



MICHELIN SHINES IN CHANGING CONDITIONS AT MID-OHIO

Rain, Wind, Cold and Sunshine at Acura Sports Car Challenge

Lexington, Ohio, May 5, 2019 ---Following 24 hours on the infield and high banks at Daytona, a dozen hours on Sebring's bumpy former airfield and 100 minutes on the streets of Long Beach, the fourth stop of the 2019 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship promised a return to normalcy of sorts.

The expectation was that Mid-Ohio, a standard two-hour 40-minute race length on a traditional natural terrain road course, would be the first true measure of performance for many of the upcoming races.

However, cold, wind and intermittently rainy conditions throughout Friday and Saturday played havoc with the practice and qualifying sessions. Normalcy finally appeared in both weather and track conditions when the green flag flew for Sunday's race.

Getting Creative

"Grip is always hard to find on the Mid-Ohio circuit and with the cold temperatures and wet conditions leading up to the race, teams took a wide range of creative measures in chassis set ups and tire strategies," said Chris Baker, director of motorsport, Michelin North America.

"It is pretty amazing that our WeatherTech and MICHELIN Pilot Challenge teams set new qualifying and race lap records in far from ideal conditions. We didn't see sunshine or track temperatures out of the 50s all weekend until early in this afternoon's WeatherTech Championship race, yet all 11 of the premier class DPi cars bettered the previous race lap record."

Michelin engineers reported track temperatures of 67 degrees at the start of the race. One hour later, the track temperatures were 79 degrees and soon increased to 85 degrees by mid-race.

"Our Michelin Race Tire Specialists and engineers worked with teams throughout the weekend and during the race to help them adapt to the conditions," said Baker.

All Three 2018 Winners Double Up in Ohio

Twelve months ago, an Acura ARX-05, Porsche 911 RSR and Lexus RC F GT3 won the Acura Sports Car Challenge. In 2019, history repeated itself as each of the same cars won in DPi, GT Le Mans and GT Daytona.

An Acura Team Penske ARX-05 won the Acura Sports Car Challenge for the second year in a row. This year, it was the pairing of Dane Cameron and Juan Pablo Montoya who shared the winning No. 6 car en route to the team's first IMSA victory since Ricky Taylor and Helio Castroneves won here last year.

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Cameron started the car and pitted within the first 40 minutes after the track began to accumulate and take rubber. Montoya then continued out front the rest of the afternoon on the track temperatures.

“For me it was about the balance today,” said Montoya, who now has his first IMSA win with Penske to go along with several he achieved in IndyCar including the Indianapolis 500. “As the tires wore, the car balance got better. The MICHELIN® tires came in well and they were very consistent. You could push them all day and there was zero degradation. So it was pretty cool to finally get this win for Acura Team Penske.”

Porsche GT Team continued its 2019 win streak in GTLM, with Earl Bamber and Laurens Vanthoor sharing the No. 912 Porsche 911 RSR. Bamber and Vanthoor won at Mid-Ohio in 2018 for their first win as co-drivers, and also won the last race at Long Beach. Porsche also won at Sebring with Nick Tandy, Patrick Pilet and Fred Makowiecki.

Bamber praised the team’s strategy as they were able to pass the No. 3 Corvette C7.R of Jan Magnussen and Antonio Garcia during the second pit stop sequence.

“It was sort of set up by Laurens’ stint as he managed to go long. We made a good target compared to the other competitors so it helped us here. Obviously, we could take less fuel and go longer on the overcut of the 3. That was pretty awesome strategy by everyone on the team,” Bamber said.

Lexus repeated its 2018 pole and victory with new partner team AIM Vasser Sullivan. Jack Hawksworth’s new 2019 co-driver Richard Heistand scored his first pole on Saturday, with Hawksworth then holding off Mario Farnbacher’s Acura NSX GT3 Evo for the GTD win. Farnbacher shared the No. 86 Meyer Shank Racing Acura with Trent Hindman.

“It was a bit of cat and mouse really when we were fast on one part of the circuit and he was good on the other,” said Hawksworth, who won the 2018 pole position in class.

PR1/Mathiasen Motorsports won the LMP2 class with Matt McMurry and Eric Lux sharing an Oreca 07 car.

Challenge Series Endure in Adverse Weather

Both the IMSA MICHELIN Pilot Challenge and IMSA Prototype Challenge resumed their seasons at the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course, and both raced under difficult conditions.

Saturday’s two-hour MICHELIN Pilot Challenge race saw teams in the GS and TCR classes excel with Michelin’s commercial slicks on a partially wet track. Past the halfway point, the weather conditions shifted from dry and overcast to damp and misty, and prompted teams to determine whether to stay on slicks or switch to the Michelin® Pilot® Sport GT Rain tire.

Even so, both GS and TCR classes set new fastest race laps over 2018, with the top 12 GS cars under last year’s mark. Trent Hindman set the fastest lap of the race on the 66th and final lap of the race, after last pitting on the 39th lap.

Hindman and Alan Brynjolfsson shared the winning Park Place Motorsports Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 in GS. Meanwhile in TCR, Hyundai and Bryan Herta Autosport scored their first

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victories. Mark Wilkins and Michael Lewis shared the winning Hyundai Veloster N TCR, and finished fifth overall in the 37-car field.

Dakota Dickerson and Dylan Murry of MLT Motorsports won the one-hour, 45-minute Prototype Challenge race, which was held under cloudy skies Sunday morning with ambient and track temperatures barely north of 50 degrees.

Next Up

The WeatherTech Championship's DPi and GTD classes race at The Raceway on Belle Isle Park in Detroit on June 1. Its GT Le Mans and LMP2 classes resume at Watkins Glen International on June 30. The Sahlen's Six Hours of The Glen is also the third round for the Michelin Endurance Cup. A handful of GTLM teams will race at the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

MICHELIN Pilot Challenge and Prototype Challenge have their second and final endurance races of 2019 as their next events.

For MICHELIN Pilot Challenge, it's a four-hour race at Watkins Glen on June 29. The Prototype Challenge has a three-hour race at Canadian Tire Motorsport Park on July 6.

About Michelin

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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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