

FORD CREDITS MICHELIN FOR WIN AT LIME ROCK PARK

LAKEVILLE, Conn., July 21, 2018 –The smallest circuit (1.50 miles) on the 2018 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship presented tough technical challenges. But Michelin’s precision and performance delivered an exciting victory for Ford Chip Ganassi Racing and Ford GT drivers Joey Hand and Dirk Mueller.

Hand emerged from his final pit stop trailing race leader Jan Magnussen of Corvette Racing by 12 seconds with just 54 minutes remaining in the two-hour, 40-minute Northeast Grand Prix at Lime Rock Park.

He relentlessly cut the margin and managed the ebbs and flows of traffic to take the lead with 12 minutes remaining. From there, he secured the race win and the lead in WeatherTech Championship GT Le Mans class standings.

Magnussen and co-driver Antonio Garcia, who’d won the pole position with a new track record, brought their Corvette C7.R home second. Porsche made it three different manufacturers on the class podium, as Earl Bamber and Laurens Vanthoor finished third in their 911 RSR.

Michelin Excels at Lime Rock ‘Bull Ring’

“With elevation changes, six right-hand turns, just one left turn and an abrasive track surface, Lime Rock Park is the the closest thing that we have to a short oval ‘bull ring,’” said Ken Payne, technical director, Motorsport, Michelin North America.

“Our GTLM class technical partners are the factory teams from BMW, Corvette, Ford and Porsche. They are very sharp and highly experienced and used the full range (soft, medium, and hard compound options) to creatively mix options from side-to-side and front-to-rear.

“Michelin did a great job today,” Hand said after his and Mueller’s second win of the season.

“They really impressed me. This track is so hard on tires. You really push them to the limit. People talk about how abrasive the track is, but tire wear issues didn’t come into play. The tires were that good.

“We stopped when we wanted to stop, and not everyone thought that would be possible. We went with a combination of tires that would work and stuck with it. I think that was the key to our success.”

The Big 5-0

Today’s Northeast Grand Prix was the 50th International Motor Sports Association GTLM class race since the 2014 merger of the former American Le Mans Series and GRAND-AM Rolex Series, and the ninth win for the Ford GT in its 29th GTLM race start since its 2016 debut.



Chevrolet Corvette 16 wins
Porsche 13 wins
Ford 9 wins
BMW 7 wins
Ferrari 3 wins
Dodge Viper 2 wins

50th GTLM Race Brings a 49-Second Lap

Magnussen's Corvette Racing co-driver, pole winner Antonio Garcia, led the first hour of the race after setting a new qualifying record of 49.754 seconds on Saturday morning.

Seven of the eight GTLM entries in the tightly bunched field broke the previous track record of 50.404 seconds, set last year by Gianmaria Bruni of Porsche.

Garcia became the seventh different driver to claim a GTLM class pole in the first seven races of the 2018 WeatherTech Championship.

Moving Up and Moving On

Hand and Mueller regained the GTLM class points lead with the win. They now lead Magnussen and Garcia by a single point, 208-207. After a sixth place finish, previous points leaders Ryan Briscoe and Richard Westbrook of Ford are now third with 206 points.

There are four races remaining this season. Next up for the 2018 WeatherTech Championship will be the longest circuit of the season, at the 4.048-mile Road America in Elkhart Lake, Wis. The race will be broadcast live, Sunday, August 5 at 2:30 p.m. ET 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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