



News Release

IMSA News Roundup: April 21, 2016

Pruett Set To Begin Testing Lexus; Michelin To Sponsor VIR Event; Johnson To Make Series Debut In BMW 228i With Hand Controls

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. (April 21, 2016) – Scott Pruett found himself in an unfamiliar role at Long Beach, giving VIP rides in a Lexus RC F Cup car “with a lot of serious tuning.” The leading winner in major North American sports car competition with 60 victories and 10 championships, Pruett will return to the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship later this year with the new R Performance team in a Lexus RC F GT3.

“It’s difficult to watch, especially given my record here,” said Pruett, who won the lone GRAND-AM Rolex Sports Car Series race there in 2006 in addition to winning in the WeatherTech Championship in 2014 and finishing second in 2015. “I don’t think any driver is a good spectator.”

Pruett hopes to begin testing the new Lexus during the first week of May, with the team assembling the parts it needs for the project. Team owner Paul Gentilozzi was also on hand for the Long Beach event.

“Racing takes time – if you want to do it right, and we want to do it right,” Pruett said. “Our first race might be Watkins Glen or Canadian Tire Motorsport Park; it all depends on the testing. We want to make sure we do all our homework, and want the car reliable and competitive.”

Michelin To Sponsor GT Challenge At VIRginia International Raceway

Michelin North America will sponsor the Michelin GT Challenge at VIRginia International Raceway, highlighting the WeatherTech Championship weekend on August 26-28. The event features a two-hour, 45-minute race for the WeatherTech Championship GT Le Mans (GTLM) and GT Daytona (GTD) classes, the only event of the season featuring only GT cars.

The GTLM class is the only division featuring open tire competition and is widely recognized as the most competitive GT racing in the world. Based upon manufacturers’ top production models, the class features factory-backed teams from Corvette, Porsche, Ferrari, Ford and BMW, all of which have chosen Michelin as their technical partner.

“VIR has become one of the top racing venues in the country,” said Sarah Robinson, Motorsports Marketing Manager at Michelin North America. “Fans enjoy seeing production-based cars from the world’s top manufacturers race on one of the most challenging circuits.”

Michael Johnson Set For Continental Tire Challenge Debut In Modified BMW 228i

After spending the Long Beach weekend as a guest of JDC/Miller Motorsports, Michael Johnson is ready to go to work with the team.

The Flint, Michigan driver will make his Continental Tire SportsCar Challenge debut at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca, driving a specially modified BMW 228i in the Street Tuner (ST) class.

“We’ve recently tested the car at Blackhawk Farms (near Chicago), and the hand controls were working really well,” said Johnson, who was paralyzed in a motorcycle accident while leading a race at age 12. “It’s the best setup I’ve used in my career so far. I’m really getting used to using the rings by the steering wheel to modulate the brakes and throttle.”

Stephen Simpson, who races for JDC/Miller Motorsports in the WeatherTech Championship Prototype Challenge class, will co-drive the No. 54 Universal Coating BMW 228i. He said that once he got used to having the rings located behind the steering wheel, it was no problem driving the car.

Panoz To Address Automotive, Motorsports Journalists In San Francisco

Panoz DeltaWing Racing will extend its stay in California following the Continental Tire Monterey Grand Prix powered by Mazda with a dinner presentation on Tuesday, May 3 at the Basque Cultural Center in South San Francisco.

DeltaWing Technology Group Chairman and Founder Don Panoz will speak about two of his company's newest forays in the world of disruptive cumulative technologies – the creation of a DeltaWing GT consumer car along with the CitiGo, a three-seat vehicle targeted toward the urban and delivery vehicle markets. Panoz also will address DeltaWing's new partnership with DHX Electric Motors, Inc. which has begun production of its innovative electric motors that are 75 percent smaller, significantly lighter, cool to the touch, yet as powerful as conventional electric motors.

The event, hosted by the Western Automotive Journalists (WAJ), will include journalists covering automotive technology as well as the motorsports industry. Katherine Legge will be on hand to share her experience as the team's lead driver of what many consider the most unique, one-of-a-kind race car in motorsports.

End Quote:

Misha Goikhberg, Driver of the No. JDC/Miller Motorsports Hi-Tide Boat Lifts/ Red Line Oil ORECA FLM09, Prototype Challenge winner at Long Beach: "I think that we are fairly confident going to Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca. I don't think there is a big difference in the approach we take – whether it's a sprint race street course vs. a longer race on a road course – I think our approach is all the same. Confidence is a very finicky thing, I think right now we have lots of it, and that's what helps us work through the weekend."

Contact:

Nate Siebens

Senior Manager, IMSA Communications

(386) 310-6568

nsiebens@imsa.com