



# News Release

## **Eyes Of Racing World Focused On 54th Rolex 24 At Daytona**

*Entry List Features 54 Cars, Drivers Representing 24 Countries, Four Female Drivers*

**DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. (Jan. 20, 2016)** – The world will be coming to Daytona International Speedway for the grand opening of its motorsports stadium, with a solid international field set for the debut race of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship: the 54<sup>th</sup> Rolex 24 At Daytona on Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 30-31.

A 54-car field with drivers representing 24 countries serves as the opening race for Daytona Rising, the \$400 million reimagining of the historic venue. In addition to kicking off the WeatherTech Championship, the race also will open the four-race Tequila Patrón North American Endurance Cup.

“As the International Motor Sports Association, we take great pride in having strong international representation in the Rolex 24 At Daytona,” said IMSA CEO Ed Bennett. “We are fortunate to have an outstanding field of drivers, teams and manufacturers representing every corner of the world join us for this year’s race. The eyes of the racing world truly will be on Daytona International Speedway during the Rolex 24 At Daytona. Between the debut of many awe-inspiring race cars and being the first race in the Daytona International Speedway motorsports stadium, the view will be spectacular.”

Daytona International Speedway founder Bill France Sr. envisioned sports car racing as bringing international recognition to his venue with the running of the inaugural Daytona Continental in 1962, an event expanded to 24 hours in 1966.

Now, 50 years later, that event has grown into the Rolex 24 At Daytona. The field will include 12 world-class automotive manufacturers across the four classes, reigniting decades-long rivalries in addition to building new ones.

In the Prototype category, the battle for the overall victory will include the classic Ford vs. Chevrolet rivalry, but will be expanded to include Honda, Mazda, Nissan and BMW-powered prototypes, in addition to the one-of-a-kind DeltaWing. Ford and Chevy have split the overall victories the past two years, but if speeds at the recent Roar Before The Rolex 24 At Daytona were any indication, any one of the 13 entries in the Prototype class could feasibly pull into Victory Lane on the afternoon of Sunday, Jan. 31.

The GT Le Mans (GTLM) class features the pair of Corvette C7.Rs that won the Rolex 24 At Daytona, Mobil 1 Twelve Hours of Sebring Fueled by Fresh From Florida and 24 Hours of Le Mans in 2015, as well as the defending WeatherTech Championship GTLM championship-winning Porsche North America team.

However, many sports car racing headlines over the past year have gone to the new Ford GT program, which makes its competition debut in the Rolex 24 At Daytona with a two-car effort fielded by Ford Chip Ganassi Racing. The return of the Ford GT begins a new chapter in the Ford-Chevrolet battle, while also reigniting a 50-year-old Ford vs. Ferrari fight. The field also will include a pair of brand-new BMW M6 GTLM race cars from BMW Team RLL.

The GT Daytona (GTD) class, which has adopted full FIA GT3 technical regulations in 2016, features a 22-car field and seven different manufacturers. Familiar GTD brands Audi, Porsche and BMW all will debut brand-new race cars in the Rolex 24, alongside updated machinery from Ferrari, Dodge and Aston Martin. Joining the GTD fray this year for the first time will be Lamborghini, with five Huracáns in a field stacked with manufacturer, team and driver talent.

In Prototype Challenge (PC), eight teams and a host of strong driver lineups will battle it out for class honors.

In total, all but three of the 54 entries feature driver lineups with mixed nationalities. The United States has the most drivers entered with 87, while Germany leads the list of visiting countries with 23 drivers represented in the preliminary Rolex 24 entry. Great Britain is next with 19 drivers, followed by Italy, 16; France, nine; and Canada, seven. Austria, Brazil and Mexico are each represented by six drivers.

Four female drivers are set to compete in this year's race. British driver Katherine Legge returns to the No. 0 Panoz DeltaWing Racing coupe in the Prototype class. Competing in GT Daytona (GTD) are German Sabine Schmitz in the No. 30 Frikadelli Racing Porsche 911 GT3 R; Christina Nielsen of Denmark in the No. 63 Scuderia Corsa Ferrari 458 GT3; and American Ashley Freiberg in the No. 96 Turner Motorsport BMW M6 GT3.

Practice for the Rolex 24 At Daytona begins the morning of Thursday, Jan. 28, with qualifying taking place later than afternoon. The weekend also includes the BMW Performance 200; the opening round of the IMSA Continental Tire SportsCar Challenge, on Friday at 1:45 p.m. Television coverage of the Rolex 24 gets underway on Saturday at 2 p.m. ET on FS1.

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