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Mercedes-AMG Motorsport Customer Racing Team Winward Racing
Extends IMSA GT Daytona (GTD) Championship Leads and Mercedes-AMG
Returns to the Top of The GTD Manufacturer Standings with WeatherTech
Raceway Laguna Seca Race Win

Press Information

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“Repeat-Repeat” Race Win for Mercedes-AMG Motorsport Customer Racing Team Winward Racing and No. 57 Winward Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3 Co- Drivers Russell Ward and Philip Ellis at WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca

MONTEREY, California – Mercedes-AMG Motorsport Customer Racing team Winward Racing – the reigning IMSA GT Daytona (GTD) class champions – turned in a “perfect” performance for a “repeat-repeat” GTD class race win Sunday in IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship competition at WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca (WRLS). The win from fourth on the grid was a GTD class-leading second victory of the season for the Winward No. 57 drivers and second consecutive at WRLS after winning on the 3.238-mile road course for the first time last year. Winward’s first 2025 victory in the 12 Hours of Sebring in March was also a repeat performance after winning the classic endurance at Sebring International Raceway for the second-straight time in March.

Starting driver Ward rolled off from the outside of the second row and immediately began the move to the front right after the green flag dropped. Ward advanced to third on the first lap and pitted from second just before the race’s one-hour mark to hand the No. 57 off to closing driver Ellis.

After an on-point and well executed pit stop by the Winward Racing crew, Ellis returned to the race as the rest of the GTD field and leading contenders dashed into the pits for their stops. As the full-field pit cycle

completed, Ellis moved into first place to take a race lead he would essentially hold to the finish.

Ellis and the Winward team were among the earliest to pit for second and final stops just over an hour from the finish, but they once again were back up front and in the GTD lead at the end of the pit cycle. Ellis maintained a steady gap on the field in the final run the checkered flag, crossing the finish line with a 5.459 second margin of victory.

Winward came into the WRLS race with a 91-point lead in the GTD driver and team championship standings and leaves Monterey with an increased 124-point margin in both championships, 1,372 – 1,248, over the nearest challengers.

The weekend's success also returned Mercedes-AMG to the top of the GTD manufacturer championship rankings, but more than the Winward victory played a role in AMG leading that championship for the second time this season.

The No. 32 Korthoff Competition Motors Mercedes-AMG GT3 team, and co-drivers Seth Lucas and Kenton Koch, used a reverse driver qualifying and race strategy that produced the team's first pole of the year and a season-best finish in the Pro-Am-structured GTD class.

The 35 points earned for Koch's pole was enough to put Mercedes-AMG back in the GTD manufacturer championship lead, and Winward added to the margin with the race win. Mercedes-AMG now has a 95-point lead over the nearest challenger, 1,404 – 1,309.

Korthoff Competition shifted from the usual GTD protocol of teams qualifying and starting the race with their "Am" or sportsman drivers before the professional drivers take over for the fight to the finish.

Koch won the pole in Saturday qualifying and twice led the GTD field in a double driving stint to open the race. Lucas, 18, took over with an hour to go and returned to the race in third, a position he capably held until the final race lap when one of the top professional international GT drivers in the world pulled off a pass for the final podium spot.

While Lucas was justifiably a bit disappointed after coming so close to a top-three result, he and his first-year Korthoff Competition teammates celebrated the fourth-place showing that topped last month's sixth place at Long Beach as their best finish to date.

Combined, the Winward and Korthoff Competition Mercedes-AMG GT3 teams led 88 of the 114-lap GTD race, the most laps up front for any manufacturer in any of the race's three competing classes.

Next up for Mercedes-AMG Motorsport Customer Racing teams in IMSA competition is the Sahlen's Six Hours of The Glen at Watkins Glen International, June 19 – 22.

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

"In order to win one of these races you really just have to have perfect execution. The Winward Racing team is always the best, and Philip and I did a good job keeping out of trouble. I mean, we don't have a scratch on the car, and I was happy to do my part with a pretty decent qualifying position and a good start. The Mercedes-AMG GT3 performs really well at this place, and so does Winward Racing. It all just came together for us today and it was great to win here again."

Philip Ellis, Driver – No. 57 Winward Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3: "I think we had the perfect race. We knew we had to have long stints with all green racing, and that was our strong suit today. Some of the other competitors were strong out of the box on new tires, but the Mercedes-AMG GT3 is the best at long runs. Then we just needed a great strategy, to keep the car clean and have very good pit stops. We had some good out laps from the pits and were able to just jump everybody and lead in clean air. I just had to hold the position after the team put me in front, and Russell had a great opening stint and picked up two positions for us. So, from our side, just a perfect race."

Seth Lucas, Driver – No. 32 Korthoff Competition Motors Mercedes-AMG GT3: "I would have taken one finishing position more, but it was fun. Coming out here, it was my first time at Laguna, I have never been here before, so it was interesting. I didn't have as much driving time before the race as I would have liked, but that's racing. We had a great starting position, and we were P1 when I got in, but I was careful on the

new cold tires out of the pits and dropped to third, which I held for a while. I had a couple battles with some people, just raced with all the fast guys, got some experience with how they treat you and how aggressive you have to be. A new experience on a new track and it was a good time.”

Kenton Koch, Driver – No. 32 Korthoff Competition Motors Mercedes-AMG GT3: “Maybe there was some question outside of the team on the strategy, but I had full faith in the Korthoff Competition team decision, and it made sense. This race has been known to go green for long periods of time, that was what we needed to happen, and it did. We were green the whole time. We were able to execute the strategy we planned, and it worked out. It ended up being a good deal. Seth got thrown to the wolves and had to battle against some of the top-level GT guys in the country and from all over the world. Seth defended his entire stint and kept the competition behind him through all the GTP traffic, and it was awesome to see. It was so cool to watch.”

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