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Mercedes-AMG Motorsport Customer Racing Team Winward Racing and Mercedes-AMG Win Class-Leading Third Race of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship GT Daytona (GTD) Season Sunday at VIRginia International Raceway (VIR)

Press Information

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Mercedes-AMG Motorsport Customer Racing Team Winward Racing and Mercedes-AMG Extend 2025 IMSA GTD Championship Points Leads with Michelin GT Challenge at VIR Victory

DANVILLE, Virginia – Mercedes-AMG Motorsport Customer Racing Team Winward Racing and Mercedes-AMG extended their 2025 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship GT Daytona (GTD) championship leads for the third-straight race with a victory at VIRginia International Raceway (VIR) Sunday in the Michelin GT Challenge at VIR. Team co-drivers Russell Ward and Philip Ellis put in a competitive but clean run to the team's GTD class-leading third win of the season in the No. 57 Winward Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3 to build their biggest GTD team and driver championship leads of the summer.

With a top time that clocked in second fastest in GTD, Ward continued to stay hot in Saturday's qualifying session but then kept a cool head when it counted in a frantic first lap of Sunday's race. Balked by some questionable moves at the race start by some of Winward's closest championship challengers, Ward was shuffled out of the top five but kept his focus, which the majority of his competitors did not.

Several penalties were assessed to other would-be contenders in the GTD field that, along with a no-quit performance by Ward, soon moved the No. 57 back into top five contention. Ellis took over late in the race's first hour, and the first of two top pit stops by the Winward Racing crew put the No. 57 back in the race in second place.

With an eye on the championship and a lasting memory of the message IMSA race officials delivered to all competitors earlier in the weekend on no tolerance for improper driving tactics, Ellis was content to track the race leader in second for several laps at the halfway point.

Instead, it was the Winward crew that gave the No. 57 a lead Ellis would hold to the checkered flag with another spot-on pit stop for the run to the finish. Ellis dashed to the pits one lap before the GTD leader, who pit the following lap but returned to the race behind the No. 57.

The win follows earlier triumphs this season for Winward in March at the 12 Hours of Sebring and two races later at WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca in May. Both races were repeat victories after Winward scored their first wins at each track in the same races in 2024, and Sunday's VIR win was also a repeat triumph several years on.

Ward, Ellis and the No. 57 Winward Mercedes-AMG GT3 team also won the 2022 running of the Michelin GT Challenge at VIR and have recorded third place finishes in the last two runnings of the races for a GTD class-leading record of four-straight podium finishes on the 3.27-mile southern Virginia road course.

Winward's drivers and the No. 57 team came into VIR atop the GTD driver and team championship standings by 112 points but leave after the Michelin Pilot Challenge a full 171 points ahead of the nearest challengers, 2,529 – 2,358.

Mercedes-AMG has built an even bigger lead in the GTD manufacturer championship with 2,743 points, 186 points clear of the closest competitor.

Next up for Mercedes-AMG Motorsport Customer Racing teams in IMSA competition is the Battle on the Bricks Six-Hour Race at Indianapolis Motor Speedway, September 19 – 21.

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

“You could definitely see the officiating standards changed a little bit for this race, and we paid close attention to that. There's always more work to do in that area, but I think it was a pretty good job. We rolled out of the

trailer with a pretty good car and were able to capitalize on it again to get a good run of points. It's really, really good, and the performance by the team is at the level of execution you need in order to win a championship.”

Philip Ellis, Driver – No. 57 Winward Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3: “It was a really, really good weekend and we built our championship lead by quite a bit again, especially after a few rough weekends at Road America and Watkins Glen. It's good to bounce back in this kind of style, and that is exactly what Winward Racing is all about. Russell did the hard work with amazing qualifying and a good first stint, even though we faced some issues from the competitors. We never give up and walked away with the win, which is so amazing. I think it's no secret that we are probably the best team with our crew on pit lane at the moment. They gave us the lead and the win today.”

Contacts:

Adam Saal Tel.: +1 321-890-2848

saalgoodpr@gmail.com

Jochen Übler Tel.: +49 (0) 7144 302-92 470

jochen.uebler@mercedes-benz.com

Andrew Brudnicki Tel.: +1 470-409-8048

andrew.brudnicki@mbusa.com

Further information from Mercedes-Benz, Mercedes-AMG and Mercedes-Benz USA is available on the Internet: media.mercedes-benz.com, www.mercedes-benz.com and www.mbusa.com.

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