

12 Hours of Sebring - Sebring International Raceway - March 16-18, 2017

March 15, 2017

Image not found or type unknown



The Lexus RC F GT3 made its IMSA debut at the Rolex 24 at Daytona and the Lexus vehicle showed promise in its maiden voyage. Although 3GT Racing's No. 14 Lexus entry finished 27th after an early-race accident, its sister entry, the No. 15 Lexus RC F GT3, raced as high as first with two drivers leading laps before tire failures hindered the team and resulted in a 14th-place finish in class. Lexus drivers Dominik Farnbacher and Jack Hawksworth led 15 laps (of 659) and 11 laps, respectively, in the No. 15 in Lexus' first event in the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship's GTD class.

Limited Lexus History at Sebring ... 3GT Racing's participation in the 2017 12 Hours of Sebring will mark the first Lexus entrants in the historic endurance race in more than 20 years. While Lexus raced in the Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series from 2004 to 2009, the series did not visit Florida's historic Sebring International Raceway. During its Grand-Am era, Lexus won 25 races, two driver's championships (2004, 2008) and three-straight Rolex 24 at Daytona victories (2006-08). Lexus now returns to Sebring for the first time since 1995, when actor Craig T. Nelson co-piloted a Lexus-powered prototype to a 14th-place finish in class.

James' Sebring Wins ... Englishman Ian James will again join 3GT Racing as an endurance driver for the No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3 and the veteran racer has three-career triumphs in the 12 Hours of Sebring (2004-05, 2015). James has won at Sebring in both a prototype and GTD race car. In 2004 and 2005, James was victorious in the LMP2 class, while he won at Sebring in the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship's GTD class in 2015.

3GT Racing's Sebring Lineup ... In addition to James piloting the No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3 at Sebring, he will be joined by full-time drivers Sage Karam and Scott Pruett, while the No. 15 Lexus will be driven by full-time drivers Robert Alon and Hawksworth, as well as endurance race add-on Austin Cindric. Since last competing with 3GT Racing in the Rolex 24, Cindric has raced in the opening two events of the 2017 NASCAR Camping World Truck Series season.

Winning Off the Track ... Many technologies from Lexus' racing initiatives have transferred to their production cars, including carbon fiber roofs, suspension design and vehicle handling characteristics. For Lexus in 2016, total F vehicle sales (GS F, RC F and formerly IS F) are 2,415. In addition to these models, many other Lexus vehicles offer F SPORT versions with enhanced bold styling and handling agility that are inspired by Lexus' racing efforts, and F SPORT sales in 2016 totaled 60,269.

Keeping Pace with Lexus ... Fans can keep up with Lexus Racing on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#) by using #LexusRCF GT3, #LexusPerformance and #LexusRacing, and online at www.Lexus.com/Motorsports.

Lexus Racing Quotes

SCOTT PRUETT, No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3

How do you setup your car to manage the bumps at Sebring?

"It's a lot of time, effort and energy, so it's everything that we're doing at the race track and then a lot of stuff we're doing with TRD (Toyota Racing Development), you know? Integrating them with their strengths to help us learn. From a dynamics standpoint, they'll take all the data from the test, they'll run it through simulations and then run all different sort of parameters on shocks and springs and bars."

IAN JAMES, No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3

How do you feel about your chances at Sebring International Raceway?

"Like every driver kind of has their sweet spot track that you thrive at or have good fortune at or where they really excel, and I've been lucky enough to win here three times, so I do love being here. The first win was in 2004, then 2005 and the last win was 2015, and the last one was in GTD, so looking forward to backing that up. Coming here, it's a reset from Daytona. We didn't quite have the pace at Daytona, but I believe we probably

have the pace here. I think we should come here aiming to win this thing.”

SAGE KARAM, No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3

How much experience do you have at Sebring and do you enjoy racing here?

“I’ve raced here in prototypes and I love this place. This is one of my favorites that I’ve ever raced on. It’s probably top-five favorite track. It’s got so much character with all the bumps and everything and you’ve really got to drive this track. You can attack it, but at the same time you can’t over attack it or else mistakes can happen here pretty quickly. It’s definitely one of my favorites mostly because of how you’ve got to drive it, but then also the historical value of this place. You just walk up and down pit lane and you see the years and the names of the manufacturers that have won this race. It’s like an Indianapolis for sports cars, so it’s definitely a cool place and this has always been on my wish list of ones I wanted to win. I’m hoping we can do that soon.”

ROBERT ALON, No. 15 Lexus RC F GT3

Why is Sebring more difficult on vehicles than Daytona?

“It’s mainly because of the bumps. They’re just really vicious on the car. If a car is not set up properly, it can cause really bad handling – it’s just the track in general just is a really, old bumpy airport. It’s just really hard on cars, but I love this track and it’s exactly for those reasons that when you are going over the bumps and whatnot, it’s not as straightforward an approach of just release the brake, turn in the corner. It’s a lot about feel and you just kind of have to modulate the brake over the bumps and you’ve got to kind of feel what’s going on with the car. You can’t just kind of tell it what to do because over the bumps it will react badly if you treat it wrong.”

AUSTIN CINDRIC, No. 15 Lexus RC F GT3

What is your mindset entering Sebring?

“I think especially after Daytona, the 3GT squad, I think we have our expectations in check. I think we should have some pretty good results at Sebring. Testing seemed to be pretty encouraging. I’m looking forward to it and my second race. I think we checked off a lot of boxes – we finished the race at Daytona and that was the number one goal, so I was excited about that. I’m excited to be back. I’m looking forward to it and I haven’t been racing at Sebring in a while, so that should be fun and running at night should be a bit of a different thing, but I think we’re well prepared. We’re a lot more prepared than I think we were for Daytona just because we have run Daytona. We’ll go out there and see what we can do.

JACK HAWKSWORTH, No. 15 Lexus RC F GT3

Why does Sebring better suit the Lexus than Daytona?

“I think a lot of it is tire related – it’s a different compound of tire – and I think the other thing is the nature of this circuit. Daytona is very much top speed and braking and traction, but we didn’t particularly have a lot of straight-line speed and our Lexus seems to work better for me in medium-speed, high-speed corners. We seem to make a lot of downforce. We have good stability. I think in the lower speed corners, our car is perhaps not quite as competitive as some of our competitors. A circuit like this which is more medium- speed high-speed corners, plays to our strengths more than our competitors, who favor tight, twisty stuff, so anytime we get to a track like this, I think we’re beginning to feel like it can be a good day for us.”