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Repeat IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship GT Daytona (GTD)
Titles for Winward Racing and Mercedes-AMG Secured Saturday at Motul
Petit Le Mans

Press Information

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Mercedes-AMG Motorsport Customer Racing Team Winward Racing and Mercedes-AMG Wrap Up Second-Consecutive IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar GTD Championships Saturday in Season-Ending Motul Petit Le Mans

BRASELTON, Georgia – Mercedes-AMG Motorsport Customer Racing team Winward Racing clinched repeat IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship GT Daytona (GTD) championships on the first lap of Saturday's Motul Petit Le Mans and then spent the next 10 hours wrapping up encore championship honors for Mercedes-AMG. The No. 57 Winward Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3 team, full-season co-drivers Russell Ward and Philip Ellis and Mercedes-AMG won the IMSA WeatherTech GTD team, driver and manufacturer titles for the second-straight year.

Bringing a class-leading three GTD wins and season-high championship leads to the Motul Petit Le Mans IMSA WeatherTech finale, Winward improved its points position even more in Friday afternoon qualifying. Ellis, who seldom qualifies in GTD races, was chosen to drive the No. 57 in the quick 15-minute session and delivered.

Clocking in fifth fastest in the 19-car GTD field, Ellis outqualified some of Winward's nearest challengers to further build its championship leads. The end result was that the No. 57 squad and drivers needed to only finish 18th or higher, out of the 19-car GTD class, in order to claim the back-to-back class championships in Saturday's race.

Winward could seal the championships with the first retirement of a GTD car in the race, and that and more happened just seconds into the 10-hour

Petit Le Mans finale. A multi-car accident in the quick MRRA esses on the first lap of the race led to the immediate retirement of two GTD cars and the ultimate demise of four class competitors in total.

The repeat titles for Winward were sealed before an official green flag lap in the race was completed. Then the No. 57 team and drivers settled in on delivering Mercedes-AMG its second-straight GTD manufacturer championship.

Joined by the team's longtime endurance race driver Indy Dontje, Ellis, Ward and the Winward team battled hard throughout the 10-hour race to secure the repeat GTD manufacturer crown for Mercedes-AMG.

Once again fully understanding the mission at hand, Winward and its drivers focused on staying on the lead lap and steering clear of trouble in a race that had several multi-car contact incidents. The Winward No. 57 only led the GTD field twice in the 10 hours for just three laps, which was more about tracking and staying in touch with their manufacturer championship rivals rather than battling for the race win.

With Ward competitively completing his driving time in the first parts of the race, Dontje and Ellis drove the final stints in the race's closing hours. The team settled into top-five contention, which was enough to wrap up the manufacturer honors, and Ellis took the checkered flag in fifth for the second race in a row.

In the end, the Ward and Ellis sealed their championships 189 points ahead of their nearest challenger, 3,103 – 2,908. The team title margin was 205 points ahead of the runner-up, 3,103 – 2,898. Mercedes-AMG took its second-straight championship by 39 points, 3,363 – 3,324.

The successful Mercedes-AMG title defense was competitively supported by IMSA Michelin Endurance Cup GTD contenders Lone Star Racing. Debuting team driver Lin Hodenius qualified the No. 80 Lone Star Racing, which he co-drives with Scott Andrews and Wyatt Brichacek, to a Mercedes-AMG brand-best third in GTD last month at Indianapolis.

Lone Star's Indianapolis qualifying performance gave Mercedes-AMG 30 valuable points that were needed to seal the manufacturer crown Saturday for the second-straight year.

Ward, Ellis and Winward are the first drivers to secure consecutive GTD championships since Mario Farnbacher, who has race-winning Mercedes-AMG GT3 experience, and his team co-drove to the class driver and team championships in 2019 and 2020.

This year's repeat-championship season saw Winward and its drivers take a points lead they would never lose with their first win in the second race of the year at the 12 Hours of Sebring. Win number two followed two races later at WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca where Winward left with then season-high GTD championship leads of 124 points.

A major challenge emerged, however, in the mid-season Sahlen's Six Hours of The Glen where Winward rallied after getting caught up in an early contact incident to make it to the checkered flag. The Glen setback still cost Winward more than half of its championship lead, but the No. 57 Winward team and drivers fought to rebuild the margin starting at the very next race at Canadian Tire Motorsport Park with a runner-up finish.

From there, Winward never failed to rebuild its points lead in every remaining round of the season. The points haul included the team's third win of the year at VIRginia International Raceway and fifth in the Battle on the Bricks 6 Hour at Indianapolis Motor Speedway last month, the two lead-in races to Petit Le Mans.

Next up for Mercedes-AMG Motorsport Customer Racing in IMSA is tonight's IMSA WeatherTech Night of Champions Awards Celebration at Château Élan Winery & Resort. There Winward Racing and Mercedes-AMG will formally accept their 2025 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship season honors and awards.

Christoph Sagemüller – Head of Mercedes-AMG Motorsport: "North American motorsport is a very important platform for us as a global brand. We are therefore delighted that we were able to defend the drivers', teams' and manufacturers' titles despite the strong competition. These successes in the IMSA strengthen the visibility of our products. Thank you to our

Customer Racing Teams and drivers, who have represented Mercedes-AMG with outstanding performances.”

Stefan Wendl – Head of Mercedes-AMG Customer Racing:

“Congratulations to Winward Racing, Philip and Russell on their well-deserved title defense. They were not only flawless in Saturday's race, but competitive and capable of winning throughout the entire season with the Mercedes-AMG GT3. This underlines the intensive and successful work we have done in integrating the new torque sensors. Accordingly, we are very proud of the results and successes achieved this season.”

Russell Ward, Driver – No. 57 Winward Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3:

“It's easier to get to the top than it is to stay there. This season had many tough races with strong competition, but we achieved goals and helped defend the manufacturer title for Mercedes-AMG. We would have loved to win the Michelin Endurance Cup as well, but with three championships, we are of course more than happy. This is really about our unsung heroes of racing. These are our team guys who are working until at least 9 o'clock every night working on the car, making it perfect and getting everything 100 percent. We have the same group as last year, and we are going to have the same group again next year. We are going to be a force again next year. The crew always provides such an amazing piece of equipment for us to drive, and as long as we don't put a foot wrong, it tends to come our way.”

Philip Ellis, Driver – No. 57 Winward Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3:

“Defending the title is definitely one of the greatest achievements of my career. Winning the championship is great but repeating it is indescribable, especially because some of the parameters were new to us this season due to the new regulations. There is always something that can go wrong in a race, so it was nice to get it done early, but then we had the manufacturer title to fight for. So that is what we raced for, and it was great we got that as well for Mercedes-AMG. It would have been nice to finish on the podium, but it is still our best finish to date in Atlanta. That's something to work on for next year. Thank you to the team that did a great job throughout. We will work hard and aim for the third championships.”

Indy Dontje, Driver – No. 57 Winward Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3:

“It's really special to help these guys win their second championship.

There was some pressure, but Winward Racing gave us a great car, the team made great pit stops and my teammates also did a fantastic job. We didn't quite make it to the front in the race, but fifth place is our best result on this track so far. In the end, it almost felt like an easy job for the championships. We made it stick, and it was really nice to be part of it. The Mercedes-AMG GT3 felt very good throughout the entire season. When I participated, we were always able to compete for top positions. I am delighted for Winward Racing and my teammates.”

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For more information on Mercedes-AMG Customer Racing, please visit www.mercedes-amg.com/en/vehicles/customer-racing.html.