



# News Release

## **Tequila Patrón ESM Honda, Action Express Corvette Tied Following Round Two Of Patrón Endurance Cup At Sebring**

*GTD Points Also Tied, Other Classes Close In Patrón Cup Standings*

*Ferrari's Christina Nielsen Scores First Victory In GTD*

*Honda's Sarah Cattaneo Takes ST Points Lead With Victory*

**DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. (March 23, 2016)** – Tequila Patrón ESM won the Mobil 1 Twelve Hours of Sebring with its Honda Ligier JS P2 Prototype, while Action Express Racing took maximum points in both mid-race segments in the No. 5 Mustang Sampling Corvette DP in Saturday's second round of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, which also served as the second round of the Tequila Patrón North American Endurance Cup.

As a result, the two teams are tied for the lead in the Prototype class in the Patrón Endurance Cup, the unique competition among the four longest races in the WeatherTech Championship which opened with January's Rolex 24 At Daytona. Competition continues with the Sahlen's Six Hours of The Glen on July 3 at Watkins Glen International, and Petit Le Mans powered by Mazda on Oct. 1 at Road Atlanta.

While Tequila Patrón ESM won at both Daytona and Sebring with Pipo Derani, Ed Brown, Johannes van Overbeek and Scott Sharp in the No. 2 Honda Ligier JS P2, Action Express Racing has captured three in-race segments to share the lead with its No. 5 Corvette DP and drivers Christian Fittipaldi, Joao Barbosa and Filipe Albuquerque, with 26 points each.

"Wow – the 36 Hours of Florida," said van Overbeek. "Tequila Patrón ESM has successfully won overall at both Daytona and Sebring. It was certainly our objective coming here, but so many things can happen. We had the red flag, crazy weather, but everything ran flawlessly. Thanks to Patrón for allowing us to be here, and hats off to Pipo for driving one heck of a last stint."

The No. 31 Action Express Whelen Engineering/Team Fox Corvette DP is third in the team standings with 23 points. Scott Pruett – who has driven both Action Express cars – is third in the driver standings with 25 points, while teammates Eric Curran and Dane Cameron each have 23.

The Patrón Endurance Cup also is tied in GT Daytona (GTD), with close battles in GT Le Mans (GTLM) and Prototype Challenge (PC).

Alex Job Racing's No. 23 Team Seattle/Heart of Racing Porsche GT3 R, with drivers Mario Farnbacher and Alex Riberas has won two in-race segments to tie Rolex 24 GTD class winner Magnus Racing and drivers John Potter, Andy Lally and Marco Seefried with 21 points. Christina Nielsen and No. 63 Scuderia Corsa Ferrari 488 GT3 co-drivers Alessandro Balzan and Jeff Segal share third with Paul Miller Racing's No. 48 Audi R8 LMS GT3 drivers Bryan Sellers, Madison Snow and Bryce Miller, with 19 points each.

Corvette Racing has won both of the Florida endurance classics with Tommy Milner, Oliver Gavin and Marcel Fassler in the No. 4 Corvette C7.R, but the team has only a one-point lead over the two Porsche North America Porsche 911 RSR entries and drivers Earl Bamber, Michael Christensen, Kevin Estre, Frederic Makowiecki, Patrick Pilet and Nick Tandy, 23-22.

In PC, PR1/Mathiasen Motorsports and drivers Tom Kimber-Smith, Robert Alon and Jose Gutierrez hold a three-point lead, 28-25, over Rolex 24 winners JDC-Miller Motorsports and drivers Kenton Koch, Misha

Goikhberg, Chris Miller and Stephen Simpson. Sebring class winners CORE autosports and BAR 1 Motorsports are tied for third with 20 points.

## **NOTEBOOK**

- After leading the GT Daytona (GTD) class in podium finishes in 2015, Nielsen scored her first WeatherTech Championship victory in Saturday's 64<sup>th</sup> Mobil 1 Twelve Hours of Sebring Fueled by Fresh From Florida. The victory in the No. 63 Scuderia Corsa Ferrari 488 GT3 with Alessandro Balzan and Jeff Segal moved her team into contention in both the GTD season championship and the Tequila Patrón North American Endurance Cup.

On Friday, Sarah Cattaneo won the Street Tuner (ST) class in the Sebring 150 in the No. 44 CRG-I Do Borrow Honda Civic Si along with co-driver Owen Trinkler, capturing the points lead in the IMSA Continental Tire SportsCar Challenge.

"We aimed for a podium finish, so it's absolutely amazing to win it," Nielsen said. "That's a bonus I couldn't imagine. I was the driver with the most podiums last year, but we never had a win. To finally take that first win feels great. There were two females on the podium (Ashley Freiberg finished second in GTD), so that's a step in the right direction."

- Pipo Derani became the first driver to win the Rolex 24 At Daytona and Mobil 1 Twelve Hours of Sebring in his first attempt. The Tequila Patrón ESM Honda Ligier JS P2 became the fifth car to win both Florida enduros in the same year, joining the JLP Racing Porsche 935 (1982); T-Bird Swap Shop Porsche 962 (1985); Doyle Racing Oldsmobile Riley & Scott Mk III (1996); and Doran/Moretti Racing's MOMO Ferrari 333SP (1998). Sharp was part of the Daytona-winning lineup in 1996 with Wayne Taylor and Jim Pace, but missed that year's Sebring event due to a schedule conflict.
- Also in the historic category, Scuderia Corsa's triumph – in its first race with the Ferrari 488 GT3 – celebrated the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ferrari's first major North American victory at Sebring in 1956.
- GTD featured great racing all the way to the checkered flag. Balzan passed Jens Klingmann's BMW for the lead with eight minutes remaining, while Andy Lally nipped Mario Farnbacher for the final podium position in the last turn on the checkered flag lap. The class saw 13 of the 20 entries take turns in the lead, with all seven manufacturers leading multiple laps.
- Both versions of BMW's new M6 finished second in their respective classes, and all four cars led. Bill Auberlen gave the BMW M6 GTLM its first pole in GTLM. The two BMW Team RLL cars ran 1-2 on occasion in GTLM, with Auberlen, Dirk Werner and Bruno Spengler giving the car its first podium.

In GTD, Turner Motorsport had two cars in podium position with 13 minutes remaining, with Klingmann, Freiberg and Bret Curtis finished second – the first podium for the BMW M6 GT3.

- While it finished sixth in GTLM, the No. 62 Risi Competizione Ferrari 488 GTE visited the podium, winning its first DEKRA Green Award of the season. The award is determined through green racing protocols established by the United States Department of Energy, Environmental Protection Agency and the Society of Automotive Engineers International as part of their alliance with IMSA.

"One of the advantages of the new Ferrari 488 is it's probably the most efficient car in the field," said Risi Competizione race engineer Rick Mayer. "Typically if we do well we will win the DEKRA Green Award. We won it four times last year and hopefully, we'll win it a lot more times this year."

- The next race for the GTLM competitors will be the BUBBA burger Sports Car Grand Prix of Long Beach on Saturday, April 16. All four WeatherTech Championship classes will be in action in the Continental Tire Monterey Grand Prix powered by Mazda at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca on Sunday, May 1.

**End Quote:**

**Ed Brown, No. 2 Tequila Patrón ESM Honda Ligier JS P2:** "At that last yellow, I thought we'd get third, and that's a good day's work. Then Pipo drove the wheels off the car for the last 20 minutes. He's amazing. The team was great, and so was the strategy. We rolled the ball. Pipo was out there for an hour and a half on slicks when everybody else was on rains. He was running better laps than those guys. It's pretty crazy. What a great way to start the year. It kind of spoils you, winning the two biggest races in the U.S."

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