



**Grand-Am Rolex Series Bosch Engineering 250
At Virginia International Raceway**
Source: Team Race Reports



Photos Courtesy www.grand-am.com

Grand-Am Race Report

Source: Grand-AM

Alex Gurney took the lead on a four-wide pass on lap 65, and then held off Michael Valiante in a sprint to the finish to capture the Bosch Engineering 250 at Virginia International Raceway, Round 2 of the Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series presented by Crown Royal Cask No. 16.

The GT race also came down to the wire, with Robin Liddell holding off Paul Edwards by .107 seconds to give the No. 57 Stevenson Automotive Pontiac GXP.R started by Andrew Davis its second straight VIR victory. Edwards shared the No. 07 Banner Racing Pontiac GXP.R. with defending GT co-champion Kelly Collins.

It was the ninth victory for Gurney and Jon Fogarty in the No. 99 GAINSCO/Bob Stallings Racing Pontiac Riley, in their 40th start driving together dating back to 2006 at VIR.

Gurney led the final 17 circuits, winning by .705 seconds over Valiante, who was co-driving the No. 6 Michael Shank Racing Ford Riley started by John Pew. Darren Law and David Donohue, winners of the season-opening Rolex 24 At Daytona, finished third in the No. 58 Brumos Racing Porsche Riley.

Valiante and Scott Pruett - in the No. 01 TELMEX Chip Ganassi Racing Lexus Riley -- pressured Gurney throughout the closing laps, although all three cars were unsure of having enough fuel to compete the two hour, 45 minute distance on the challenging 3.27-mile circuit. With 12 minutes

remaining, Andy Wallace went off course in the No. 2 Gentleman Jack's Childress-Howard Motorsports Pontiac Crawford to bring out the fourth caution of the event.

That resulted in a three-lap sprint to the finish, with Gurney trying to hold off Valiante, Pruett, Donohue and Max Angelelli, who was driving the No. 10 SunTrust Racing Ford Dallara. Donohue, Pruett and Angelelli made contact, with Angelelli going off course. Gurney then held off Valiante over the final two laps to take the victory.

"It was a great day," said Gurney, who shared the 2007 Daytona Prototype championship with Fogarty. "This is where we always aim to be. Our guys did some great work over the off season, and did a lot of work after Daytona. We really made some big improvements. It was a typical Grand-Am race - really tough - and I was happy to be up there and winning. It was a great race for Michael Valiante. It was just an unlucky deal for him - I've been sitting in that position before."

Pruett was driving in relief of pole-winner Memo Rojas, who led a race-high 27 circuits before handing over to Pruett.

Valiante led 15 circuits in his second race for Michael Shank Racing.

"I was trying to save fuel, but not enough to affect the outcome of the race," Valiante said. "When the yellow flag came out, we were able to run hard to the end. But Alex had just a little bit more than me, and that made it difficult for me to get by. We had the car to beat for sure, but we came up on lapped traffic that allowed Alex to pull out and take the lead."

Christophe Bouchut and Scott Tucker took fourth in the Supercar Life Racing BMW Riley, followed by Memo Gidley and Brad Jaeger in the No. 77 Doran Racing McDonalds Ford Dallara.

Rounding out the top 10 were Ozz Negri and Mark Patterson in the No. 60 Michael Shank Racing Ford Riley; Romain Dumas and Timo Bernhard in the No. 12 Penske Racing Verizon Wireless Porsche Riley; Joao Barbosa and JC France in the No. 59 Brumos Racing Porsche Riley; Darren Manning and Bill Lester in the No. 45 Orbit Racing BMW Riley; and Guy Cosmo and Scott Russell in the No. 09 Spirit of Daytona Porsche Coyote.

The race was slowed four times for 17 laps. The top eight finishers completed 81 laps, averaging 96.074 mph.

Donohue and Law hold a one-point lead over Gurney and Fogarty, 60-59, heading into the next event, the May 3 Verizon Wireless 250 presented by Crown Royal Cask No. 16 at New Jersey Motorsports Park.

Porsche Motorsports Race Report

Source: Andy Schupack - Porsche Motorsports

Brumos Porsche Riley Grabs DP Podium Spot in Rolex Grand-Am Race at Virginia; Farnbacher Loles Takes Fourth in GT; Porsche Drivers and Team on Top of near Top of All Points after Round Two

Brumos Racing grabbed a controversial podium finish in Saturday's Rolex Grand-Am Sports Car Series presented by Crown Royal Cask No. 16 race at Virginia International Raceway, and the Farnbacher Loles Racing Porsche GT3 finished fourth in GT.

David Donohue (Malvern, PA) and Darren Law (Phoenix AZ) finished third in the #58 Porsche Riley, taking advantage of a late caution that allowed Donohue to make up a seven-second deficit to the third-place car.

When the green flag fell with less than five minutes remaining, Donohue was still fourth, now right behind the third-place car. As they came through Turn 1B, Donohue bumped into the rear of Scott Pruett's third-place Lexus Riley. That made Pruett's car twitch back and forth and the Ford Dallara of Max Angelelli hit Pruett's right front corner and went spinning off left. Pruett spun sideways, and Donohue went around him to capture third.

"Pruett just slowed more than I did," Donohue said. "I just got into the back of him, pretty hard I guess.. I don't know if I locked up (the brakes), but I couldn't go sideways to avoid him because Max (Angelelli) was there. Then they tangled right in front of me and I avoided Pruett when he spun, and Max went off to the left. I don't know why they are upset."

The podium finish enabled Donohue and Law to remain co-leaders in the driver's standings with 60 points each, and moved Porsche into a tie for the manufacturer's standings with Ford with 60 points each.

"I'm very, very happy with the outcome of this race" said Law. "The win at Daytona and the podium here puts us in the point's lead, which is what we're aiming to do for the season. It was rough out there; it was very hot (93 degrees F) and there was a lot of traffic. But I think we were competitive with everybody except maybe 01. The pit stops were correct and the car was quick enough I felt like I could run with anybody. I brought it in second place, the team did a great job and David fought his way to the front."

A day that started on the bright side for the Penske Porsche Riley turned into disappointment for the Porsche works drivers, but even after falling back to 23rd, still managed a seventh place finish for drivers Timo Bernhard (Germany) and Romain Dumas (France).

Spirit of Daytona Race Report

Source: www.sundaymanagement.com

Guy Cosmo and Scott Russell combined to bring the No. 09 Porsche V8-powered Coyote home 10th in the Bosch Engineering 250 at Virginia International Raceway to take the first top ten of the Rolex Sports Car Series season for Spirit of Daytona Racing, which opened the season with a run to 11th in the Rolex 24 At Daytona.

Cosmo started the race from 10th on the grid, and was on the gas from the drop of the green, moving up to 7th in the early laps, into the top five and then up to 3rd by lap 25 of the two hour and forty-five minute race.

“The car was just as good in the race as it was in qualifying,” said Cosmo. “We got off to a solid start, and just went from there. It was really stable and predictable, so it was a great move forward from Daytona. We were hoping to still be in the top five at the finish, but the way the yellows fell just didn’t work out with our driver changes. But it was still a good weekend, Scott kept making progress every lap he was out there, and we just kept working on getting everything we could out of the car. And the great news is that we get to go racing again next weekend! So we can just keep at it. We were strong in New Jersey last year, so we’re going to head there to build on what we did here this weekend.”

Turning the car over to Russell, who had only previously seen the track from aboard a motorcycle, saw the AMA-liveried Coyote return to the field deep in the pack. But despite one off-course excursion, Russell kept his rapidly accelerating Daytona Prototype learning curve going as he moved up from 24th up into the top 12 before turning the machine back over to Cosmo.

“I’m still feeling like I’m in the deep end a little bit here, but it was great to get more time behind the wheel today and hopefully I can get a good start at new Jersey next weekend,” said Russell. “I had a little off and I’m disappointed for the team that it set us back some, but I’m just working on getting a feel for what the car can and can’t do. I’m really hungry for more seat time, and hopefully I can have all the guys hard work pay off with a little bit better run here soon!”

GAINSCO/Bob Stallings Racing Report

Source: Adam Saal – GAINSCO/ Bob Stallings Racing

Gurney and Fogarty Give GAINSCO/Bob Stallings Racing First VIR Victory in 40th Race Together In the Bosch Engineering 250

Gurney Stretches Fuel Mileage and Holds off Valiante for First 2009 and Ninth Career Win

Alex Gurney stretched his fuel mileage and then his lead over Michael Valiante in a three-lap dash to the finish to give GAINSCO/Bob Stallings Racing its first career victory at Virginia International Raceway Saturday in a Bosch Engineering 250 race that marked the 40th career start together for Gurney and teammate Jon Fogarty.

Gurney took over from opening driver Fogarty before the race’s halfway point and then muscled the No. 99 GAINSCO Auto Insurance Pontiac Riley past Valiante’s Michael Shank Racing Ford Riley in a four-wide pass in traffic on Lap 65 for what would prove to be the race’s winning pass. The drama was far from over, however, as Gurney and the rest of the front runners had to nurse the fuel mileage of their Daytona Prototypes to the finish for most of the race’s final hour.

The fourth and final caution of the day 15 minutes from the end of the 2 ¾ hour race took away any major fuel concerns but set the stage for the three-lap run to the checkered flag. Gurney withstood the challenge and led Valiante across the finish line by .705 of a second for GAINSCO’s first 2009 win and ninth career team victory. GAINSCO averaged 96.074 mph in the victory and completed 81 laps.

“It was a great day and this is where we always want to be,” said Gurney who first teamed with Fogarty at GAINSCO in the 2006 race at VIR almost exactly three years ago. “Our guys did some really neat things over the off season and after Daytona. We have a new car and a lot of nice detail changes so we have really made some big improvements.”

In their 40 Grand-Am Rolex Series races together with GAINSCO, Gurney and Fogarty have nine victories, 20 total top-three podium finishes and 11 poles. Saturday’s win was GAINSCO’s first since Mid-Ohio last June.

"The race to me just seemed to be a typical Grand-Am race," Gurney said. "Just really intense, so many fast guys and good teams and it is just tough to be up there and get the breaks in traffic and not make mistakes. At the end Michael and I were both in a fuel situation, I think, and my guys were yelling at me every lap 'you're not making the (mileage) number, you're not making the number and we are going to run out of fuel.' So, we were happy to see the yellow. It was a great race with Michael there and he just got held up in traffic – that was right before the esses – and it was just one of those unlucky deals. That's happened to me quite a bit last year."

Fogarty started third, moved to second on the opening lap and was in the lead by Lap 5 in the first part of the race.

"It was a good stint, I was happy with the car and I kept it clean," Fogarty said. "I knew that we had something to race with for sure when Alex got in. It was definitely a positive day for the GAINSCO team and we are liking the points situation after this and we are hoping to capitalize on it in the next round next week at New Jersey."

Round 3 of the 2009 Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series will be held at New Jersey Motorsports Park (NJMP) next weekend and GAINSCO and its drivers are in the thick of the championship chase heading to the Garden State. GAINSCO is now just one point behind third place VIR finishers David Donohue and Darren Law of Brumos Porsche Racing in both the Grand-Am Rolex Series Team and Driver Championships. The Brumos squad has 60 points to lead both championships but GAINSCO, Gurney and Fogarty follow closely with 59 points.

The Verizon Wireless 250 at NJMP will run next Sunday, May 3 and can be seen live on SPEED at 1 p.m. ET.

NOTEWORTHY

GAINSCO/Bob Stallings Racing teammates Gurney and Fogarty are more than just co-drivers on the track. "Jon is not only my really good friend but an awesome driver and teammate," said Gurney, who first teamed with Fogarty in 2002 in Toyota Atlantic competition. "We really get along and try to push this thing forward. He's obviously super fast and makes good starts and just does everything right, and he did that today too. It's a good combo, for sure."... Among GAINSCO's supporters today was Rolex 24 At Daytona teammate Jimmie Johnson who was watching the action live on SPEED from Talladega. Johnson frequently sends text messages back and forth to team owner Bob Stallings during Grand-Am Rolex Series races and sent a message for Gurney during the late going today. Stallings radioed Gurney when he was leading and told him that Jimmie said "you're looking good and good luck." Johnson has co-driven with GAINSCO in each of the last two Rolex 24 At Daytona races along with Jimmy Vasser.



Michael Shank Racing Report

Source: Matt Cleary, Sunday Group Management

Despite the Bosch Engineering 250 getting off to an inauspicious start, Michael Shank Racing staged a strong recovery on Saturday with both team entries and returned to the Rolex Sports Car Series podium as John Pew and Michael Valiante finished second in the No. 6 Michael Shank Racing Ford-Riley after making a tremendous comeback at Virginia International Raceway.

The sister No. 60 of Mark Patterson and Oswaldo Negri finished 6th despite having to make an extra pit stop following a cut tire midway through the race.

“I’m really proud of the performance we had this weekend,” said team owner Mike Shank. “Our guys drove strong races, the engineers made some great calls with pit strategy, and our guys were great in the pits once again. We were hoping to get back to the top of the podium, but this was still a strong weekend for us and now we’ll look for more at New Jersey.”

The two hour and forty-five minute event got off to an undesired start after Pew’s strong qualifying performance, which netted him 7th on the grid, was thrown out the window when another car sent him off-course on just the third lap of the race. Fortunately the damage wasn’t so severe that he was forced to retire, and he was able to return to the track to begin work on recovering positions from deep in the field. A full course caution was a welcome development, as the field was repacked for a restart. But for the second time, Pew was again crashed off-course shortly after the restart, this time by a different car.

Once again, he was able to get back on track and into the thick of battle before turning the car over to Valiante.

Meanwhile, Patterson was able to make the most of a car that had him smiling inside his helmet as he was up to 8th by lap 7, and then following the caution, took the restart from third in the order. That well-handling car was put to full pelt as the defending Rolex Champion Ganassi machine harried the South African for third, but after getting off to a clean restart, Patterson established and kept a gap before turning the machine over to Negri.

Midway through the race, Michael Shank Racing ran 5th and 6th with Negri and Valiante looking to keep the team's strong form in the results continuing. But soon thereafter, the two cars' fortunes took separate turns, as Negri was able to keep control of the car despite a high-speed tire problem, which forced him to take to the pits with only three patches of rubber before he took on fresh tires and rejoined deep in the pack.

Valiante, though, kept making ground, and moved up to take second on credit from his pace, some great pit calls and pit work, and was soon enough fighting at the front, taking the lead and holding station out front for 15 laps.

What looked to be a possible return to victory lane for the No. 6, which won the season-ending event at Miller Motorsports Park, was stymied just minutes from the checkered flag as lapped traffic kept Valiante from taking his second Rolex win after getting bottled in traffic and losing the lead.

But he shadowed the leader through the last moments of the race, finishing less than once second behind to take second.

"I had a good in-lap and then the crew did a phenomenal job to get me out so quickly, and then I was able to keep the 99 car behind me on my out lap," said Valiante, whose fitness regimen meant that he barely needed water after getting out of the car following his big battle in the high heat. "But we had contact with a lapped car and that damaged the front of our car a little bit so when we caught that traffic, there was nothing I could do to keep Alex from getting the lead. We had a lot of ground to make up after John got knocked off track. We were fast enough to run up front, but just didn't have the speed to get back in front of him. It's tough to be that close and not get the win, but it's still great to get up here on the podium with John, and we'll look to do it again next weekend in New Jersey."

"What a great comeback!" said Pew. "We had an awful start, getting knocked off track twice in just a few laps. That wasn't any fun at all, but the team called a great strategy, we got a little luck with that yellow, and then Michael just drove an incredible race today. Finishing the season with a win last year at Miller was fantastic, but Daytona was a huge disappointment to start this season, so this is much more like it to get back up on the podium today. Thanks to the Mike Shank guys, they never gave up."

Negri had shown his own determination and pace, recovering from 21st to race his way to take 6th at the finish.

"The car was absolutely a podium car today, and I just had to drive my heart out to get back up to sixth after we lost the tire and had to make the extra pit stop," said Negri, who also suffered a similar fate in the 2008 race as a deflating tire forced an extra pit stop. "We had the speed today; this was a really great car. But to come back from where we did to finish 6th, we'll take it. And now we're headed back to New Jersey where we won last year, so hopefully we can just avoid any bad luck next weekend and get back up on the podium."

"Two fantastic comebacks for the team today to come out of the day with 2nd and 6th," said Patterson, who held off reigning Daytona Prototype champion Memo Rojas for third place before turning the car over to Negri. "The car was fantastic at the start—it felt as though it was at half tanks with warm tires, even though we had full tanks and cold tires at the start. I had a great time running in third and keeping the distance over Memo, and Ozz did a fantastic job to come all the way back to finish sixth, so a really strong day for the whole team."

SunTrust Racing Report

Source: Laz Denes - True Speed Communication

It's amazing how "unlucky" and "13" always seem to find their way into the same sentence, like into the storyline that describes the outcome of Saturday's Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series Bosch Engineering 250 at Virginia International Raceway (VIR) in Alton for Max Angelelli and the rest of the No. 10 SunTrust Ford Dallara team of Wayne Taylor Racing

Angelelli and the SunTrust Racing machine were just three laps from a solid, top-five finish when they found themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time heading into turn one on a restart, got punted off the track as the result of contact between two other cars, and were left in the grass, unable to continue due to heavy rear-end damage to the car.

So, rather than a potential podium run, Angelelli, co-driver Brian Frisselle and the SunTrust team leave VIR with 13th place and a good bit of repair work to do before taking to the track again in less than a week's time.

Angelelli was sitting in fifth place on the lap-78 restart and had a good run on the inside of the fourth-place No. 58 Brumos Porsche of David Donohue. As they approached the sharp, right-hand turn one, Donohue then made heavy contact into the back of the No. 01 Chip Ganassi Racing with Felix Sabates Lexus of Scott Pruett, spinning the No. 01 into the rear of Angelelli in the SunTrust Ford and sent the No. 10 off the track.

While Angelelli remained stuck in the grass for rest of the final three laps, Pruett was only able to limp his car back to the pits, where it retired in 12th place. Donohue and the No. 58 Brumos Porsche went on to finish third when the checkered flag flew on lap 81, right behind the race-winning No. 99 Gainsco/Bob Stallings Racing Pontiac Riley of Alex Gurney and Jon Fogarty, and the runner-up No. 6 Michael Shank Racing Ford Riley of Michael Valiante and John Pew. Both the Ganassi and Wayne Taylor Racing teams questioned why Donohue and the No. 58 team were not penalized for avoidable contact during the incident.

"It's very disappointing to walk back to the paddock and see a driver, who took two cars out of the race, greeting people on the podium and celebrating," said Angelelli, whose team suffered a similar fate at VIR last year when it was punted off the track by the No. 01 car en route to a 17th-place finish. "This is not fair. What I'm asking for is justice. That team took out three cars in the race today. No penalty. They must be penalized for what they did. This must be addressed. We were good. I was saving fuel, sacrificing myself, playing it safe. Losing the race because of stupidity is not good."

"I am angry," added team owner Wayne Taylor, who co-drove with Angelelli to victory in SunTrust's first visit to VIR in 2004, a runner-up finish with Angelelli in 2006, and celebrated his first victory as a team owner at VIR in 2007 when Angelelli and Jan Magnussen triumphed. "The 58 took out two cars at the end. No penalties, nothing. And we've got a crashed car, again. There needs to be more consistency in the way rules are enforced because we can't afford to keep racing like this with no repercussions."

At various points in Saturday's 2-hour, 45-minute race on the 3.27-mile, 17-turn VIR layout, the SunTrust team flirted with its 35th Grand-Am podium finish early in its sixth season, and possibly even its 13th victory (there's that number again).

Frisselle had a solid opening stint from the eighth starting position, moving into the top-five by the fifth tour of the circuit, and ever-so-briefly into the race lead on lap 18 when the No. 12 Penske

Racing Porsche pitted for the first time while Frisselle was running second. Frisselle pitted on lap 20 for the SunTrust team's first fuel-and-tire stop of the day and handed the car over to Angelelli in second place.

Angelelli, who resumed in 10th place, then began a steady march back toward the front. He cracked the top-five on lap 31, crept up to second just two laps later behind the No. 01 Ganassi car, and stayed there until getting called into the pits a final time on lap 44. Angelelli was approaching the entrance to pit road when an off-course excursion by the No. 13 Beyer Racing entry sent that car into the tire barrier.

The team hurriedly called Angelelli into the pits in anticipation of a yellow flag for the Beyer car's incident, as did a number of other teams that were on track behind the SunTrust car. Angelelli resumed with fuel enough to make it to the end of the race, but only if he drove in fuel conservation mode most of the rest of the way. Such was the case for the other teams who stopped on lap 44.

A final caution flag on lap 74, with Angelelli in fifth place, eliminated the need for the lead-pack cars to conserve fuel and set up a final, three-lap dash to the finish. For the SunTrust and Ganassi teams, their top-five runs were not to be.

"I'm disappointed," Taylor said. "The team did an outstanding job today. We got out in front of everybody on the last pit stop. There was a miscommunication about whether the yellow flag was out or not, and the (No.) 99 and the (No.) 6 got in front of us. And then, on that last restart, Max was in the right place. Donohue just drove straight into the back of Pruett. Pruett spun, hit us and took us out of the race. And they let the race carry on when, historically, they would have issued a penalty. And in the beginning of the race, the same (No. 58) car punted the (No.) 76 car out for good. That's not right."

Frisselle, the 25-year-old from Aspen, Colo., who scored his first career Rolex Series victories on back-to-back weekends in Montreal and Watkins Glen, N.Y., last August while driving for the AIM Autosport Ford Riley team, found a measure of consolation in his opening stint during the race after being disappointed with his first qualifying outing for the SunTrust team on Friday.

"The first stint went really well," Frisselle said. "We were saving tires. Everything went well. I felt terrible yesterday. I knew this car belonged further up the grid than that. I didn't deliver what I needed to deliver in qualifying. So, coming out of it today and handing the car off to Max in second felt really good. Max did a great job. The team did a phenomenal job. I think we had the best strategy out there. There was a bit of a communication error on the final pit stop and we gave up a couple of positions. Had that not happened, we just might have come out first. But the SunTrust car was really solid. We have some things to improve. It was a good run, but an unfortunate ending for what we did today."

Banner Racing Report

Source: Jim Bourn – Banner Racing

Collins and Edwards finish in 2nd in Rolex Grand-Am race at VIR

Alton Virginia (Saturday, April 25, 2009): Kelly Collins and Paul Edwards over came two minor problems and survived the Bosch Engineering 250 at VIRginia International Raceway in Alton Virginia to finish their #07 Leighton Reese Performance Group Pontiac GXP.R in second place in GT.

"We finished our Pontiac GXPs one-two and Pontiac won the Daytona Prototype class as well so all in all it was a great day for Pontiac here at VIR," said Kelly Collins.

Round 2 of the Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series presented by Crown Royal Cask No. 16 at VIR was won by the #57 Pontiac GXP.R of Andrew Davis and Robin Liddell and the #99 GAINSCO Pontiac Riley Daytona Prototype won the race overall.

Collins, of Newport Beach California, started the race from his 4th place qualifying position and right at the start Kelly started applying heavy pressure on the #87 Porsche of Leh Keen for 3rd. It took Collins a couple of laps to slip past and set out after the two leading Mazda's.

"I think the tires start getting a little hot on the Porsches and I could get off Turn 17 better and I could get a run on him," Collins said of the pass. "The first time he blocked me but the second time he thought better of it and I got by him. When I got by him I went after the two Mazda's and we were pulling away until the first yellow came out."

The first caution period of the race came out when the #69 Mazda spun and got center punched by the championship leading #67 Porsche of Justin Marks. Most of the leading cars pitted for fuel and tires but Collins remained on track and assumed the GT lead.

When the course went green again on lap 13 Collins held the lead until the pole sitting #70 Mazda slipped past down the straight on lap 17. Collins pitted about 45 minutes into the race and Paul Edwards took over the car. Since the stop was under green the #07 Pontiac dropped to 10th.

The first issue Edwards had to deal with was a sway bar problem caused when a small part broke on the adjustment mechanism for the rear sway bar. While the problem wasn't necessarily major the drivers had to set the rear bar to full soft to balance out the car. The issue first arose while Kelly Collins was driving his opening stint.

"The car still handles pretty because we just set the rear bar to full soft to balance out the car," said Collins. "But the car really rolls over particularly on transition turns."

"It wasn't really bad but you really had to watch yourself particularly when you were going up through the esses," Said Edwards. I don't know if they showed it on TV but I was really hanging it out a few times."

But Edwards was still racing hard and making up ground until the second caution flags flew on lap 23.

The unseasonable 90 degree heat in Southern Virginia was bad enough but when the air conditioning unit motor seized up the race got much hotter for Paul Edwards. First Paul had to deal with the smoke caused by the failing motor during caution number two and then summon everything he had to stay focused in the extreme heat.

"During a caution the car started filling up with smoke," said Edwards. "The motor for the air conditioner was burning up and our AC turned into a 200-degree heater and started blowing hot air. Actually the hot air didn't feel all that bad because as hot as it was at least there was some air flow in the car."

When the track went green again Ham still led in the #70 Mazda and Edwards was back up to 3rd as several of the leaders pitted for fuel, tires and driver changes.

After the restart Ham opened up a fairly sizable gap as Edwards was trying to solve the #40 Mazda of Joe Foster with a group of GT Pontiacs, Porsches and Mazda's right behind. Edwards finally

solved Foster to take over the 2nd position on lap 30 and almost immediately the double yellow flags flew after the #13 DP slammed into a tire wall.

During this caution the #70 Mazda pitted and when the course went green again and after Liddell dove past the Porsche of Werner Edwards and the #07 Pontiac was leading a GXP 1-2.

Edwards maintained a 4 to 5 second gap over Liddell and as the race progressed there were many continuous green flag laps so the GT cars began making green flag stops for fuel and tires.

The #66 and #87 Porsches began the stops under green and on lap 49 Edwards pitted the #07 Pontiac GXP.R giving the lead to Liddell's Pontiac. Paul returned to the track in 5th and still well ahead of the two Porsches that had stopped a few laps earlier.

Finally Liddell completed the cycle of pit stops for the leaders and as he moved the #57 Pontiac towards the end of pit road Edwards thundered past to re-claim the lead.

Edwards held form but the heat and his minor suspension malady allowed Liddell to slowly creep up on the leading GT car until Edwards, after getting balked by a group of prototypes, had Liddell all over him.

Edwards gamely fought off the heat and Liddell but he made a slight misstep at the top of the hill in turns 15 and 16. Paul bobbed and Liddell tapped him sending the yellow #07 Pontiac briefly into the Virginia countryside. Edwards recovered but was 6 seconds out of the GT lead he had held for so long.

"I was pushing pretty hard keeping Robin [Liddell] behind me and I made a little mistake and got a little wide," said Edwards. "He got into me and pushed me off. After than I really didn't have anything for him."

There was a late race caution that bunched up the field for the final 10 to 12 minutes of the race and while Paul Edwards couldn't catch Liddell he was able to drive away from the #70 Mazda of Tremblay who filled out the podium in the 3rd position.

"Paul said he made a little mistake and that was the race," said team owner Leighton Reese after the checkered flag fell on the torrid affair. "We had a couple of systems quit but nothing major fell off the car and we had a good finish for the points chase so while I am disappointed that we didn't win overall it was a strong finish for us."

"Going into the race we thought we had the dominant package here," said Paul Edwards. "The car was super strong and the crew really hit the sweet spot here and the car was just perfect for me this weekend. I have never felt so good in the car and really have our Pontiac GXP dialed in this year. But a couple of little things went wrong and that was enough to keep us from winning. It is amazing what a couple of little things can do to upset the program.

"As disappointed as I am that we didn't win today we did show that the team is strong, stronger than we were last year I think, and that we are going to be a strong contender to repeat our championship this year. It is still too early to say but we have better finishes this year than we did in the opening two races in 2008 so we can take that positive out of this race."

"At the moment our Leighton Reese Performance Group Pontiac GXP is handling great and we have a strong car underneath us for the long run," Kelly Collins said after turning over the wheel of the #07 Pontiac to his co-driver Paul Edwards. "In the beginning I just tried to stay clean and keep up with the two Mazda's at the front. There were people putting wheels off everywhere and there seemed to be grease and dirt everywhere.

The 2nd place finish by Collins and Edwards coupled with the win by Liddell and Davis has all four drivers tied for the GT Drivers' Championship with 60 points each with Ballou and Pumpelly, who finished 6th today, close behind with 57.

Farnbacher-Loles Race Report

Source: Roger Garbow - Farnbacher Loles Racing

Two top 5 finishes for Farnbacher Loles Racing Porsches at VIR

After two hours and 40 minutes of racing, the Grand-Am Rolex Series Bosch Engineering 250 at Virginia International Raceway came down to a 5-minute shootout to determine the final results. At the end, the Farnbacher Loles Racing team took well-earned fourth and fifth positions as the top finishing Porsches. The two cars ran flawlessly throughout the entire race, marking a real team effort.

At the start, Leh Keen and Eric Lux started from the third and seventh positions on the grid. Both drivers held their own but quickly realized they had nothing for the Pontiacs and Mazda's. With a considerable weight reduction prior to this race, the Pontiacs showed impressive speed that the Porsches couldn't touch, but the two Farnbacher Loles cars set the pace for the rest of the field. The drivers had to contend with very warm temperatures, which made the Porsches more prone to rear tire wear due to their rear weight bias. To make the battle even more challenging, an early stop and go penalty dropped Lux down in the standings, but he fought back into contention. The first round of pit stops went perfectly and the drivers held onto their positions. At the midway point in the race, both Keen and Lux turned the cars over to their co-drivers. 2007 Rolex series Champion Dirk Werner took over the 87 while Porsche factory driver Wolf Henzler piloted the 86.

The two Germans fought hard to get into podium contention, and never conceded the finish. A late caution period bunched up the field prior to the five-minute dash to the checkered flag. Werner was too far back from the cars in front to gain a position, but Henzler running in sixth felt he could take the fifth spot. He pushed hard and incredibly on the final lap, made the pass for fifth.

Team principal Gregory Loles was very proud of his team and the effort, "I want to congratulate the whole team. Our guys did a great job throughout this entire event. There was just no way a Porsche was going to do any better than we did today. The heat was really hard on our tires, but I'm happy with the effort we put in."

Team manager Frank Resciniti was also proud of the accomplishment, "This was a real team effort. Our pit stops and strategy were flawless. And the drivers did all we could ask of them. Wolf in particular put in a superhuman effort. His cool suit stopped working for the last hour. So he needed to drink more water, which ran out with 30 minutes to go. We could tell on the radio that he was struggling. Under those conditions, to pull off that pass on the last lap was amazing."

The strong finish helped the drivers close in on the championship lead. Eric Lux now sits only eight points out of the lead followed by Leh Keen and Dirk Werner another one point back. The series moves to New Jersey's Thunderbolt Raceway for the next round on Sunday May, 3rd at 1pm

KROHN Racing Report

Source: Barbara Burns – Burns Group Unlimited

The Krohn Racing team came to the Bosch Engineering 250 race at VIRginia International Raceway determined to show their mettle in the 2009 Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series championship. That was not meant to be when starting driver Nic Jönsson got hit from behind on the second lap. After discovering right rear suspension damage, the Krohn Racing team withdrew the No. 76 Krohn Racing Proto-Auto Lola Ford, as the time to make repairs left the car more than 10 laps down, too lengthy a time in a two hours and 45 minute sprint race.

Nic Jönsson, driver, No. 76 Krohn Racing Ford Lola:

"It's obviously very disappointing. We had a very good car again. The guys have done a great job. We had a good start where we came from sixth up to fourth on the first lap. I was fighting a little bit in turn one for position there. I was not really going to fight it too hard early in the race, so I just let the 61 car go by. It was a clean pass on his part. I made a corner than then coming out of Turn One I got nailed by the 58 car coming off the corner. It bent the toe link and pierced the rear right rim wheel. We just had to come in and park it. It's very unfortunate after this long break; we were looking forward to coming back and racing. It's unfortunate that we can't go back racing clean. We just have to play by the rules, I guess, and try to come back in New Jersey."

Ricardo Zonta, driver, No. 76 Krohn Racing Ford Lola:

"It is a disappointment. The car was very good. We must come back at New Jersey and fight for the win."

Bryce Miller's Race Report

Source: Sylvia Proudfoot – Spur Communications

Bryce Miller earned an eighth-place GT-class finish in the Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series race at Virginia International Raceway on Saturday, despite physical and mechanical difficulties resulting from the 90-degree temperature. Miller, of Summit, N.J., combined with Dane Cameron of Sonoma, Calif., for the finish, Miller's first in the Marquis Jet Mazda RX-8 prepared by Racers Edge Motorsports.

Cameron drove first, starting from second on the GT grid, but quickly taking the class lead on the first turn of the first lap on the 3.27-mile road course in Alton, Va. He held the lead until his first pit stop, 21 minutes into the two-hour 45-minute race. He returned to the track ninth, and then regained seven positions to second. He stopped for fuel during a caution period just before the one-hour mark and was fifth as the race restarted. But the high temperature and a long stint took their toll on the car and tires – Cameron was eighth when he pitted for a driver change with one hour remaining in the race.

Miller took over, ninth in class. He was unable to hear or speak to the crew, so he waited for direction on a potential final pit stop. The resourceful crew crafted a sign board to advise Miller to stay on track, enabling him to gain a position to finish eighth.

"From the beginning of my stint, I had no radio contact. I was turning it on and off, and checking all the plugs, but I just couldn't hear the guys. I knew we were going to be close on fuel, but I didn't know how much the caution was buying us. Luckily, I saw the crew's pit sign, I stayed out and we were able to maintain our position," Miller said.

"The car was also pulling badly to the left and it seemed to wear down on the power steering. I was really struggling to counteract the suspension, just wrestling it. It was very hot out, so it was difficult in the car, just physically, and also the engine was overheating. It was running really well in the

high end and I could close up on some guys at the very end of the straightaway, but we couldn't come off the corners. But an eighth-place position helps us to secure points in the championship, so it's positive."

Darren Law's Race Report

Source: Sylvia Proudfoot – Spur Communications

Darren Law of Phoenix earned his second-consecutive Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series podium finish on Saturday, finishing third in the series race at Virginia International Raceway in Alton, Va. Victory in the Rolex 24 At Daytona in January and the Virginia podium gave Law and his co-driver, David Donohue of Malvern, Pa., a one-point lead in series championship standings after the first two races of the season.

Law qualified the No. 58 Brumos Racing Porsche-powered Daytona Prototype fifth on the 34-car grid. He moved up to second during his stint, and then handed off to Donohue, who returned to the track 10th in class. He regained positions as other competitors pitted, then steadily worked through the field to finish third.

"I'm very, very happy with the outcome of this race," Law said. "The win at Daytona and the podium here puts us in the point's lead, which is what we're aiming to do for the season. It was rough out there; it was very hot and there was a lot of traffic. But I think we were competitive with everybody except maybe [car No.] 01. The pit stops were correct and the car was quick enough that I felt like I could run with anybody. I brought it in in second place, the team did a great job and David fought his way to the front."



TRG Race Report

Source: Kyle Chura – TRG Motorsports

TRG put three Porsches in the top 11 in today's running of the Grand-Am Rolex Series Bosch Engineering 250 at Virginia International Raceway.

Ted Ballou and Spencer Pumpelly in the No. 66 AXA/Mitchell Rubber/Wealth Management Strategies/TRG Porsche GT3 led the TRG charge with a sixth place finish. Pumpelly had a fourth place heading into the last handful of turns when his Porsche stumbled on fuel causing him to relinquish two places.

"I didn't realize we were that close on fuel, so I wasn't ready for the car to stumble," Pumpelly said. "When the car bobbed, in the time that I had to reach down and hit the reserve Henzler went by me. The car was excellent today. I had a little bad luck in traffic. I would get pushed back by the DPs and then move back forward. Not a really lucky day for us, but I am really happy with how the car performed today. Ted did a great job early to keep us up front early."

John Potter and Craig Stanton finished in a strong ninth in their No. 65 Riegel/Stanton/Cystic Fibrosis Foundation/65 Roses/Magnus Racing/TRG Porsche GT3. Potter started the race and was able to run in the top ten before turning the wheel over to Stanton.

"The race was great," Stanton said. "We had a pretty good car, although not great on the long runs. We could do 54s and 55s pushing it right along and then end with 56 and 57s. I think some of the lighter cars would roll past us at the end of stints. Jeff Braun, team engineer, came onboard recently and gave us a format to follow - the house rules. He has helped organize our technical side. John Potter did a great job this weekend. All of our partners Road Source Supply and TRG have done a great job for us. We really had a nice crowd here this weekend. I am Looking forward to New Jersey in another six days."

Josemanuel Gutierrez and Scott Schroeder finished their No. 68 Cohen Financial/TRG Porsche in 11th. The pair was able to spend several laps in the top ten during the race.

"We had a tough weekend," Schroeder said. "We missed some practice time yesterday so we were using today to do some setup, learning as we went. All things considered we finished 11th

which is pretty good for the day we had. Josemanuel did a good job, he handed the car over clean and in excellent shape. He and I will be back next month at Laguna Seca."

Justin Marks and Andy Lally had a difficult day in the No. 67 Construct Corp/No Fear Energy Drinks/Voodoo Ride/Kartel Motorsports/K1 Speed/Gemstone Winery/TRG Porsche GT3. Marks started the race and was starting to get his rhythm when a spinning Mazda in turn 17 collected him causing severe front-end damage to his Porsche. The team was able to get him back in the race about an hour later to make as many laps as possible.

"I was starting to get the feel of the race when I came into 17 and the Mazda was sitting in the middle of the track," Marks said. "I really had nowhere to go. We had a good warm-up session and made some adjustments to the car which seemed to be the way to go. It was too bad our race pretty much ended on lap seven."

Team owner Kevin Buckler is looking for some performance help.

"We are really down to the Pontiacs and the Mazda's on power," Buckler said. "It is not really even fun to race because there isn't any way to win. They are running one to two seconds a lap faster than us in race trim and just cruising. Our guys did the best they could today. Justin got caught up in someone else's mistake early. Ted and Spencer had a good day, but we gave a couple of positions away when the car stumbled for fuel. Potter and Stanton ran a good solid race and Josemanuel and Scott had a strong day finishing in 11th even with all of the challenges. This was a big race for Josemanuel and John as they really had their work cut out for them and mixed it up big time with all of the pro drivers. We have our work cut-out for us for New Jersey, but we are the defending GT winners there."

