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Mercedes-AMG Motorsport Customer Racing Teams Secure Motul Petit Le Mans Race Win and Clinch Eight 2023 IMSA Racing Series Championships at the Season-Ending Motul Petit Le Mans at Michelin Raceway Road Atlanta

Press Information

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Mercedes-AMG Motorsport Customer Racing Team WeatherTech Racing Wins GTD-Pro at Motul Petit Le Mans and Joins Korthoff Preston Motorsports in Sweeping the IMSA Michelin Endurance Cup GTD Championships at the Season-Ending Motul Petit Le Mans at Michelin Raceway Road Atlanta

BRASELTON, Georgia – Mercedes-AMG Motorsport Customer Racing teams brought the curtain down on the 2023 North American racing season with a multiple-championship and race-winning performance Friday and Saturday at the 26th Motul Petit Le Mans at Michelin Raceway. The No. 79 WeatherTech Racing/Proton Competition Mercedes-AMG GT3 of Jules Gounon, Daniel Juncadella and Maro Engel won the GT Daytona (GTD) Pro class race in Saturday's 10-hour Petit Le Mans IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship finale and joined GTD team Korthoff Preston Motorsports in sweeping all six GTD/GTD Pro championships in the IMSA Michelin Endurance Cup (IMEC). Saturday's banner day followed Friday's season-ending IMSA Michelin Pilot Challenge race that saw Mercedes-AMG GT4 teams secure the second straight Grand Sport (GS) class manufacturer championship and third in the last five seasons for Mercedes-AMG Motorsport. A repeat title was also won by Wilsports and team drivers Gary Ferrera and Kris Wilson who captured a second-straight Pilot Challenge GS Bronze Cup title Friday in the No. 11 Wilsports Mercedes-AMG GT4.

A championship within the overall IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, the IMEC awards the top performers in the year's long-distance races at the Rolex 24 At Daytona, the 12 Hours of Sebring, the Sahlen's Six Hours of The Glen and this weekend's 10-hour Petit Le Mans.

Co-driving with Cooper MacNeil – who won in his final race – Gounon, Juncadella and Engel took an IMEC GTD Pro points lead they would hold all season after a victory in January's season-opening Rolex 24 At Daytona.

Going into Petit Le Mans with a three-point lead, WeatherTech clinched the IMEC driver, team and manufacturer titles for Mercedes-AMG at the eight-hour mark. Incredibly, WeatherTech went on to take the overall GTD Pro victory two hours later, one of the few teams in the history of the Endurance Cup to win that title while also taking a race victory in the season finale.

Gounon, Juncadella and Engel combined to lead a class-high 97 laps, including the final 41 circuits when Juncadella never faltered under pressure from the second-place finisher. The victory was the first for the Mercedes-AMG GT3 at Petit Le Mans in any class and a GTD Pro class-high fourth of the season for the WeatherTech team and drivers.

The Korthoff Preston team's road to its first championship of any kind was a little tougher with the No. 32 Korthoff Preston Motorsports Mercedes-AMG GT3 team and drivers Mikael Grenier, Mike Skeen and Kenton Koch coming into Saturday's race one-point out of first place in the IMEC GTD battle.

Second place points in the first segment at Petit at the four-hour mark gave the No. 32 its first IMEC championship lead of the season and they all but sealed the driver, team and manufacturer titles at the end of the race's eighth hour when they earned the maximum five points for leading GTD at that point. From there the team focused on a clean and controlled run to a sixth-place finish while making sure they stayed ahead of or matched the final IMEC segment points of their closest competitor.

The GTD/GTD Pro IMEC sweep is the first time Mercedes-AMG GT3 teams and Mercedes-AMG have won dual IMEC team, driver and manufacturer titles. WeatherTech's strong day also saw them move up to second in the final full-season WeatherTech Championship GTD Pro team and driver championships.

The Korthoff Preston team led three times Saturday for 58 laps in GTD, but the main class pacesetter was the No. 57 Winward Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3 of Russell Ward, Philip Ellis and Indy Dontje. The team's 142 laps at the front of the GTD field was the fourth highest lead lap total of the 52 cars in the race, trailing only three Prototype competitors, but the run was derailed from what appeared to be a certain race victory after contact with a lapped car in the race's closing stages. Despite the damage, Ellis brought the damaged No. 57 across the finish line in ninth place for a lead lap finish.

Saturday's haul of six championships was preceded by a pair of titles secured in Friday's two-hour Michelin Pilot Challenge finale. A fifth place GS finish for Bryce Ward and Daniel Morad in the No. 57 Winward Racing Mercedes-AMG GT4 was enough to give Mercedes-AMG its second consecutive manufacturer championship and third in the six years the AMG GT4 customer racing program has been in operation in North America. The first Pilot Challenge GS manufacturer championship for Mercedes-AMG was won in 2019.

Every team competing in a Mercedes-AMG GT4 this season was a championship contributor. Winward also earned the manufacturer points with victories at Indianapolis and Detroit while Murillo Racing scored the first of three Mercedes-AMG GT4 wins this season at WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca in May in addition to a string of other top finishes.

Lone Star Racing delivered the GS championship points at Sebring and even part time and debuting team Thaze Competition helped in the title race by garnering the points at its home race at Canadian Tire Motorsport Park.

Wilsports did its part by going a perfect two-for-two in Bronze Cup titles in the two-year history of the award that is championship within the overall GS series for "Am" or sportsman drivers. Ferrera and Wilson also won the inaugural Bronze Cup last year.

Christian Szymczak and Kenny Murillo led or challenged for the overall GS driver and team championship all season in the No. 72 Murillo Racing Mercedes-AMG GT4 and ultimately finished third in the final standings for the No. 72 team's best GS season on record.

The inaugural VP Racing SportsCar Challenge season wrapped up at Petit Le Mans and Tim Probert ended the year on a high note. Probert finished second in the Bronze Cup class race in the No. 72 Murillo Racing Mercedes-AMG GT4 in Thursday's opening race. He was in a position to battle for the lead in the closing stages of the 45-minute sprint only to have a late and race-ending caution period take away a shot at the victory. Probert came back with an equally strong showing in Friday's finale for another second-place class finish to close the season with a double-podium showing.

Stefan Wendl, Head of Mercedes-AMG Customer Racing: "All in all, a great weekend for us. With the maiden win for Mercedes-AMG in Motul Petit Le Mans, our expectations were even exceeded. On top of that, there are driver, team and manufacturer titles both in GTD and GTD Pro in the Michelin Endurance Cup. We can be very, very happy with that. We extend our thanks to WeatherTech Racing, Winward Racing and Korthoff Preston Motorsports who have made this success possible and have delivered a fantastic season."

Daniel Juncadella, Driver – No. 79 WeatherTech Racing/Proton Competition Mercedes-AMG GT3: "It was a great result for the whole WeatherTech Racing/Proton team. We had a tough middle of the season, but we had a great car for Petit. It made my life easy to bring it home for the win in my last stint. It was great to win the IMEC Championship, Rolex 24 and the two sprint races and then to finish with a big win today is amazing. Thanks to David and Cooper MacNeil for all of their support throughout the year and the WeatherTech Racing/Proton crew."

Jules Gounon, Driver – No. 79 WeatherTech Racing/Proton Competition Mercedes-AMG GT3: "Amazing! We came into this race with big hopes and happy to have Maro back with us. I had a lot of fun with my teammates, and usually when you have a lot of fun, you get some good results. We started the year with the win at Daytona and then at Sebring we did our best and finished third. Petit Le Mans is an incredible race and one that every driver wants on their C.V. None of us had won here, for me it was my first time here, and to get a win is just great. I want to thank the MacNeil family, David and Cooper, for all of the effort to build this project around us. To win Daytona, Petit Le Mans and two sprint races

was great. We are proud of the WeatherTech Racing/Proton team for all their hard work.”

“Maro Engel, Driver – No. 79 WeatherTech Racing/Proton

Competition Mercedes-AMG GT3: “It was a great race for us. For the three of us, it is all our first victories here at Petit Le Mans, and that is definitely one of those boxes you want to check in your career. Winning the GTD Pro class here means a lot. Big thanks to Mercedes-AMG, the WeatherTech/Proton team for giving us an amazing car and great strategy today, which brought us back into the game.”

Mikael Grenier, Driver – No. 32 Korthoff Preston Motorsports

Mercedes-AMG GT3: “It was a good race. We led a good part of the race, running in the top three most of the race after starting P12, so it was a really good strategy from the team. My teammates drove amazing as well. In the end we had to sacrifice the race to win the championship. The Mercedes-AMG GT3 was good but it is always tricky because it was warm during the day, but you finish in the night. So, the conditions change, but the car was really good at the end. The team was great, not a mistake the entire race and the car doesn’t have a scratch on it after 10 hours.”

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

AMG GT3: “This goes to show the high level of performance these guys have and the great effort the Korthoff Preston team has put in all year. They called some great strategy to get us some track position early in the race, we ran up front, led a bunch of laps and scored points when it mattered. We kept the car clean and brought it home to the finish. It wasn’t a representative finish of our performance in the race, but we focused on getting the points we needed in the Endurance Cup, and I am super happy to bring it home and get this finish.”

Kenton Koch, Driver – No. 32 Korthoff Preston Motorsports

Mercedes-AMG GT3: “It’s pretty cool to be part of a team that has the dedication and the manpower to do as well as we have. I am pretty honored to be included for the endurance races and I just did my part. It was a team effort to be able to be in this position to win the IMEC championships. It’s also a first for me.”

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

“The good qualifying really helped and it’s really because what Daniel and I have been working on through the season on the simulator. Thanks to him and the ‘Moradness’ crew that have all been a great help and inspiration to me. A lot of restarts in my stint but I eventually got into a great rhythm and turned the car over to Daniel, I think in sixth place. The team did an amazing job on the strategy. We had a really strong end to our season and we are already looking forward to Daytona. I am truly proud that we were able to earn the championship points for Mercedes-AMG in the year’s final races and earlier in the season. Mercedes-AMG has been a really great platform for us, and I am looking forward to continuing for many years to come.”

Kenny Murillo, Driver – No. 72 Murillo Racing Mercedes-AMG GT4:

“I am just so incredibly grateful to be racing in Michelin Pilot Challenge, especially in the Mercedes-AMG GT4. The car has done wonders for us all season long and put us in a position to fight for a championship. All credit goes to the Murillo Racing crew for an incredible effort all year. I am just a small piece in this giant puzzle.”

Tim Probert, Driver – No. 65 Murillo Racing Mercedes-AMG GT4:

“I was really looking forward to this last race of the season. Atlanta is a great place that I always enjoy, and the team always prepares me very well for this track. For me at least, the Mercedes-AMG GT4 works well here. I did a good job in qualifying, even in the damp conditions, and a lot of that comes down to the car itself. It does very well in the wet. I was absolutely going to make a move at the end of the first race. I was planning to do that, but we got a little cut short. But it has been a great season, two P2 results to finish and some respectable overall finishes too. I just love driving the Mercedes-AMG GT4 and Murillo Racing does a great job setting it up for us.”

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