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Race Win and Fourth-Place Finish Move Mercedes-AMG and Mercedes-AMG Motorsport Customer Racing Teams Korthoff Preston Motorsports and Winward Racing Closer to Year-End Championship Honors

Press Information

August 26, 2024

Korthoff Preston Motorsports Breaks Through for First IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar GTD Victory Sunday in the Michelin GT Challenge at VIRginia International Raceway

DANVILLE, Virginia – Mercedes-AMG Motorsport Customer Racing team Korthoff Preston Motorsports (KPM) broke through for its first victory in the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship's competitive GT Daytona (GTD) class Sunday with a convincing win by team co-drivers Mikael Grenier and Kenton Koch in the No. 32 Korthoff Preston Motorsports Mercedes-AMG GT3 in the Michelin GT Challenge at VIRginia International Raceway (VIR). The No. 32's maiden win came just over three years after the team made its IMSA GTD debut in July of 2021 at Watkins Glen International. The triumph follows KPM's IMSA Michelin Endurance Cup GTD team and driver championships last year and several near-miss shots at a race win over the course of the team's full-season campaigns, which began in 2022.

After qualifying on the outside front row – KPM's second stout qualifying performance in a row after Grenier won the pole earlier this month at Road America – Koch pounced from his second place starting position to grab the GTD lead on the first lap of the race. Koch then maintained a close but comfortable gap on the field while doing his best to save fuel in what turned out to be a double stint to open the race.

Grenier took the wheel after the KPM team executed its second flawless pit stop and picked right up where Koch left off. The KPM team led a GTD class-high 82 of the race's 86 laps, losing the top spot only twice for two laps each time when the field cycled through a pair of green-flag pit stops. With a GTD Pro competitor in between him and the second place GTD

challenger, Grenier took the checkered flag for the milestone win by 0.897 of a second.

Meanwhile, season-long GTD class championship leaders Winward Racing and team co-drivers Russell Ward and Philip Ellis secured a solid race result to improve their points margin with a late charge to a fourth-place finish. After Ward kept the No. 57 Winward Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3 in the lead pack and out of trouble in his race-opening stint, a good stop by the Winward crew just before the race's 45-minute mark put Ellis back in the race in the top 10.

Driving almost the final two hours over the course of two stints, Ellis kept the championship in mind as he chose his battles and looked for the right chances to improve race positions. The best opportunities came in the final 10 minutes of the race when Ellis took advantage of being in the middle of a GTD Pro class battle and the typical frenzied fight to the finish that always occurs at the end of IMSA races.

Ellis found a way by Winward's closest championship competitor to take the checkered flag in a race-high fourth place and one spot ahead of their title rival.

With two endurance races remaining on 2024's schedule next month at Indianapolis Motor Speedway (IMS) and in October at Michelin Raceway Road Atlanta, the No. 57 team and drivers have a 284-point lead in the WeatherTech GTD standings, 2,698 – 2,414, over the nearest competitor.

Sunday's KPM win also gave Mercedes-AMG another major boost in the GTD manufacturer championship with the Silver Star's series-leading fifth victory of the season following Winward's four race wins in the first half of the year. Now with 2,882 points, a season-high 507 clear of the closest competitor, Mercedes-AMG heads to next month's race in Indianapolis with a chance to clinch the title one race before the end of the season.

Grenier and the KPM team also improved their stakes in the GTD team and driver championship standings with Sunday's win. The No. 32 KPM squad is third in the GTD team championship with 2,178 points while Grenier moved into third in the driver championship rankings for the first time this season with the same number of points.

Next up for Mercedes-AMG Motorsport Customer Racing teams is the Battle on the Bricks six-hour race at Indianapolis Motor Speedway, September 19 – 22. Longtime KPM driver Mike Skeen returns to the No. 32 with Grenier and Koch at Indy while Indy Dontje resumes his familiar endurance roll with Winward to co-drive the No. 57 with Ward and Ellis.

Mikael Grenier, Driver – No. 32 Korthoff Preston Motorsports

Mercedes-AMG GT3: “I’m happy, especially for Herb Korthoff and the entire Korthoff Preston Motorsports team. All of the mechanics, they have been working so hard, but we have just had some bad luck. We should have won three or four races over the last few years, but you can never stop trying, so it is good to get a victory. We started off Friday really off, we were almost the last car and it was really hard to drive, but we made a good change overnight with good feedback from my teammate. We had good track position after Kenton’s great qualifying and we knew we had to keep it. I think it is hard to overtake for everyone here. Kenton took the lead and did a good job with fuel saving, so it gave us short pit stop. In the end, I was just managing a bit and keeping them behind me. Every win is important but this one is very special, extra special because I am happy for the team, I know that they wanted this, and I am also happy for Kenton.”

Kenton Koch, Driver – No. 32 Korthoff Preston Motorsports

Mercedes-AMG GT3: “Having the track position here is really important, so once we were where we needed to be I was kind of managing it from there, just making it to each pit stop with as much fuel in the tank so we would have the shortest stop as possible. We did that, the crew nailed the stops like they always do, and then we’re able to maintain track position. My first win in GTD and for the team as well. Everyone has worked really hard to get to this point, to finally have the planets align. They knew it was coming eventually as we’ve always had opportunities to win, but something has always gotten in our way. Not this time! It feels good, and it definitely feels good to be piloting one of these Mercedes-AMG GT3 cars. It’s only my second time here in a Mercedes-AMG GT3, and first in GTD, but we have wins now two years in a row. Obviously, the car is quite nice to drive. I’m very fortunate to be a part of this program.”

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

“Finishing ahead of our main competitor is helpful but I wouldn’t say it makes it easier. I think it’s going to be the same mentality going into the final races of keeping out of trouble and making sure we finish. Increasing the points gap a little bit again is nice but this was more of a statement, I would say, to them that we will also give them a good fight, a good run for their money. It was a good fight, and I tried to pick the right battles along the way with the right cars, choosing who I let by, who I would fight, and try to wiggle our way back to the front that way. It worked out perfectly. Of course, it would have been a little bit nicer to be an extra step or two up on the podium, but from where we started the weekend, and how it was going with the safety car and with the GTD Pro cars in between battling, I think it was a very good race for us.”

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