



News Release

IMSA News Roundup: May 26, 2016

Notebook Items Include IMSA's Strong Presence For 100th Indianapolis 500; Milner Says Le Mans Also Pays Dividends For Home Races; Marcelli Begins Three-Race 'Home Stretch'

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. (May 26, 2016) – The IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship will be well represented when the green flag waves on Sunday for the 100th Indianapolis 500.

Defending GT Daytona (GTD) champion Townsend Bell, who co-drives a Lamborghini Huracán GT3 with Bill Sweedler for Change Racing, will start on the inside of the second row for the open-wheel classic. He's one of nine of the 33 starters who have also raced in WeatherTech Championship events in 2016.

Ryan Hunter-Reay – who will start on the outside of the front row at Indy – joined Bell in competing in three WeatherTech Championship races this season, placing third at Daytona, fifth at Sebring and sixth at Long Beach in the No. 90 Visit Florida Racing Corvette DP. Reigning IndyCar champion Scott Dixon joined Sebastien Bourdais in racing at both Daytona and Sebring. Mikhail Aleshin – the 2016 TOTAL Pole Award winner at Daytona – Simon Pagenaud, Tony Kanaan, Graham Rahal and Spencer Pigot also competed in the Rolex 24, while Jack Hawksworth participated in the Roar Before the Rolex 24 test.

Team Penske's Juan Pablo Montoya is a three-time Rolex 24 champion, while Dixon is a two-time winner of the event. Bourdais is a two-time Sebring winner in addition to one Rolex 24 victory, while Kanaan and Bell have won at both Daytona and Sebring. Other Rolex 24 winners in the Indy 500 field include Charlie Kimball and Graham Rahal, while Conor Daly is a former Sebring class winner.

Many of the other Indy 500 starters have experience in America's premier sports car competition. Indy 500 pole sitter James Hinchcliff is a four-time Rolex 24 starter for SpeedSource/Mazda Motorsports, running in three different classes coming up through the Mazda Road to Indy. His best finish was sixth, running in the Rolex Series GT class in 2012. Alexander Rossi and Gabby Chavez co-drove for Panoz DeltaWing Racing in the 2014 Rolex 24.

The IMSA Continental Tire SportsCar Challenge will also be represented at the Brickyard. LAP Motorsports team owner Luis Perocarpi and lead engineer Rob Ridgely will take time from preparing their three MINI John Cooper Works to take key positions in the pits for Dale Coyne Racing. Perocarpi is crew chief for Brian Clauson, while Ridgely is head engineer for Pippa Mann.

Milner: 24 Hours Of Le Mans Pays Dividends For WeatherTech Championship Season

Looking for his third GTE Pro victory at the 24 Hours of Le Mans, Corvette Racing's Tommy Milner also feels that the French endurance classic on June 18-19 pays dividends for the remaining races on the WeatherTech Championship GT Le Mans (GTLM) schedule.

"We learn quite a bit at Le Mans," explained Milner, who will return with fellow 2015 GTE Pro winners Oliver Gavin and Jordan Taylor in the No. 64 Corvette C7.R. "Watkins Glen (the Sahlen's Six Hours on July 3) is an important race. It's a gauge to see where we stand, if the stuff we learned at Le Mans will help us back in the U.S. With this [GTLM] class being so competitive, small details can make a big difference. But at the end of the day, you still need a bit of luck."

Jan Magnussen and Antonio Garcia will be joined at Le Mans by Ricky Taylor in the No. 63 Corvette C7.R to complete Corvette Racing's two-car lineup.

Detroit Begins Three-Race 'Home Stretch' For Canadian Kyle Marcelli

The next three WeatherTech Championship rounds are like home races for Kyle Marcelli. The Ontario, Canada resident plans to drive to all three events, competing at Detroit, Mich.; Watkins Glen, N.Y.; and then his true home event at Canadian Tire Motorsport Park.

Next week, he'll be making the five-hour drive to compete in the Chevrolet Sports Car Classic presented by the Metro Detroit Chevy Dealers. He enjoys the challenges of street racing, finishing on the Prototype Challenge podium for the BUBBA burger Sports Car Grand Prix at Long Beach in April, the only other street race on the WeatherTech Championship schedule.

"Street racing presents extra challenges, and you need to really stay focused," said Marcelli, who co-drives the No. 38 Performance Tech Motorsports ORECA FLM09 with James French. "Instead of racing between two white lines you're driving between two concrete walls. I really enjoy racing in Detroit. It's the home of GM and the other American manufacturers, and we race with a Chevrolet V-8 engine. Also, my wife is from Michigan, so I've spent a lot of time there, and I'm looking forward to going back."

End Quote:

Katherine Legge, a regular in the No. 0 Panoz DeltaWing Racing Coupe, will co-drive the No. 60 Michael Shank Racing Honda Ligier JS P2 at Belle Isle Park: "This is not only my first time in an LM P2 but my first time racing at Detroit and I am really looking forward to it. I am extremely grateful to Mike Shank and Honda for offering me this chance to drive and really appreciate that Dr. Panoz (Panoz DeltaWing Racing team owner) agrees that this is too good of an opportunity to miss as the DeltaWing is not racing. Ozz (Negri) has already started sending me in-car footage and notes for me to study, and I hope to be as ready as possible from the start of the weekend. This is a fantastic opportunity for me and I intend on making as much of it as I possibly can."

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