



News Release

Pruett Wins Thriller, Joins Rojas In Lone Star Le Mans Victory In Chip Ganassi Racing Ford EcoBoost At Circuit Of The Americas

- ***Action Express Corvette DP Drivers Fittipaldi, Barbosa Take Third, Extend Points Lead***
 - ***Rayhall, Diaz Earn Second Straight PC Victory For 8Star Motorsports***
 - ***Braun, Bennett Clinch PC Title With Second-Place Finish***

AUSTIN, Texas. (Sept. 20, 2014) – Scott Pruett prevailed in a three-car shootout Saturday at Circuit of The Americas, showing speed when it counted to join Memo Rojas in scoring their third victory of the TUDOR United SportsCar Championship season for the No. 01 Telcel Ford EcoBoost/Riley.

Pruett took the lead with 33 minutes remaining, and then held off a strong stretch run by both Joao Barbosa and Alex Brundle to win the Lone Star Le Mans for Chip Ganassi Racing with Felix Sabates. The race will be televised on the FOX network on Sunday in a two-hour telecast. Check local listings for times.

“I took some big chances at the end,” said Pruett, who scored his 59th career victory in major sports car competition. “I knew they were coming, but when you see victory in your grasp, you take big chances. Sometimes they pay off.”

Pruett took the checkered flag 2.336 seconds ahead of Brundle, who joined Gustavo Yacaman in the debut of the No. 42 OAK Racing Ligier JS P2/Honda. Barbosa finished 11.016 seconds behind in third, ending a two-race winning streak for the No. 5 Action Express Racing Corvette DP started by Christian Fittipaldi.

“There was a lot more competition out there than met the eye today,” said Ganassi, whose team won earlier this year at both Sebring and Long Beach. “There were a lot of strong cars, especially the new Ligier. I’ve got to hand it to Pruett and Rojas. It was a close race.”

The moment of truth came with six minutes remaining, when the leaders caught heavy GT traffic. Pruett found a way through, while Barbosa and Brundle battled side-by-side caught in the pack. By the time Brundle passed Barbosa and they cleared the lapped cars, Pruett had the advantage he needed to make his dash to the checkers. It was all he had, as the 54-year-old Californian ran out of fuel on his cooldown lap.

“Honestly, we had nothing for Pruett after our tussle with Barbosa near the end – he was too far away,” Brundle said. “I’m delighted by how the car ran this weekend. It was great work by OAK Racing and Honda. We’ll come back strong and fight hard at Road Atlanta.”

The third-place finish unofficially extended Action Express Racing’s lead to 22 points over Wayne Taylor Racing’s Ricky and Jordan Taylor, who finished seventh in the No. 10 Konica Minolta Corvette DP. Fittipaldi and Barbosa have accumulated 316 points, to 294 for the Taylors. Another point back, with 293, are Michael Valiante and Richard Westbrook, who finished sixth in the No. 90 VisitFlorida.com Corvette DP.

“That was a real tough race,” Barbosa said. “We had a great strategy, and everything worked perfectly. We were in the fight until the end. Unfortunately, the rear tires started to go away and traffic was hectic out there and cars started pushing me around. I knew where the 10 and 90 were, so I decided that this

was not our fight, I had to stay safe and do what I could to bring as many points as I could for the championship.”

Ricky Taylor, Yacaman and Valiante all had close calls early in the race. Taylor went wide in Turn 1 on the first lap of racing after slight contact with Yacaman, and the resulting pit stop had the team playing catch-up for the remainder of the race. On the restart following the lone caution period on lap 23, Yacaman spun after contact with Valiante, who was assessed a drive-through penalty for the incident.

8STAR MOTORSPORTS WINS SECOND STRAIGHT RACE; BRAUN, BENNETT TAKE TITLE IN PC

While Sean Rayhall and Luis Diaz took their second consecutive Prototype Challenge victory in the No. 25 8Star Motorsports Takis/Speedsters ORECA FLM09, Colin Braun and Jon Bennett clinched the drivers’ championship with one race remaining with a second-place finish in the No. 54 CORE autosport ORECA FLM09.

The race ultimately came down to a battle between Rayhall and Braun. Rayhall spun while leading with more than one hour remaining, and Braun was assessed a drive-through penalty following the incident. That gave the PC class lead to RSR Racing driver Jack Hawksworth, but he ran out of fuel entering pit road on lap 52. At that point, Rayhall had worked his way back from fifth place to take a lead he never relinquished.

“That’s why they call it endurance racing,” said Rayhall, who scored his first victory at Virginia International Raceway one race ago. “We got spun out, and came back to the front. Good strategy put us there. I can’t put into words how excited we are.”

Renger van der Zande entered the race mathematically eligible for the title, but the driver of the No. 8 Starworks Motorsport Martini ORECA FLM09 started by Mirco Schultis was eliminated despite a third-place finish.

“I’m super happy for the team – Colin and I have had a pretty successful year, and it’s nice to clinch the drivers’ championship,” said CORE autosport owner Bennett, who joined Braun in winning their first career driving titles. “At the end of the day, we’ll do the best we can at Petit and see how the points work out at the end of the day. It’s an important race.”

CORE autosport takes an unofficial 11-point lead in the battle for a fourth consecutive team championship, leading 8Star Motorsports 288-277 entering the season-ending Petit Le Mans. CORE won the final three consecutive PC team titles in the American Le Mans Series presented by Tequila Patrón.

Petit Le Mans powered by Mazda also serves as the final race in the Tequila Patrón North American Endurance Cup, which rewards points in the four endurance races in the TUDOR Championship.

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