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Mercedes-AMG Motorsport Customer Racing Teams Winward Racing, Korthoff Preston Motorsports and Lone Star Racing Combine for a Victory and two more top-10 Finishes in the Rolex 24 and a Michelin Pilot Challenge Runner-up Result in a Competitive Race Weekend at Daytona International Speedway

Press Information

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Winward Racing Secures Second Rolex 24 At Daytona Victory in Four Years as Korthoff Preston Motorsports Moves IMSA Michelin Endurance Cup Title Defense Off to a Winning Start

DAYTONA BEACH, Florida – Mercedes-AMG Motorsport Customer Racing team Winward Racing secured its second Rolex 24 At Daytona GT Daytona (GTD) race win in the last four years while Korthoff Preston Motorsports moved its IMSA Michelin Endurance Cup (IMEC) title defense off to a fast start this weekend in the 62nd running of America's premier 24-hour race at Daytona International Speedway. Russell Ward, Philip Ellis, Indy Dontje and Daniel Morad co-drove the No. 57 Winward Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3 to the team's second Rolex 24 GTD win Saturday and Sunday at the "World Center of Racing" following 2021's initial victory. Mike Skeen, Mikael Grenier, Kenton Koch and Maximilian Götz in turn finished fifth in GTD while securing enough segment points during the race to win the opening round of the 2024 IMEC in the GTD division.

Winward's convincing victory was the second in a row and third in four years for Mercedes-AMG Motorsport Customer Racing teams in the Rolex 24. In addition to Winward's pair of victories, WeatherTech Racing secured the GTD Pro win in last year's Rolex 24.

Including Lone Star Racing, which finished eighth in its Rolex 24 debut, the three Mercedes-AMG GT3 entries competing in the GTD class combined to lead 424 of the race's 731 laps over the 24 hours. The total was anchored by Winward's GTD class-high 383 laps up front that saw each of the team's four drivers lead the race at least once.

Morad was at the wheel for the finish and steadily opened a gap in the final 23 laps for a 2.731 seconds margin of victory. All four Winward drivers captured their second Rolex 24 victories, with Morad first earning the title in GTD in 2017 and Ward, Ellis and Dontje all part of Winward's maiden Daytona victory in 2021.

Reigning IMEC GTD champions, the No. 32 Korthoff Preston Motorsports team and drivers battled in the lead pack for the majority of the race and led a total of 36 GTD laps. The team was ultimately just a tick off the front runners in the final fight to the finish, but they backed up their fifth-place result at the checkered flag by winning Daytona's opening round of the IMEC in the GTD class. The Daytona IMEC win was anchored by a first-place finish in the opening segment of the season at the race's six-hour mark. The Korthoff Preston team and drivers and Mercedes-AMG head into round two of the five race IMEC championship in March at Sebring International Raceway leading the GTD standings.

Lone Star's initial attempt at the Rolex 24 rarely looked like a first-time effort as team drivers Scott Andrews, Adam Christodoulou, Salih Yoluç and Rui Andrade joined Winward and Korthoff Preston in frequently contending for the lead. The No. 80 Lone Star Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3 led five laps and finished eighth only because of some pit procedure penalties and an untimely late caution knocked them from a likely top-five result. Yoluç, Andrade and Andrews are set to co-drive the Lone Star No. 80 in the Sebring 12 Hour race in March.

Another race-leading performance was turned in by SunEnergy1 Racing that was the lone Mercedes-AMG Motorsport Customer Racing team competing in the GTD Pro class. Kenny Habul, Maro Engel, Jules Gounon and Luca Stolz co-drove the No. 75 SunEnergy1 Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3 and, after leading six laps, were just settling in to battle with the class leaders Saturday evening when the entry retired with a technical issue.

Winward's top weekend also included a close second-place finish in Friday's season-opening IMSA Michelin Pilot Challenge race. With Morad once again the closing driver, the No. 57 Winward Racing Mercedes-AMG GT4 was catching the race leader on the final lap but settled for the runner-up result 1.936 seconds behind the race winner. Morad co-drives

with Russell Ward's father Bryce Ward who ran in the top-10 throughout his race-opening stint in the eight-hour race.

The Daytona opener also saw the debut of Mercedes-AMG GT4 standouts Michai Stephens and Jesse Webb who scored a top-10 Pilot Challenge GS-class finish in the No. 34 JMF Motorsports Mercedes-AMG GT4.

Next up for Mercedes-AMG Motorsport Customer Racing teams in both the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship and IMSA Michelin Pilot Challenge is the 72nd running of the 12 Hours of Sebring, March 14 – 16 at Sebring International Raceway.

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

“This one is pretty special to me. The first victory wasn't luck of course, everybody put their work in, but to come here and do it again is a great feeling. Our work really began at the mid-December test. We experienced the new Michelin tire, which is quite different from last year's tire, and we just kind of set the car for the long run. That's what we all like. You can put a fast lap together, but at the end of the day you just want a car that is good on the long run. The team did a great job on that, and that was big for our race this weekend. We have had a pretty consistent crew the last five years that has stayed with us and that really helps us be successful.”

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

“We have done a flawless job. Our Mercedes-AMG GT3 was in top condition in the closing stages as well and that is the basic requirement to be able to push at the end. Generally, Winward Racing has done a great job. The strategy was always right and that is how we were able to work our way up step by step and remain in front. At the end, we had to give it our all once again, but fortunately, we had the better outcome. I am simply just grateful for being here.”

Daniel Morad, Driver – No. 57 Winward Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3

and Mercedes-AMG GT4: “It was just a perfect weekend, starting with the Michelin Pilot Challenge. We definitely had the performance against us, but we really over-achieved big time for the championship. Once that was all finished the focus went on to the big race with the Rolex 24. I just had a feeling we would be in the hunt. We worked so hard on the prep, Winward Racing gave us just an unbelievable car, and the Mercedes-AMG

GT3 was just incredible with the tire degradation. That was a big key to the win: we had the rear tire, and the other guys did not.”

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

“Obviously, it is a great feeling. A two-time winner of the Rolex 24 is a really amazing feeling, and I am happy to be able to do it together again with Winward Racing and all of our teammates from the first win. Daniel wasn’t there for the first one, but I am really happy he joined us for this race together. It was an exciting race at the end, and I really couldn’t watch!”

Maximilian Götz, Driver – No. 32 Korthoff Preston Motorsports

Mercedes-AMG GT3: “Fifth place is not what we had in mind. We had a very good pace at times but lost it again. Especially in comparison with Winward Racing, we have to sit down and analyze this. The heat in the last six or seven hours caused us problems. Unfortunately, we also had a drive-through penalty. The rear wheel spun in the air during a pit stop, which is not allowed. That threw us a bit out of rhythm. Congratulations to Winward Racing who did a great job. They were the benchmark. It’s nice to have a star at the top.”

Kenton Koch, Driver – No. 32 Korthoff Preston Motorsports

Mercedes-AMG GT3: “It feels good to get the endurance cup off to a good start but this year we want to go for wins and this weekend we fell short. It was unfortunate, and it wasn’t for a lack of trying, that’s for sure. Everyone here did everything they could this weekend. We were fast for a lot of the race and in certain conditions we just were not. That’s just how it goes sometimes but I feel very fortunate to be here again for the endurance races this year.”

Mike Skeen, Driver – No. 32 Korthoff Preston Motorsports Mercedes-

AMG GT3: “The guys did an awesome job. We ran a really good race but unfortunately at the end we just didn’t have the pace the front-running cars had. We were in the mix all night, and kept the car up there without any mistakes, and not banging it up, but when the pace went up in the morning, we just didn’t have it. Frustrating in a lot of ways but very proud of the team and good points to start the season.”

Adam Christodoulou, Driver – No. 80 Lone Star Racing Mercedes-

AMG GT3: “What a roller coaster of a race. I started the race and straight away the car felt really, really nice. We were really on the backfoot here, this was kind of a last-minute deal and we missed all of the testing the other teams were able to do, but I was still happy to get the call up just five days before the Roar test. We started almost last and moved up to second, but some penalties and safety cars kept us always fighting to get back into the top three. In the end we were sixth but got caught out when we just passed the pits as a safety car came out. That led to some other issues and our race was basically done. I think we would have had a podium for sure but staying out of trouble is so key for this race.”

Scott Andrews, Driver – No. 80 Lone Star Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3:

“It was a massive effort from everybody involved just to get here. We were the last car entered in this year’s Rolex 24. Less than two weeks ago the car we raced wasn’t even in IMSA specifications and we didn’t even have a full team assembled. I think if you had told us two weeks ago we would get a top-10, we would have taken it, but everybody saw how the race went. With our driver lineup and the pace of the Lone Star Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3, I think we deserved a podium for sure.”

Maro Engel, Driver – No. 75 SunEnergy1 Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3:

“We had a good car and a great team. Many thanks to SunEnergy1 Racing! The team spirit was great, and the car handled really well at the beginning of the race. However, we had an issue with the fuel system that forced us to retire. Sadly, something like that happens at times, there isn’t much one can do about it. Too bad, but we will fight back and compete for victory again next year. The atmosphere at Daytona was really great thanks to the record crowd.”

Bryce Ward, Driver – No. 57 Winward Racing Mercedes-AMG GT4:

“We were hoping for a top-10 on Friday but honestly that was a win. To get a second-place finish is just incredible. The strategy just worked out so well, the pit stop crew worked so hard and were the reason we jumped two competitors, and what can you say about Daniel. He fought every single lap. So proud of everybody.”

Jesse Webb, Driver – No. 34 JMF Motorsports Mercedes-AMG GT4:

“We are getting in the rhythm, knowing how the pit stops work, knowing

how IMSA works, just learning how everything operates. It was good to have that long race to give us more time to build an understanding of this big step and we learned a lot. We are definitely looking forward to building on that and Michai and I are both extremely grateful to even be here. Everybody on this entire JMF team worked extremely hard to have us here at Daytona and to get a top-10 in our first outing in GS is a great step. We will keep moving forward.”

Michai Stephens, Driver – No. 34 JMF Motorsports Mercedes-AMG

GT4: “We raised our flag high for the JMF Motorsports crew, and we did it with the support of Mercedes-AMG, rolling on Michelin tires, and we appreciate it all greatly. Long story short, we now know the height of the mountain, how far we need to climb, and I think as a unit we will be able to surpass that. This was our IMSA GS debut, and for the team in its entirety as well, so we are just going to continue to be one big family moving forward and the bond will grow stronger.”

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.