

RC F GT3s Lead Laps, No. 15 Lexus Finishes Fifth at Sebring

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SEBRING, Fla. (March 19, 2018) – The 3GT Racing No. 15 Lexus RC F GT3 scored a fifth-place GTD class finish in the Twelve Hours of Sebring Saturday in the second endurance event of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship season.

The No. 15 team debuted its new red livery and led the GTD field for 45 laps in the first half of the 12-hour event, including 40 laps by Jack Hawksworth and five circuits by David Heinemeier Hansson, but the team experienced a few issues during the middle of the race and fell back two laps in their class. In his final stints of the event, Hawksworth commanded the Lexus from 14th-place to finish fifth to match the best result for the RC F GT3 in IMSA competition. Hawksworth ran the third-quickest lap of the race for the GTD class on Lap 4 (of 321 laps).

The No. 14 RC F GT3 ran the quickest single circuit of the race in the GTD class with 3GT Racing driver Dominik Baumann behind the wheel, also on Lap 4 of the 12-hour endurance event. The No. 14 Lexus led eight circuits in class and went on to record a 14th-place finish after having an issue with the hood midway through the race. Endurance racer Philipp Frommenwiler led seven circuits in the No. 14, while Kyle Marcelli was out front of the GTD field once.

Both Lexus' began the weekend with strong qualifying efforts at the historic Florida road course, with the No. 15 starting third and the No. 14 in fourth.

Lexus and 3GT Racing will next compete in the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Showdown at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course on Sunday, May 6. It will mark the first sprint race of the season and the first time the Lexus RC F GT3s will compete at the 2.4-mile road course.

Jack Hawksworth, No. 15 Lexus RC F GT3

“It was a fantastic beginning of the race. I took the lead immediately. I had a little bit of contact with the Ferrari, which was concerning. You never want to have contact at the beginning of a 12-hour race. I don't know if the Ferrari went off and came back on and banged doors with me, but fortunately we got away with that and led the race and was able to control the race at that point. Just looked after the car and tried to get a feel for every bit and obviously got good track position, so that was obviously fantastic. We got back into the lead in the afternoon at some point as well and I think our Lexus' were one-two at that point with myself and Philipp (Frommenwiler) so that was pretty cool. Just kept on battling away and obviously had a few issues along the way. When we had the steering wheel issue – that was kind of frustrating and put us back a little bit – but in the end really I didn't know where we were but knew we were back on the lead lap. I was told the cars ahead are for position, so I did my best to chase them down. The Ferrari in front was a little too fast, but I was able to overtake the Audi, the Porsches and Acuras. Our Lexus was working well and I was happy to salvage a top-five. When you think of all of the stuff that happened throughout the race and we came back and got a top-five, so I'm really happy – 12 hours and so much can happen. We kept fighting and got a top-five so good points for the championship and I'm happy.”

David Heinemeier Hansson, No. 15 Lexus RC F GT3

Are you happy with the finish after overcoming some adversity in the middle part of the race?

“I thought we were going to finish 14th or whatever we were at one point, but this is the magic of racing in IMSA. The right amount of luck with yellows can bring you back in contention. When Jack (Hawksworth) got back on the lead lap, he just put it down and we went from 12th to fifth, which is an amazing finish given just the amount of issues that we had – two drive throughs, a brake change that took three times as long as it should have, changing a steering wheel. Just a lot of incidents and to finish fifth is a real victory.”

[Lexus Racing Quotes](#)

Sean Rayhall, No. 15 Lexus RC F GT3

What does it say about this team to come back from a couple of laps down to finish fifth?

“From all of the adversity, to come back and finish fifth, that definitely shows how good this 3GT Racing team and this Lexus RC F is. I’m really proud of all of the boys and girls here. You have bad days at the track, but the way we were able to claw ourselves back in that amazing drive by Jack (Hawskworth) at the end was just remarkable. Really proud to be a part of it and just absolutely blown away. It felt good driving the Lexus when I had a proper stint in it and it wasn’t in the middle of the stuff we had going on. It was a pleasure to drive and we definitely had some pace there, so I’m looking forward to Petit (Le Mans at Road Atlanta).”

Dominik Baumann, No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3

How did the Lexus RC F GT3 drive during Saturday’s 12-hour endurance event at Sebring?

“I think we had a car for the podium today. Out on track we had no problems. The three drivers were really clean and everything went well until we had trouble with the hood. I couldn’t see anything. I hit the sign because I couldn’t see and then I stopped the car but it was just the same so I had to go really slow. It was a scary moment the first time and then I hit it three times, so it was not nice hitting that at 100 miles an hour. It’s hard to get a lap back this year because the level of drivers is so strong. We improved a lot over the weekend. We did a lot of setup work and it’s a good direction. I don’t know the other tracks, so now everything will be new for me and the Lexus did a good job.”

Kyle Marcelli, No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3

Are you disappointed in the finish after having such a strong Lexus through the first part of the race?

“I’m gutted. We started off so strong, not even just this weekend but the February test here was really good and then we rolled out of the trailer this weekend and we had a good race car. We tuned our Lexus to be good in the long stints and we were less concerned about one lap outright pace and more concerned about the pace over a long run and for the first six hours we were either first, second or third-place and it was looking good and everything was running smooth. Then during Dominik’s (Baumann) stint the hood came up and just one of those stupid little things that you really can’t do much about. We had the hood on and latched properly and Sebring is a bumpy place and it broke one of the latches up front and caused the hood to come off. We thought we made a temporary Band-Aid for it and then it came off again, so we decided we needed to do a proper fix and lost the four laps. Otherwise, we had a good car and we finished the race so that’s important. We’re still collecting points. You can’t afford to take any zeros. We’ll just move on to Mid-Ohio. I’m looking forward to the sprint race part of the season now. I think Dominik (Baumann) and I work quite well together and I’m really excited to move on to Mid-Ohio.”

Philipp Frommenwiler, No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3

Can you take us through this 12-hour Sebring race and what took the Lexus RC F GT3 out of contention mid-way through?

“We had a really good start. The first six hours were great. We were always in the top-three fighting for the lead. I did my double stint and then I gave the Lexus over to Dominik (Baumann) in P1 and a few laps after we had a technical problem with the hood. We needed time to fix it and we lost a few laps, so it’s really sad after also having issues in Daytona. We were really quick here and I think the quickest car, so I’m looking forward to Petit and racing again in IMSA giving my best.”

Jeff Bracken, group VP and general manager, Lexus Division

What is your impression of how the Lexus RC F GT3s performed in the Twelve Hours of Sebring?

“From our standpoint, we are happy to see both Lexus RC F GT3s finish today’s race. Both had competitive speed throughout the weekend. We qualified well and then raced competitively today and we’re pleased to see both running a consistent pace in the first two endurance events. It was heartbreaking to see the 14 have issues today after running strong early on and what a performance in the last few hours by Jack Hawskworth making up

quite a few spots to finish in the top-five. We look forward to going to Mid-Ohio for the first time where we expect to do even better.”