tire performance and tire strategies an essential part of the day and Michelin helped the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship and IMSA MICHELIN Pilot Challenge competitors deliver a pair of exciting races.

"In IMSA, we race with highly diverse fields of cars on a great variety of circuits and in a wide range of conditions, including the heat," said Ken Payne, technical director, motorsport, Michelin North America.

"A day like today is what makes the IMSA WeatherTech Championship and Michelin Pilot Challenge so relevant to Michelin's technical development of tires for production vehicles."

The WeatherTech Championship (21 cars) and Pilot Challenge (32) fields here included a total of 15 different marques on the shortest circuit of the season and highest ambient and track temperatures recorded by Michelin's engineers all year.

The top five teams covered 182 laps in a caution flag free 160-minute WeatherTech Championship race.

Beating the Heat All Weekend

IMSA MICHELIN Pilot Challenge and IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship series raced on the same day, as a part of Lime Rock's condensed two-day weekend schedule. Additionally, the WeatherTech Championship also qualified Saturday morning.

Friday's practice and qualifying sessions saw the ambient consistently hover between 93 and 95 degrees Fahrenheit, with track temperatures reaching 120 degrees.

Both races ran in the same level of heat. The maximum recorded temperatures for Saturday's WeatherTech Championship race were 98 degrees ambient and 117 degrees on track.

But through the heat, Michelin excelled as GTLM teams utilized its range of confidential tires and the GTD and Pilot Challenge successfully ran their third consecutive race weekend with the MICHELIN® Pilot® Sport GT S9M hard compound commercial slick tires.

Qualifying and race lap records fell again throughout all four classes in two series.

Recapping the Lime Rock Winners

After difficult seasons, both Ford Chip Ganassi Racing (GT Le Mans) and PFAFF Motorsports Porsche (GT Daytona) claimed their maiden wins of the season.

In Ford's case, Richard Westbrook and Ryan Briscoe rolled with the No. 67 Ford GT team's three-stop strategy against the two-stoppers. Westbrook eventually made it past Earl Bamber's

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No. 912 Porsche 911 RSR within the final 10 minutes, which denied the factory Porsche GT Team a record-extending sixth consecutive victory.

“When you race for Chip Ganassi in this Ford GT, you need to do something special and we did that today,” Westbrook said. “They called the strategy perfect. The three-stopper to get fresh tires worked well. To beat our opposition, we have to roll the dice. They executed to perfection.”

Bamber and Laurens Vanthoor finished second to provisionally extend their GTLM points lead, while the second Ford of Dirk Mueller and Joey Hand completed the team’s best day of the year in third place.

GT Daytona saw a thrilling battle to the finish, with Dennis Olsen in the No. 9 PFAFF Porsche holding off Mario Farnbacher in the No. 86 Meyer Shank Racing Acura NSX GT3 Evo by just 0.010 of a second. The win is the first for Olsen and Zacharie Robichon this season, and the first for the Canadian PFAFF team at this level.

Farnbacher and polesitter Trent Hindman finished second. Turner Motorsport completed a busy day at its home race with Bill Auberlen and Robby Foley finishing third in the No. 96 BMW M6 GT3. Auberlen and Foley completed an “ironman” weekend where they raced in both WeatherTech Championship and MICHELIN Pilot Challenge races, with the same team and in two different variants of BMW cars.

To kick off the day, Owen Trinkler and Hugh Plumb (No. 46 Team TGM Mercedes-AMG GT4 GS) and Mark Wilkins and Michael Lewis (No. 98 Bryan Herta Autosport Hyundai Veloster N, TCR) won the two-hour IMSA MICHELIN Pilot Challenge race.

Next Up

Both the WeatherTech Championship and MICHELIN Pilot Challenge race next on the longest circuit of the 2019 season, the 4.04 miles at Road America in Elkhart Lake, Wis., the weekend of August 2-4, 2019.

All four WeatherTech Championship classes are in action at Road America. The race airs Sunday, August 4, on the NBC Sports App at 2:30 p.m. EDT and on NBCSN at 6 p.m. EDT. The MICHELIN Pilot Challenge race is Saturday, August 3, at 4:55 p.m. EDT on IMSA.TV. All sessions air flag-to-flag on radio via IMSA Radio.

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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For more information contact:



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

John Love
Jackson Motorsports Group
Cell: 313-506-2114
Email: john.love@jacksonmg.com



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