

AIM Vasser Sullivan Claims First Victory

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LEXINGTON, Ohio (May 6, 2019) – The AIM VASSER SULLIVAN (AVS) No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3 was victorious in the GTD class of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship race at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course on Sunday with co-drivers Jack Hawksworth and Richard Heistand.

The win marks the third for Lexus in IMSA GTD competition, first for AIM VASSER SULLIVAN and the second victory for the RC F GT3 at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course.

Heistand earned his first-career IMSA pole position on Saturday and led the field for the first eight laps of the race, and then ran in second-place until turning driving duties over to Hawksworth. The 28-year-old Englishman drove the final two stints of the two-hour, 40-minute event, leading twice for 21 laps as he held off his closest competitor coming down the stretch.

Hawksworth ran the second-quickest GTD lap of the race, while Heistand ran the fourth-fastest GTD circuit in the No. 14 Lexus.

The AVS No. 12 RC F GT3 finished fifth in Sunday's race with co-drivers Townsend Bell and Frankie Montecalvo. This is the second pair of top-five results for AIM VASSER SULLIVAN in just the team's third IMSA race.

Lexus is currently second in the unofficial GTD manufacturer point standings following three races. The No. 12 Lexus maintains second in the GTD championship point standings, while the No. 14 moved up to third in points with the win.

The Lexus RC F GT3 will return to IMSA racing action on June 1 in Detroit to compete at the Raceway at Belle Isle Park street circuit.

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AIM VASSER SULLIVAN Driver Quotes

JACK HAWKSWORTH, No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3

How does it feel to get the win today?

“This has been an awesome weekend. After a difficult Sebring, the team bounced back. Richard (Heistand) did a fantastic job in qualifying and gave us an awesome opportunity in the race. Great first stint, and there at the end I got the opportunity to take the lead and did it. The guys were spotless on the pit stops. The Lexus RC F GT3 was working perfect all race long. I'm so happy to get our first win so early with AIM VASSER SULLIVAN as well. Everyone is doing a great job and just thank you to everyone. This is awesome.”

How did it feel to be back in victory lane today?

“It was awesome. I was proud of our team last year when they won with the Lexus RC F GT3 here. I've had some great times in the Lexus RC F GT3 over the last three years and it's been a pleasure to work alongside Lexus and drive for these great teams. I've had a lot of fast laps and fast cars, but it never quite happened. This weekend, it all came together. It was a really well executed weekend. Richard (Heistand) with the pole position yesterday with a phenomenal lap in tricky conditions. It was an impressive lap and he had a good first stint and we fought with the 86 (Trent Hindman/Mario Farnbacher) car the whole way through. I just hoped we'd get an opportunity at the end. We were kind of chipping away at them in that last stint. The gap was about eight or seven seconds and I felt like if I kept pushing, that they may hit traffic and maybe we could make something happen. But, obviously, that yellow was what we really needed and then once I got by him, I wasn't going to let him go. Great job from my team and Richard. It was a really well executed weekend and just proud to be a part of it.”

Can you talk about those final laps trying to hold onto the lead?

“It was tense, and it was interesting, because we were strong at different parts of the track. I knew I was quicker through Turn 1 and I knew the Lexus was working well on the back part of the circuit on Turn 9. I was trying to get a gap on the exit of Turn 1, because I knew he was very strong off Turn 2. They seemed to have good straight-line speed and he (Mario Farnbacher) was good on the brakes into Turn 4 as well. It was a good cat and mouse really, because we were fast on one part of the circuit and he was fast on the other part. I knew as long as I could get a little bit of a gap through that back section that I was going to be alright. It worked out well.”

RICHARD HEISTAND, No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3

How does it feel to get the win today in the Lexus RC F GT3?

“Just an incredible day. I think it means a lot to everyone. This is the first win for AIM VASSER SULLIVAN and my first win in a race car since 2006. Jack’s first win in a while. He’s one of the fastest drivers here and probably deserved a win before now. This is the third win for Lexus so just a special day. I think we’re both happy with how we drove. I haven’t done a lot of racing, but I’ve been around long enough to know that these days don’t happen that often and we’re going to enjoy it.”

How was your stint in the Lexus RC F GT3?

“I wasn’t super happy on my first stint. I made a mistake and the 86 got by. I don’t think I would’ve been able to keep him behind me anyway. Jack (Hawksworth) did an unbelievable job. That pass on the restart was just incredible. His pace at the end – people don’t realize this Lexus at the end of the stint is very hard compared to some of these other cars with the tires. What Jack does at the end of the stint is remarkable. Just look at the pace of the other cars. What he did is incredible.”

TOWNSEND BELL, No. 12 Lexus RC F GT3

How was your race today?

“It was tough for the No. 12 AIM VASSER SULLIVAN car at the start with the way things checked up. Frankie (Montecalvo) got hit from behind and that dropped us back. Then he did a great job just fighting through it and hanging in there. The pit stops were perfect, and the car felt really good in clean air. Then the restart happened, and we just didn’t have it in traffic on the restart. We got roughed up, bumped around, pushed out of the way. Luckily, a couple of cars went off and we ended up fifth. Not really what we had hoped for, but I’m really happy for the No. 14 guys. They have worked hard. Jack (Hawksworth) has been with the Lexus program since the beginning. It’s his first win and he has earned every bit of it, so I am happy for him.”

FRANKIE MONTECALVO, No. 12 Lexus RC F GT3

How was your race today in the Lexus RC F GT3?

“I’m very happy for the AIM VASSER SULLIVAN team to get their first win together. A win and a fifth finish for us is great. Our only hiccup was the start. We got held up, bumped and pushed around a little bit. We fell back and it was a tough one to try and claw back those positions, especially here. I think without that start we could have had a little better finish, but we stayed clean, stayed out of trouble and got fifth-place points. We’ll take that for this championship run.”