



Bits & Pieces From the Rolex 24 – Saturday Early Race



Racing under blue skies and with a few thousand friends

The weather could not have been better scripted by a Hollywood writer for the start of the 50th Anniversary Rolex 24 at Daytona. 70 plus degrees with a slight – and welcome – breeze have

proved incentive enough for this facility to fill up with literally thousands of race fans. (OK, maybe the NASCAR drivers and the new Corvette and Riley DPs had something to do with it too.) The infield parking areas were said to be closed off to new parking hours before the race began. Overflow parking (read: outside the track) has been deployed in the extreme and it seems people just keep coming in undeterred by parking woes that equate to many more footsteps to get to the action.

When the grid was opened to all before the start, it quickly became impossible to see the asphalt as there were so many bodies moving in every direction. Needless to say the Patrick Dempsey car and the Ganassi 'car of the stars' collected the biggest cadre of fans but they had plenty of competition in the race for attention. Simply stated, we have never seen this big a crowd at the Rolex 24 Hours at Daytona.

I guess when you mix new cars, good weather, movie stars, rock stars, a heaping dose of living history in the form of past winning drivers and cars, throw in new Daytona Prototypes and racing drivers that hail from all points on the globe, you should expect a good turnout. Great expectations indeed and fully realized here at the "Road Racing Center of the World".



Like Father Like Son...and Like the Other Chevy's?

Among the past winning cars on display here today is the Dan Gurney Arciero Racing No. 96 Lotus-Climax 19B with which Dan won the inaugural race that evolved into what we now know as the Rolex 24 at Daytona. As fans of Grand-Am will know, Dan's son Alex has been making his own mark in the Rolex Series the last few years, running with Jon Fogarty in the No. 99 GAINSCO-Bob Stallings Racing Daytona Prototype. Would you think Alex might enjoy repeating his father's feat on this, the 50th anniversary of that famous win?

"Obviously, that's the goal, for sure." Alex said, "That kind of chance doesn't come along very often. Fifty years is a big landmark, so I'm definitely hoping to do it. We haven't won this race before, so it's the perfect time to make it happen."

With an all new Corvette DP under him, Gurney has learned that some of the other new Chevy-powered DPs have been experiencing undefined engine issues. "Well, I'd like to find out what

happened to them. I don't really know, actually, yet. We're running strong, so that's what we're focusing on. And we really tried during all of the testing that we had – I guess we've done five days – with this new car, and we really tried not to worry too much about speed, and if any little thing came up, our engineer, Kyle Brannan, was on it. He was just really methodical about covering our bases, so, so far, so good.”

Wayne Taylor Racing No. 10 SunTrust Corvette DP Out Early

Well, it took the start of the race to bring the Chevy engine problem to light. Team Chevy reports the engine in the No 10 car suffered valve train issues and the news knocked the wind right out of Team Owner, and past Rolex 24 race winner, Wayne Taylor.

“It's really disappointing. Even though there was a statement that Max might've over-revved the engine – that's absolutely not the case. There's a problem in the valve train; quite honestly, we're not exactly sure what it is, but there's a problem enough for us to pull the car out of the race.”

Looking to attain the all important championship points a great finish here would have delivered to the SunTrust team, Taylor verified his primary drivers, Max Angelelli and Taylor's son Ricky Taylor would still have earned points because of the way the rules read. And he still expects more points to come as his team will use this set back as a springboard to a better season ahead.

“We clarified with Grand-Am”, said Taylor, “that both Max and Ricky will get points based on the fact that he did do his 30 minutes and because of catastrophic failure, the second driver automatically gets points. We will go on here with [14th-place] points, [18] points down. But at the same time, we came into this weekend feeling very upbeat. Everybody, all of the support we've had from GM, SunTrust, Dallara and Corvette, everybody. We'll just go back; regroup and we'll go to the next event.”



Porsche Posts Winners Video on You Tube

Porsche has released a video on its You Tube channel which includes interviews with former winners of the 24-hour classic. Here is the link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aITSalbZr5U>

Race Standings After 3 Hours

Daytona Prototype (DP):

1. Justin Wilson – No. 60 Ford/Riley
2. Joao Barbosa – No. 9 Corvette DP
3. Lucas Luhr – No. 8 Ford/Riley

Grand Touring (GT) Top 3:

1. Paul Edwards – No. 88 Autohaus Motorsports Chevrolet Camaro
2. Patrick Pilet – No. 66 TRG Porsche GT3
3. Mike Rockenfeller – No. 45 Flying Lizard Motorsport Porsche GT3



Photos of the Rolex 24 Heritage Cars (past winners) are now posted on www.ashautophotos.com



Photos from the BMW Performance 200 Continental Tire Sports Car Challenge are now posted on www.ashautophotos.com