



Grand-Am Brumos Porsche 250 Race Reports Source: Reports Submitted By The Teams

Krohn Racing on Podium at Brumos Porsche 250 at Daytona

The Krohn Racing team showed that their hard work and persistence with the development of the new Proto-Auto Lola is paying off, as the team celebrated a podium finish in the Brumos Porsche 250 at Daytona International Speedway. Round eighth of the 2008 Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series was the second podium finish for the Krohn team, both third-place finishes.

Nic Jönsson and Ricardo Zonta drove their No. 76 Krohn Racing Pontiac Riley from the 13th starting position to third place. Team owner/driver Tracy Krohn and Eric van de Poele started 17th and finished 14th after a 60-second penalty for running over their sister car's air hose cost them time which they could never recover during the 70-lap, two-hour and 25 minute race.

Scott Pruett and Memo Rojas, in the No. 01 Telmex Chip Ganassi Lexus Riley, scored their fifth victory of the season. Thursday's race was the closest margin of victory in the history of the Grand-Am Rolex Series, 0.081 seconds over second place finishers Jon Fogarty and Alex Gurney in the Gainsco Bob Stallings/Riley Matthews Pontiac Riley.



Tracy W. Krohn, team owner/driver, No. 75 Krohn Racing Pontiac Lola:

"This is an amazing turnaround today because it was so miserable earlier in the day for both cars. We were both searching. We made some very, very last minute, I mean just before the race last minute, changes on the No. 76 car that made a huge difference. I applaud (Krohn Racing Team Manager) David Brown and our drivers. They did a really good job pulling it back together. Several laps they were actually the quickest car in the field. It was a huge turnaround. Getting on the podium here was very big for us. We really struggled the last couple of weeks, and particularly today, but they pulled it through and made it work."

"My stint was actually pretty uneventful. The track was a little bit slick. There was a little bit of a wet/dry line when we first started. I overshot the "bus stop" a little bit, but other than that it was totally uneventful. Unfortunately, the car just never quite came together for us this week. But I think we learned something with the No. 76 car. Of course, that's the advantage of having more than one car."

Eric van de Poele, driver, No. 75 Krohn Racing Pontiac Lola:

"The car didn't quite have the performance we were looking for this week, but we did find a little more speed before the start of the race. We had an unfortunate incident of receiving a penalty for running over the other car's (No. 75 Krohn Racing Pontiac Lola) air hose when we both pitted at the same time. After the 60-second penalty, we were finished. It was too long of a penalty to be able to recover."

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

"It was a fantastic result for us. Obviously we were struggling all day a little bit with the set-up on the car. We basically turned the car upside down in practice and qualifying. Finally we sat down after qualifying and decided to go with the traditional set-up for this car that we learned so far this year. That's what we did, even though we lost a little bit on straight line. The engineering crew – Simon, Jeff and David – pulled it off again for us. We were able to stay out of trouble out there and just plug away. It just gets better. It's nice to be on the podium again with the Proto-Auto Lola. There's more to come."

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

"I'm very happy. With everything we had this week; I think this is perfect results for us – for the maturation of the car, for everything. I think this is the best time for the results also. I am just very happy for the team, for everybody and for myself also. We worked very hard to finish on the podium. It is very positive for us.

"I enjoyed my stint, especially when we stopped for the last pit stop. I knew I had to find a lot to be in the top three positions. I think everything went so well for the race. Of course, practice and qualifying was very difficult for us. We had so many small problems to balance the car, but I had a lot of fun in the race.

"We have to continue to work hard and have everything in the right place at the right moment. I think we are getting close to stepping up higher on the podium."

David Brown, Team Manager, Krohn Racing:

"I was very pleased with our results. I think it's a just reward for a great deal of work by the whole team, including the drivers, all of whom have adopted the theory of 'just keep plugging away even when things look bad'. That fortitude has paid off. So we look forward to the next race at Barber Motorsports Park."

The next Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series race, Round 9 of 14 will be the Porsche 250 at Barber Motorsports Park on Sunday, July 19-20. For more information, please see www.grand-am.com and www.krohn racing.net.



Photo Courtesy Grand-Am

Spirit of Daytona Racing Scores Another Top-10 at Daytona

Spirit of Daytona Racing opened the 2008 Rolex Sports Car Series season with a run to tenth in the Daytona Prototype class in the Rolex 24 At Daytona, and showed improvement in Thursday night's Brumos 250 to take the tenth overall position with drivers Guy Cosmo and Marc-Antoine Camirand, who came back from a disappointing qualifying to mark another chapter in the potent V8 Porsche-Coyote combinations race history.

The No. 09 Spirit of Daytona Racing Porsche Coyote ran as high as seventh place in the early going with Cosmo enjoying a much-improved car over what he had experienced earlier in the day. The team's goal for the season is to learn and improve on the new Coyote chassis and they continue to do just that.

"This was a much better race car than we really had all day," said Cosmo. "I was working as hard as I could, driving every lap like qualifying. But we ran into a problem with our right rear in practice and then again in the race tonight, and it got to be a real handful. I'm not sure if the issue was just debris or what, but we weren't the only ones."

Cosmo stayed at the controls until turning the machine over to Camirand, who moved the car back through the order to come home in tenth, matching the best race finish thus far of the 2008 season for the Porsche V8-Coyote combination as the team looks to improve every facet of the effort.

"I can say for sure that one area where the team has made huge strides in cockpit cooling since we first ran this car," said Camirand. "It might not seem like a big deal for a sprint race like this, but that should pay dividends when long races like the 24 come up. Overall, we know we've made progress, but now we need to show it a little bit better and hopefully we can do that at Barber."

The team has run a select schedule during the 2008 Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series, and will look to keep the development moving forward quickly as the team races through a busy summer schedule that will see the team fighting again at Barber Motorsports Park in Alabama, Watkins Glen International in upstate New York and in Montreal, Canada at Circuit Gilles Villeneuve.

Team owner Troy Flis had been looking for more in the team's home race, but knows that not every break is going to go the team's way as the new Daytona Prototype combination grows its racing resume.

"That was an ok run for us—not great, but at least ok," said Flis. "We got a little unlucky on the radio and missing pit lane during that second caution on the lap that we should have come in. But we've just got to keep working at it. We were faster than the 16 car and pretty close to the 23, so we know we are on the right path with this car. We were really frustrated to finish outside of the top ten at the Glen, so at least we came home with a lead lap car in tenth tonight. But this was another day of us getting more knowledge with this car and we should be better still at Barber."

Puncture Lets Air Out of New SunTrust Car's Debut

After Leading for Seventh Time in Eight Races, Angelelli, Valiante Out Early; Still, New Dallara Shows Its Potential at Daytona's Brumos Porsche 250

On a day when SunTrust announced to the racing world that it is proud to extend sponsorship agreements with Grand-Am and Wayne Taylor Racing for many years to come, Thursday night's Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series Brumos Porsche 250 at Daytona (Fla.) International Speedway started with a flourish but ended rather unceremoniously for Max Angelelli and Michael Valiante in the brand new No. 10 SunTrust Racing Pontiac Dallara.

The new Dallara, which replaces the original model that burned to the ground in a transporter fire May 19, picked up right where its predecessor left off by qualifying at the front of the grid, getting off to a strong start in the race, and putting SunTrust in the lead for the seventh time in eight races this season.

After the SunTrust Racing driving duo reeled off solid practice results to start the day – recording top-six lap times in all three sessions – Valiante qualified the new Dallara third behind the polesitting No. 61 AIM Autosport entry, and its fellow front-row-starting No. 99 Gainsco/Bob Stallings Racing entry, which won last year's series championship and the most recent race on the schedule at Mid-Ohio.

Valiante made short work of getting by Jon Fogarty in the No. 99 on the very first lap of tonight's 70-lap event around the 3.56-mile, 12-turn superspeedway road course. He then was in close pursuit of Mark Wilkins in the race-leading No. 61 Ford for the first seven tours of the circuit before the team's first strategic move of the night – a fuel-only stop that also allowed the SunTrust crew to reset the on-board computer in an effort to repair a power steering problem Valiante was reporting. That stop dropped Valiante back to 15th, but over the next 13 laps, Valiante passed several cars in front of him while others gradually peeled off one-by-one to top off fuel tanks in strategy moves of their own.

By lap 20, Valiante was in the lead and pulling away from the field with what he later told the SunTrust crew just might be the best race car he had ever driven. Six laps later, however, Valiante's right-rear tire blew as the result of a puncture just past the start-finish line. From there, he had to limp around the entire road circuit before making his way down pit road for a fresh set of Pirellis and a driver change on lap 27. The slow roll back to the pits put the No. 10 SunTrust Pontiac a lap down, in 17th position, when Angelelli took control with 43 laps to go.

"I had a really bad vibration about 20 laps before the tire blew up," Valiante said. "I slowed down because it was so loud that I couldn't even hear the engine. And then, when I was headed into turn 1, it just blew up and I almost went off. It's tough for this SunTrust team because it's been working so hard. We lost the power steering, but the car was still quick enough to win."

Angelelli was back up to speed in no time, clicking off lap times consistent with the fastest laps of the race. But his efforts to unlap himself and move up in the finishing order came to an abrupt end some 30 laps later when, entering the chicane on the back-straight known as the "Bus Stop," he and a number of other cars bunched up, and a GT-class Porsche forced him off the track and spinning into a tire barrier. That was the end of the new Dallara's once-promising debut on the Rolex Series' most high-profile track, and one where SunTrust had enjoyed numerous shining moments in its four-plus seasons on the circuit.

"It happened in the 'Bus Stop,'" Angelelli said of the incident that put him out of the race. "A Porsche came down. I don't think it saw me. It came down, I was right there, and I spun. There were times the car was really, really good. It's just a shame what happened. Everything started to go bad with the tire puncture. But I was very excited about how good the car felt, so I wanted to have a strong finish. Michael qualified well and put the car in the lead, so we had a very strong day at the beginning. He said the car felt good, too. The car definitely is fast. It's just disappointing to not get the good result tonight."

Scott Pruett, in the No. 01 Chip Ganassi Racing with Felix Sabates Lexus Riley, passed Alex Gurney in the No. 99 on a last-lap restart to win tonight's Brumos Porsche 250. It was the fifth win of the season for Pruett and co-driver Memo Rojas.

Disappointment at Daytona For Michael Shank Racing

With 40 minutes remaining in the Brumos 250, Michael Shank Racing was well-placed to make a return to the Daytona International Speedway podium with one team entry and back that up with another strong result in the second team car.

Track record holder Oswaldo Negri ran in third, with Ian James charging from sixth in the closing stages of the 70-lap race. But within two laps, team fortunes changed dramatically.

The No. 6 Ford-Riley that James co-drives with John Pew was hoping to improve on their 4th place run in this event last year, but a half shaft failure sent James into the pits and out of the race.

A second calamity struck nearly immediately, as GT traffic contact damaged a wheel and forced Negri in to the pits for a tire change and mild body repair. The team made quick work of the repair but the damage was done as the podium aspirations were dashed and the team was forced to settle for an unlucky thirteenth place finish.

"This was a really disappointing way to finish a day that had otherwise gone really well," said team owner Mike Shank. "Mark and John did great jobs in qualifying and things were going exactly according to plan in the race. But we just got hit with two strokes of bad luck, nearly at the same time, and it's just a big disappointment to not bring home the results we showed we are capable of."

Michael Shank Racing will return to action in three weeks' time at Barber Motorsports Park for the Porsche 250 presented by Bradly Arant.

"It's really frustrating, but we have to keep our heads up because we performed really well all day long but just didn't get the luck to go with that at the end. It'd have been great to get the 60 car back on the podium here at Daytona, and who knows how much more ground Ian could have made at the end, but we'll just have to focus on delivering another strong team effort at Barber." Additional information: www.michaelshankracing.com

Grand-Am Race Report

Pruett Edges Gurney in Thursday's Brumos Porsche 250 to Win Closest-Ever Grand-Am Rolex Series Race

Scores fifth victory of 2008 with last-lap pass in sprint to checkered flag

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. (July 3, 2008) - Scott Pruett beat Alex Gurney in a sprint to the checkered flag to win Thursday's Brumos Porsche 250 at Daytona International Speedway, the closest finish in the history of the Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series presented by Crown Royal Cask No. 16.

It was the fifth - and most dramatic - victory of 2008 for Pruett and Memo Rojas in the No. 01 TELMEX Chip Ganassi Racing with Felix Sabates Lexus Riley. The winners of the 2008 season-opening Rolex 24 At Daytona, Pruett and Rojas extended their Daytona Prototype championship lead to 40 points after their seventh podium finish of the season.

"That Pruett's the man," Chip Ganassi said. "This track rewards great drivers, and it did that tonight. Winning felt good here in Daytona (when Ganassi won his third consecutive Rolex 24), but it felt even better tonight."

The final margin of victory was .081 seconds, bettering the mark Pruett and Luis Diaz set in 2005 at California Speedway when they edged Wayne Taylor and Max Angelelli by .096 seconds.

"I had just enough to get by Alex at the start/finish line," said Pruett, who extended his Rolex Series record to 19 victories. "I've got to give it to Grand-Am for putting on a great show."

Gurney and Fogarty were aiming for their second consecutive triumph in the No. 99 GAINSCO/Bob Stallings Racing Pontiac Riley. Gurney passed Pruett for the lead with 22 laps remaining, and led through the final 100 yards of the race.

The 70-lap, 250-mile race ended with a one-lap sprint to the finish following the fifth and final caution when Jeff Segal flipped the second-place No. 69 SpeedSource FXDD Mazda RX-8 after an altercation with a Daytona Prototype. Segal's SpeedSource teammates Nick Ham and Sylvain Tremblay went on to win their third consecutive race at Daytona.

Ricardo Zonta and Nic Jonsson matched their best showing of the season by finishing third in the No. 76 Krohn Racing Pontiac Lola. Fourth came down by a side-by-side battle between Brumos Racing teammates, with Joao Barbosa passing and holding off Darren Law. It marked the best finish of the season for the No. 59 Porsche Riley of Barbosa and JC France, while Law and David Donohue recorded the fourth consecutive top-five finish in the No. 58 Porsche Riley.

The No. 61 AIM Autosport Lexus Riley of pole winner Mark Wilkins and Brian Frisselle led 16 laps. Frisselle was running third with 16 laps remaining when the car retired with a broken half-shaft. Ryan Dalziel moved up to third in the closing laps in the No. 2 SAMAX Pontiac Riley started by Henri Zogaib, but also retired with a broken half-shaft with six laps remaining.

SpeedSource's Ham, Tremblay win third straight GT race at Daytona

Tremblay bested Bryce Miller by 1.83 seconds to win the Rolex Series GT portion of the Brumos Porsche 250. Tremblay and Ham - who won the pole earlier Thursday - led 37 laps to score their first victory in the No. 70 SpeedSource Castrol Syntec Mazda RX-8 since the Rolex 24 At Daytona, and third consecutive triumph from the pole at Daytona.

Miller passed Robin Liddell at the line for his and co-driver Dirk Werner's best finish of the season in the No. 87 Farnbacher Loles Racing Porsche GT3. It marked the sixth podium finish in seven races for Liddell and Andrew Davis in the No. 57 Stevenson Motorsports Pontiac GXP.R.

Paul Edwards and Kelly Collins finished fourth in the No. 07 Banner Racing Pontiac GXP.R. They maintained their lead in the GT championship standings, with Ham and Tremblay 24 points behind and Liddell and Davis 30 points back.

Ross Smith, driving the No. 30 Racers Edge Motorsports Mazda RX-8 started by Craig Stone, was involved in an incident with seven laps remaining when he spun after contact with Dalziel. Smith's car was then struck head-on by the No. 97 Stevenson Motorsports Corvette of Jeff Bucknum, who co-drove with James Gue.

Both Smith and Segal were taken to the infield care center, where they were evaluated and released. Smith bruised his knee in the incident.

Four cautions for 16 laps slowed the race's average speed to 102.690 mph.

The Rolex Series returns to action July 19 for the Porsche 250 Presented By Bradley Arant at Barber Motorsports Park near Birmingham, Ala.

NEWS & NOTES

- The victory is the season-leading fifth Daytona Prototype victory of the season for Scott Pruett and Memo Rojas in the No. 01 TELMEX Chip Ganassi Racing with Felix Sabates Lexus Riley. This is also the fifth victory for the Lexus Riley.
- The victory was Pruett's 19th career Rolex Series victory and Ganassi's 20th as a team owner. Both are Rolex Series records.
- Pruett has also won the Rolex Series' second- and third-closest races in history. The previous record was 0.096 seconds, in which Pruett and Luis Diaz beat Wayne Taylor and Max Angelelli in the 2005 race at California Speedway.
- Pruett and Rojas also won the Rolex 24 At Daytona.
- Riley Chassis has won all Daytona Prototype races this season and 18 dating back to last year's Sahlen's Six Hours of The Glen. The manufacturer also took four of the top five positions.
- The victory marks the fifth this season for the Lexus power plant.
- The second-place finish was Alex Gurney and Jon Fogarty's second of the season. The other runner-up finish also came at Daytona.
- Ricardo Zonta and Nic Jonsson recorded their best finish of the season in the No. 76 Krohn Racing Pontiac Lola with a third-place result. Their previous best, a fourth-place finish, also came at Daytona in January's Rolex 24 At Daytona.
- JC France and Joao Barbosa gave Brumos Racing its third top five of the race with a fourth-place finish in the No. 59 Brumos Racing Porsche Riley, the duo's best finish of the season.
- Darren Law and David Donohue scored their third straight top-five finish in the No. 58 Brumos Racing Porsche Riley with a fifth-place finish.
- Six drivers in five Daytona Prototypes led laps in the race: Alex Gurney (25), Mark Wilkins (16), Jon Fogarty (12), Scott Pruett (9), Michael Valiante (7), Shane Lewis (1).
- Eleven Daytona Prototypes finished all 70 laps of the race.
- Oswaldo Negri and Mark Patterson finished 13th, as the pair encountered trouble with less than 10 laps remaining. Running third, the car suffered a flat tire while making contact with the No. 06 Banner Racing Pontiac GXP.R.
- The No. 2 SAMAX BMW Riley of Ryan Dalziel and Henri Zogaib started 19th, and ran as high as fourth before making contact with the No. 30 Mazda RX-8 of Ross Smith. Dalziel's car suffered a broken axle in the process, and the No. 30 - which spun after contact with Dalziel - was subsequently hit by the No. 97 Corvette of Jeff Bucknum. Dalziel and Zogaib finished 17th in Daytona Prototypes.
- Michael Valiante and Max Angelelli's bad luck continued when the No. 10 SunTrust Racing Pontiac Dallara's wheels locked up while leading on Lap 27. Valiante slid off the track in Turn 1 and limped around the track with a flat tire, the car falling off the lead lap and dropping out of the top 15. The car - which had developed a vibration early in the race and also spun on Lap 59 in the Bus Stop turn - finished 20th in Daytona Prototypes.
- Marc Goossens and Jim Matthews suffered a severe blow to their championship hopes with a 15th-place finish in the No. 91 Bob Stallings/Riley-Matthews Motorsports Pontiac Riley. Matthews ran in the top five for several laps before running into the No. 07 Banner Racing Pontiac GXP.R, forcing the No. 91 into the pits for bodywork repairs.

Farnbacher Loles Racing

Farnbacher Loles Racing earned its second-consecutive podium on Thursday evening, taking second place in the GT class on the last lap of the Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series race at Daytona International Speedway in Daytona Beach, Fla.

Both drivers of the No. 87 Porsche 911 GT3 Cup car led the class during the two-hour 25-minute race. Dirk Werner of Kissenbrück, Germany, started second and took the class lead at the green flag. He handed off to Bryce Miller of Summit, N.J., from second place and Miller regained the class lead on a subsequent restart. He dropped back to third behind two stronger Mazdas and was passed by a Pontiac as one of the Mazdas flipped, bringing out a late-race caution. With one green flag lap to the finish, Miller passed the Pontiac for second place.

Their teammates Leh Keen of Charleston, S.C., and Eric Lux of Jacksonville, Fla., weren't able to repeat their class win of the previous race, at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course. Lux started sixth in class after a transmission problem slowed his qualifying effort in the No. 86 Porsche. He moved up to second in class, then had to pit for replacement of a radiator hose coupling. The repair cost the team 10 laps and the car finished 20th.

Farnbacher Loles also prepared the No. 63 Porsche for JLow Racing drivers Jim Lowe of Bryn Mawr, Pa., and Jim Pace of Ridgeland, Miss. Lowe started 22nd and gained nine positions before pitting for a driver change. Pace had only one lap before the car was out of the race with a gearbox failure.

Dino Loles, team owner: "We're really happy with the result, to take the victory at Mid-Ohio with one car, then come here and finish second with the other car. We feel that was the maximum we could get out of the Porsche today and we're happy to have achieved the podium for Porsche. With a little luck, the 86 car would have been there, also, and the 63 had a strong run going. Hopefully, we can take this newfound momentum to [the next race at] Barber Motorsports Park."

Leh Keen, No. 86: "Today's result doesn't show the whole story. We ran well all day and were P1 in the second practice session. In the race, we were one of the fastest GT cars at any given time. We had a radiator hose blow, which is just one of those things, but the car got fixed and we were again one of the fastest. I'm happy for the 87 and wish we could have been on podium with them. I know we had a podium car tonight. That would have been a double podium for the team and they deserve that."

Eric Lux, No. 86: "The crew did a really great job getting the car back after qualifying, when we blew a transmission. The car was excellent, so I just wanted to get up front as quick as I could and get away from all the chaos behind us. During that time, the coupling of a radiator hose fell off and I ended up doing a spin on my own car's fluid. The motor got really hot and it took 10 laps to fix the radiator hose. It's too bad because we really had a shot at winning here."

Bryce Miller, No. 87: "It's a great feeling to score a podium after such a long while and to be reunited with Dirk. He set me up perfectly for this evening. It's just great to be back here and have the exposure to this driving development and to be able to run for a podium finish like that at the end of the race. It's been a long time coming, so to deliver a result like this after such a trying season is certainly a good feeling, and it's good to share with our sponsors, Marquis Jet and Resorts International, as well."

Dirk Werner, No. 87: "I'm absolutely happy with the race. Finally, our series of bad luck ended today. I'm really proud of the crew and all the people who worked on the car that we could finally get a podium after that many bad races. I know it's not easy to keep the motivation high, but the mechanics kept on giving us a good car and preparing it as if we were running for the championship. That's just awesome! Bryce brought the luck back to our car and we showed today that our car was the fastest Porsche again."

Dirk Werner Race Report

With free practice, qualifying and the race all in one day, it was clear from the beginning that we didn't have enough time to make changes on the car setup. So we started with the setup we had at the 24-hour race in Daytona and it was already pretty good.

It turned out today that the car was fast – we had the fastest time in free practice – and we could improve the car a little bit. But still, the Porsche is not as good as the Mazda on tire wear. The Pontiacs seemed to struggle a little bit in the free practice sessions, so it turned out it was going to be a fight between the Mazda and us.

I was happy to see that the 87 car was back on speed and was the fastest Porsche. The last race was the changing point for the team, with the win of our teammates Lehman Keen and Eric Lux in the No. 86 Farnbacher Loles Porsche. I still was motivated for this race and I was thinking, 'At a certain point, the bad luck has to go away.'

Qualifying went kind of okay. Two laps from the end, I still had the GT pole, but the Mazda pushed a button somehow and did a very fast lap, so I had to start second. But it was just the 70 Mazda and us that were fast – the other cars already had a little gap.

For the race, we knew that the 70 Mazda would be the hardest competitor. In the beginning, the Porsche was very good; I could do very fast lap times. But then, like any other race, the tires start to go down a little bit and you have to not overdrive the tires, so you have to play conservative. I had to back off a little bit.

The Mazda could still do very fast lap times and they didn't have to change tires at the first pit stop. The driver did nearly a double stint on the tires, so that shows how well-balanced the Mazda is on the Pirelli tires, and how much it is a [purpose-built] race car. To be able to keep up with the Mazda with a street-based race car was very good!

I just tried to stay clean in my stint, stay out of trouble and give my co-driver Bryce Miller a good car so that he could make the best out of it. Obviously, he did! He stayed in third position, which was very good, then he got passed as one of the Mazdas had a crash. I hope the driver is okay ...

But Bryce kept a cool head and I think he knew the Porsche was fastest on the front straight. He waited 'til the last lap and caught the other car on the front straight. It was pretty good to see and it was great to feel the atmosphere with our team at the end of the race.

Even with a second place, I'm very, very happy. I want to thank the team – especially the crew of the 87 car – for never giving up and keeping on working hard and preparing the car. The car was fast every race. Speed wasn't the problem; it was just bringing it to the finish line. So now I hope for the last three races of the season, we can get paid off for the first half of the season.

www.dirk-werner.net



Photo courtesy Grand-Am

www.ashautomobilia.com

Daytona International Speedway Race Report

Pruett, Rojas Win Brumos Porsche 250 In Photo Finish

Scott Pruett and the No. 01 TELMEX Chip Ganassi Racing Lexus Riley captured a thrilling photo-finish win in the Brumos Porsche 250 under the lights Thursday on the 3.56-mile road course at historic Daytona International Speedway.

A full-course caution with four laps to go set up a one-lap sprint for the win. Alex Gurney and the No. 99 GAINSCO Bob Stallings Racing team seemed to have the win sealed up on the final lap.

But coming off of Turn 4 with the checkered flag in sight, Pruett went to the outside and made a surge at the end to win by .081 of a second – the smallest margin of victory in the history of the Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series.

“Wow. Unbelievable,” said Pruett, who won his fifth race of the season and shared the driving duties with Memo Rojas. “It’s never over ’til it’s over. We were quicker on the straightaway than the No. 99 car and we got it done.”

“It’s definitely a tough pill to swallow for sure,” said Gurney, who co-drove with Jon Fogarty. “It looked like we had it under control. I knew I had to get a good enough gap in front of him going into the chicane or else I was toast because he was coming like a freight train on the straight(away).”

Sylvain Tremblay and Nick Ham drove the No. 70 SpeedSource Mazda to the GT class victory from the pole position.

The No. 70 SpeedSource Mazda team has now won the pole and their class the last three races at DIS beginning with last year’s Brumos Porsche 250.

“We have the keys to this place,” Tremblay said. “We know what it takes to get around here. We’re back in Victory Lane for the third time at Daytona. It’s pretty awesome.”

Racer/actor Patrick Dempsey and the No. 40 Hyper Sport Mazda GT team improved upon their 39th-place finish in the Rolex 24 At Daytona with a 25th-place finish overall.

“It’s great to come back to a track and certainly this is a great track,” Dempsey said. “I just want to stay consistent and be in the car; I think it makes a big difference. We’re seeing improvements and I’m hitting the goals each race that I want to hit.”

Tickets and packages for the Coke Zero 400 Weekend Powered By Coca-Cola are available online at <http://www.daytonainternationalspeedway.com> or by calling 1-800-PITSHOP.

Porsche Motorsports Race Recap

Overall, Porsche’s performance customer teams turned in solid efforts with three top-10 finishes in DP Class and a podium for second place in GT in Thursday night’s Brumos Porsche 250 at Daytona International Speedway, the eighth race in the 14-race 2008 Rolex Sports Car Series Presented by Crown Royal Cask No. 16.

Portugal’s Joao Barbosa provided some last-minute heroics in the No. 59 Porsche-Riley as he passed Brumos Racing teammate Darren Law of Phoenix, Ariz., on the final lap to finish fourth, only 3.24 seconds behind the winning Lexus-Riley of Scott Pruett and Memo Rojas. Law finished fifth, just a whisker behind Barbosa, and Joey Hand of Sacramento, Cal., gave the No. 23 Ruby Tuesday Alex Job Racing Porsche-Crawford its first top-10 finish by placing eighth, only 4.661 seconds behind the winner.

A late-race caution helped set up the close finish, but the Porsche contingent ran in the top 10 most of the evening with the No. 58 Brumos car and the Alex Job Racing entry both running as high as third place at separate times during the 250-mile race.

For the Brumos team, it marked the second straight race with both of its cars taking the checkered flag in the top five.

“We had some brake problems with the No. 58 car so he (Law) couldn’t hold off the No. 59 car in the end,” said Hurley Haywood, the Brumos team director and legendary sports car racer in his own right. “But it was a good showing with all of the problems we had tonight. So we’re happy with that.”

Haywood alluded to an early pit stop for David Donohue of Malvern, Pa., who started the race after qualifying fifth. Donohue pitted on Lap 7, but fell from fifth to 17th after stopping to have an electrical short repaired on the

car's number panel. Donohue slowly rebounded to third by Lap 28 and then pitted two laps later to hand the car over to Law, who was again delayed by work on the troublesome number panel. Law rejoined the race in 13th position but would move back up in the standings to remain in the top five for the final 11 laps.

As he had at Mid-Ohio, Barbosa came on strong at the finish after co-driver and hometown favorite J.C. France took good care of the No. 59 entry after starting in 16th position. France ran as high sixth before pitting on Lap 19 and vacating the cockpit for Barbosa.

"It was a pretty good stint," France said. "I was trying to keep the car clean and keep it on lead lap to give a good car to Barbosa."

Mission accomplished and with the good car, the Portuguese driver continued to improve his position, saving his best for the last lap. The fourth-place finish also came despite a green-flag pit stop that came 30 seconds before the race's first caution period of the night on Lap 38.

"Everything worked really well," Barbosa said. "I made some bad calls on my part and lost many places and it was really difficult to catch up. But the Porsche engine was strong all the way through the race. The team did a great job and gave me a good car--a competitive ca--so we were able to go from 17th to fourth."

Thursday's race was a vast improvement for the Alex Job Racing entry that had retired on the pace lap of the previous race. Not only did the newly redesigned Porsche- Crawford go the distance, but Hand was able to bring it home in one piece, gain some important development miles and score a top-10 finish.

Bill Auberlen started seventh and although the resident of Redondo Beach, Cal., dropped to 17th position in the early laps, he was able to work his way up to as high as third before pitting on Lap 38 during a full-course caution and turning the car over to Hand. That yellow came courtesy of race leader Michael Wilkins who cut a tire and then brushed the wall, leaving enough debris to merit the caution.

Hand rejoined the race in fourth and never ran lower than 11th the rest of the way.

"We ran," Hand exclaimed. "We've kind of struggled with some things dealing with the new bodywork on the Crawford and then had some freak things happen on the parade lap of the last two races, so it's just nice to get a finish under our belts. We knew there would be some attrition here so we just tried to keep it clean. Alex asked us to keep the bodywork on it because we don't have a ton of spares just yet. We had some sort of vibration in the end with the right rear tire and it was causing some weird sort of harmonic. It was actually slowing the engine down. We persevered."

NOTE: Hurley Haywood and J.C. France will drive the original Brumos Racing Porsche- Fabcar in next week's Goodwood Festival of Speed in England. The chassis, No. 001, has been restored and carried Haywood and France to score first overall victories for a Daytona Prototype in races at Homestead and Phoenix in 2003.

Werner, Miller Lead Porsche Contingent in GT Class

For the second straight race, a Farnbacher Loles Porsche 911 GT3 Cup scored the best finish for Porsche in GT Class as Germany's Dirk Werner and Bryce Miller of Hoboken, N.J., wound up second to the Mazda RX-8 of Nick Ham and Sylvain Tremblay. Starting in third in the No. 87 entry, Werner jumped into the lead at the start and took off with teammate Eric Lux of Jacksonville, Fla., who eventually worked up to second to give Porsche a 1-2 in the standings for a handful of laps. However, Lux was forced to pit on Lap 11 with a mechanical problem that kept the car in the pits for 12 laps.

The winners at Mid-Ohio would be denied a second straight victory. Werner continued to lead, setting the pace for the first 21 laps before losing the lead to Ham. The full-course caution for debris on Lap 38 allowed Werner to close up on Ham, who had been ahead by 20 seconds. Both teams used the occasion to pit and make driver changes with Miller taking over for Werner. Miller continued where Werner left off by jumping into the lead as the green flag came out on Lap 44 and stayed there for five laps until being passed by Jeff Segal in a Mazda RX-8. Segal brought out the final caution after tangling with a DP car and flipping just after the exit from the Bus Stop Chicane.

On the final lap, Miller was able to pass the Pontiac GXP-R of Robin Liddell to finish in second. "The last race was the changing point for our team," Werner said during the post-race interview. "We wanted to hop on that train and get a good result at Daytona. The plan was to get a gap in the first part of the race and as the tires went away, I tried to stay up front. The advantage (for the Mazdas) was that they didn't have to change the tires. I'm pretty happy with the second place. Bryce did an awesome finish passing Robin on the last lap."

"It's nice to have the exposure and experience to close the race and for Dirk to give that to me is special," Miller added. "I thought Robin had me there going into the Bus Stop turn, but the Pontiac punched such a big hole I was able to get by. It's a good feeling."

TRG also placed three cars in the top 10 in GT Class. Ted Ballou of Coronado Del Mar, Cal., and Andy Lally of Dacula, Ga., took team honors by finishing fifth in the No. 66 Porsche 911 GT3 Cup entry while Canada's Hima Maher and Craig Stanton of Long Beach, Cal., placed eighth in the No. 65 TRG/Riegel Autosport entry. Tim George Jr. of New York, N.Y., and Spencer Pumpelly of Mason Neck, Va., finished ninth in the No. 67 entry

TRG Team Reports

The Porsche GT3 has traditionally been at its strongest at Daytona International Speedway, which TRG hoped would continue to be the case in Thursday night's Brumos Porsche 250.

However, while Andy Lally and Ted Ballou finished fifth in the No. 66 Mitchell Rubber Porsche GT3 and three TRG Porsches earned top-10 results in the GT class, team owner Kevin Buckler and the rest of the team came away somewhat disappointed.

"We had three cars in the top 10 and our guys did a great job, but I'm a little disappointed," Buckler said. "I'm not having a lot of fun running here in Grand-Am right now. It was just a Mazda parade tonight again. I've never seen so many awesome lap times with the two Mazdas at the front of the field. They need to get the rules right, because you're seeing the fields diminish and that is truly a shame and will really hurt everyone. We are trying to be patient but we need parity between the marques NOW. Done right, this is a great place to race but right now it is not right. This used to be THE Porsche track. What's left for Porsche?"

Lally and Ballou were the second highest teammates among the Porsche drivers and the No. 66 was the first car to finish one lap down to the race-winning No. 70 Mazda. Ballou started the car 12th in class and kept the car in the hunt throughout his stint before turning the car over to Lally. The timing of yellow flags ultimately dropped the No. 66 machine off the lead lap, but Lally persevered for a top-five result. It was the second consecutive top-five result for Lally and Ballou and was their third top five of the season.

"It was a good day," Ballou said. "We had a good car under us. I had a little contact out there, but it was a good run. I picked up a couple of spots. Unfortunately, we lost the lead lap. Otherwise, Andy would have been right there for a podium. It was a good day for us."

For the third consecutive race and the fourth time in the last five races, the No. 65 Mike Wiegele Helicopter Skiing/Total-R Insulation Solutions Porsche GT3 from TRG/Riegel Autosport finished inside the top 10. Co-drivers Hima Maher and Craig Stanton brought the car home in eighth place, earning the race's hard-charger award for gaining the most positions during the race.

"It was another really clean run," stated Hima Maher. "I handed a clean car off to Craig. We had excellent strategy from both John Bedell and Ted Rozsa. What more can we say? We just kept it clean and ran consistent laps. It's unfortunate we went down a lap, but we weren't the only ones. We're the second-highest finishing TRG Porsche behind Andy Lally and Ted Ballou. It's great."

The No. 67 Johnny Love Vodka/ 994 Magazine TRG Porsche GT3 also returned to the top 10 after a two-race absence with a ninth-place performance by co-drivers Tim George Jr. and Spencer Pumpelly. It was the sixth top-10 result in nine races this season for the No. 67 teammates, enabling the No. 67 team to maintain fourth place in the championship standings.

"It's another top-10 finish for the No. 67 Johnny Love Vodka/ 994 Magazine TRG Porsche," George said. "They're a new sponsor, and it's nice to get them a top-10 finish. We did what we could. We didn't have the best setup. We changed some gears and missed the practice. I qualified the best out of the TRG Porsches (11th), which was great, and ran a pretty clean stint. I had a little issue with a DP out there; he gave me a little knock. Spencer had a little issue and that cost us a lap, and we couldn't get the lap back. It is what it is. We should still be pretty good on the rookie points. We should still be leading, and I'm looking forward to our next track at Barber, where it's a Porsche track."

Unfortunately, the fourth TRG Porsche was back in the garage area at the drop of the checkered flag. The No. 68 CRG/Maxter/Rotax/MBA Group/F1 Air Porsche GT3 for co-drivers Bryan Sellers and RJ Valentine was classified 21st in the GT class after retiring with a mechanical problem. The No. 68 machine completed 44 of the race's 70 laps.

"We had a pretty good thing going and then the engine went away on us," Valentine said. "What's more to say? It's a bad day at Black Rock."

The TRG Rolex Series teams return to action on Sunday, July 20 at Barber Motorsports Park near Birmingham, Ala.

Chip Ganassi Racing Report

Pruett Makes Last Lap Pass to Win at Daytona International Speedway

Scott Pruett won the closest finish in Grand-Am Rolex Series history Thursday night at Daytona by 0.081-second with a pass of Alex Gurney coming out of the final turn. The move to win the race was made on the high side of the No.99 car and gave the No.01 TELMEX Chip Ganassi Racing with Felix Sabates (CGRFS) team its fifth visit to victory lane through the first eight races of the 2008 season.

Co-driver Memo Rojas' fourth place starting position enabled him to maintain a hold in the top-four positions throughout the first 18 laps. The TELMEX team employed an off-sequence pit strategy to make a driver change and put Pruett in the car on lap 18 and continued to progress from 12th place to the top-three positions by lap 30 of the 70-lap event.

Pruett gained the lead from laps 50-57 and trailed in second position behind the No.99 in the caution-marred final seven laps, until regaining the lead on the last corner.

Thursday's record-breaking finish marked Chip Ganassi Racing Teams, Inc.'s 99th career win and 20th victory for CGRFS' Rolex Series team. Pruett continues to extend his record Rolex Series career victories (19). The No.01 TELMEX team has now scored top-10 finishes and completed every lap for two straight seasons (since June 29, 2006).

Pruett and Rojas currently lead the Rolex Series driver and team championship race with their largest margin of the season with 260 points, 40 points over the No.99 Fogarty/Gurney car (220).

CGRFS Quoteboard:

Scott Pruett "Winning here tonight means so much. This is our first win at Daytona in July and it just feels great. I was battling a loose car yet we were still able to run times with the leader if we weren't at the front. When it's a green/white restart we had no other option than to give it all we had. I went to the high side of Gurney coming onto the front stretch (for the checkered) and chose that line because I figured he'd be protecting the bottom line. Lucky for the two of us he didn't go high! But tonight was outstanding and it definitely holds true that it's not over until it's over. I can't say enough about TELMEX, Chip Ganassi Racing with Felix Sabates and the Lexus engine."

Memo Rojas "I am so proud of Scott right now. In my stint I just wanted to be smart with car and make good moves so when I handed the car over to Scott, he'd be in a position to be at the front. We started out running an off-sequence pit stop strategy than the leaders and by the end I think our strategy paid off because we were right there after our final stop. Scott did an amazing job – I am so excited for this win. Thank you to Chip and Felix, TELMEX and Lexus."



Photo Courtesy Grand-Am

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