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Mercedes-AMG Motorsport Customer Racing Teams Extend IMSA
WeatherTech SportsCar Championship Leads and Win First VP Racing
SportsCar Challenge Race at Canadian Tire Motorsport Park

Press Information

Mercedes-AMG Motorsport Customer Racing Teams Winward Racing and Thaze Competition Anchor Championship Lead-Extending and Race-Winning Weekend at Canadian Tire Motorsport Park

July 15, 2024

BOWMANVILLE, Ontario, Canada – Mercedes-AMG Motorsport Customer Racing team Winward Racing secured a series-leading fifth podium finish of the 2024 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship season Sunday at Canadian Tire Motorsport Park to extend the 2024 GT Daytona (GTD) class points leads across three categories. The No. 57 Winward Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3 team and drivers Russell Ward and Philip Ellis turned in another competitive and flawless performance for a second-place GTD class finish that increased their points leads in the WeatherTech GTD team and driver standings and Mercedes-AMG's first-place standing in the GTD manufacturer championship.

Sunday's solid run to second place, that saw the No. 57 cross the finish line 5.060 seconds behind the GTD class winner, followed race wins by Ward, Ellis and the Winward No. 57 in four of the five races that made up the first half of the 10-race season.

Beginning the year's final stretch of five races with the same competitive form as the opening half, starting driver Ward rolled off from sixth on the GTD grid and battled with the lead pack from the drop of the green flag. Ward steadily climbed up the running order as he drove a lengthy double stint that kept him behind the wheel for nearly the first 100 minutes of the two-hour and 40-minute race.

Ward pitted from second with one hour remaining to hand off the No. 57 to Ellis, who returned to the race in the same position and was set to hold

it to the finish and bank away some valuable championship points. A late caution with less than 15 minutes to go closed up the field and put the No. 57 in closer touch with the GTD leader, but Ellis stayed focused on the championship picture and didn't attempt a late charge for the win.

The end result of the disciplined performance was a second-place points haul that further extended the points leads across the GTD driver, team and manufacturer championships with four races remaining on this year's 10-race calendar.

Ward, Ellis and the Winward No. 57 came into this weekend's race in Canada 305 points ahead of the nearest driver and team championship challengers but have now increased that season-high lead to 340 points, 2090 - 1,750.

Mercedes-AMG maintains an even larger lead in the GTD manufacturer championship battle with 2,185 points, a full season-high 397 ahead of the second-place competitor's 1,788 points.

To put all three championship leads into perspective, the maximum points available to a driver, team or manufacturer in all GTD championships for a race win is 350.

Mercedes-AMG's margin in the manufacturer championship, which amounts to more than a full race points lead, has also been supported this season by the No. 32 Korthoff Preston Motorsports Mercedes-AMG GT3 team and co-drivers Mikael Grenier and Mike Skeen.

Grenier qualified a Mercedes-AMG best fourth at CTMP and joined Ward in the GTD top three for a good portion of the middle part of the race. Like Ellis and the No. 57, Skeen took over the No. 32 for the race's final hour and a top-five finish or better appeared to be a possibility.

Skeen was running fifth in the GTD lead pack in the closing minutes of the race when a late full course caution set the stage for a frantic fight to the finish with nine minutes remaining. With GTD Pro cars, battling for their own class victory, in the mix, Skeen was momentarily moved off line and into the loose "marbles" on the edge of the circuit. The No. 32 slipped from fifth to eighth place and, for the second-straight race, the Korthoff team

and drivers were forced to settle for a finish not indicative of their race performance.

Despite the disappointing finish, the No. 32 Korthoff team and drivers moved to third in the WeatherTech Championship GTD team and driver championship standings following CTMP.

The race-winning performance for Mercedes-AMG Motorsport Customer Racing teams at CTMP was turned in by Thaze Competition and emerging talent Josh Green who combined for the first IMSA race wins for both the team and the driver in Sunday's rain-plagued 45-minute sprint race.

Building on a third-place finish in Saturday's first VP Racing sprint, Green ran fourth in the No. 78 Thaze Competition Mercedes-AMG GT4 from the start of Sunday's race. The opening laps were run in the dry but under threatening skies that soon opened up with a steady downpour.

Green moved to third at the onset of the rain and then pitted with the rest of the field under caution for a mandatory switch to rain tires. The race resumed for a wet and wild six-minute dash to the finish, and both Green and the Mercedes-AMG GT4 proved well suited for the rainy conditions. After an exploratory lap or two to determine the various conditions around the course, Green made his move with just over one lap remaining to pass both the first and second place competitors in one move and take the checkered flag for a 1.208 seconds margin of victory.

Next up for Mercedes-AMG Motorsport Customer Racing teams in the WeatherTech Championship is the August 2 - 4 race weekend at Road America in Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin.

Mercedes-AMG Motorsport customer teams in the VP Racing series next compete at the Michelin GT Challenge at VIRginia International Raceway (VIR), August 23 - 25.

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

"It's very satisfying. We took the maximum out of the car that we could today, but we are just lacking pace with the current rules compared to some of the competition. All in all, given the circumstances, it was a perfect weekend, and we increased the gap again in the championship. It

sure would have been nice to have another win under our belts, but it wasn't there this weekend. We will continue in the year's final races with the same plan we have followed all year. We will stay clean, stay out of trouble, maximize the points we have in hand and try to keep the championship lead straight to the end of the season."

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

"Sometimes you can't get it done just on the race track. Some of the other competitors have a better rules package than we do right now, but it just shows when you put it all together and execute well – make no mistakes – you can get the most out of your available performance. Hats off again to the team, and it was just an incredible effort out of them once again. We are really looking to win this championship. We have won some races the last few years. We know we are capable of the race wins, but as sweet as they are, this team has never had a championship. That's really our 100 percent focus, and you just have to stay out of trouble. You can't do well if you don't finish. We have got the speed, we have got the confidence, we've got the momentum, so we just need to execute on all of that. It's difficult when you put the helmet on because you want to go out there and you just want to be the fastest. You want to be first, but really, we just need to bring this one home, and we are going to bring it home."

Mike Skeen, Driver – No. 32 Korthoff Preston Motorsports

Mercedes-AMG GT3: "The Korthoff Preston Motorsports guys have been doing a fantastic job week in and week out. We had a podium here last year and we were very hopeful coming in that we could repeat that. We had a good position most of the race to capitalize on that, but some things just didn't fall perfectly for us, but super happy for these guys. They just keep hustling and trying to make it all work, and maybe one of these days we will put it up on top."

Josh Green, Driver – No. 78 Thaze Competition Mercedes-AMG GT4:

"I am super pumped. I was doing the rain dance the whole weekend. Once we put the wets on, I was pretty confident. I've had a lot of great races in the rain. We actually had an LMP3 car kind of get stuck in front of us and he blocked everyone, and I knew that that was going to be the opportunity to get clear. It feels sweet, I'm so happy. Thaze Competition is such an awesome group, it's like family to me, and I've been so lucky

that they took me under their wing. It's my first real season in sports cars and to win our first times together after a few races is just awesome."

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