

Lexus RC F GT3 Earns Top-10 Result in Rolex 24 at Daytona

January 27, 2020

Image not found or type unknown



DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. (January 27, 2020) – Lexus and AIM VASSER SULLIVAN (AVS) opened the 2020 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship season with a top-10 finish in the Rolex 24 at Daytona with the No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3 finishing ninth on Sunday afternoon.

Jack Hawksworth, Kyle Busch, Parker Chase and Michael de Quesada teamed up behind the wheel of the No. 14 RC F GT3 and made their way to sixth place in the GTD class during hour 15 of the race. However, an extended brake change on the No. 14 RC F GT3 put the car six laps down and the team finished ninth.

The No. 12 Lexus visited the garage for repairs in hour 15 of the race after an on-track incident. Townsend Bell, Shane van Gisbergen, Frankie Montecalvo and Aaron Telitz split time behind the wheel of the No. 12 Lexus during the 24-hour race. The quartet of drivers went on to finish 12th after having run on the lead lap and as high as second place during the first half of the race.

Lexus and AIM VASSER SULLIVAN return to action at Sebring International Raceway for the Twelve Hours of Sebring on Saturday, March 21. To follow all of the racing action, follow Lexus Racing on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) by using #LexusRCF GT3, #LexusPerformance and #LexusRacing.

AIM VASSER SULLIVAN Driver Quotes

JACK HAWKSWORTH, No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3

Can you talk through the performance of the No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3 during the Rolex 24 at Daytona?

“The race was going really well. Both AIM VASSER SULLIVAN Lexus GT3s were running strong, especially at night. The speed was really good at night, but it didn’t seem to be quite as good in the daylight from what we could see this morning. At nighttime, the cars really came alive and both the 12 and the 14 GT3s speedwise looked good. The 12 car maintained the lead lap the whole race and then the 14 managed to get back onto the lead lap thanks to some full course cautions. We were feeling good about it and then we had to do a brake change, which usually takes about two minutes, but unfortunately there was an issue with a caliper and it required bleeding the brakes and some other things which ended up taking 10 minutes to get out of pit lane. We ultimately ended up six laps down. It was such a green race so it was difficult to return to the lead lap. Obviously, happy to get to the finish. The Lexus RC F GT3s were really reliable. We had a good performance, but we weren’t able to turn that into a favorable result at the end of the day.”

Did Kyle Busch share new ideas and feedback to assist the race team working together with you for the Rolex 24?

“Kyle’s got a lot of ideas. Kyle’s super switched on and he is like a sponge. He studies the setup, he’s studies the driving and every aspect of it. He’s been good, he’s been helpful in many elements of the car setup. Again, anyone like him, he’s obsessed with it, so he’s thinking about it all of the time and constantly trying to improve it. So, he’s been good to work with.

KYLE BUSCH, No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3

What was your first experience like racing in the Rolex 24 at Daytona behind the wheel of the Lexus RC F GT3?

“Overall, it was plentiful. There was a lot going on and a lot to learn and kind of pick up on and figure out. Overall, it was good. We had a lot of fun. I enjoyed it. Just being able to get back in a race car again, kind of my season warm-up if you will, and be able to go out there and run a ton of laps and have a good go of it. Unfortunately, we just got a little behind with the brake change there, we had some issues on the right-front caliper and that got us a little bit further back than we wanted to be. We just didn’t have the long run pace.”

Was this experience what you expected?

“It was good, it was fine. Racing at night, people were talking about how difficult it was and I’ve been to some short tracks that don’t have very good lights, so there were plenty of lights here to see around. Obviously sometimes when you’re following a guy, or having a guy follow you, their lights are in your mirror the entire lap around the race track. That’s a bit difficult, but it’s not too bad getting the experience of running at night and having my first 24 hour was pretty cool. We’ll see what happens next.”

Did you learn or experience something you weren’t necessarily expecting?

“No, not really. Just overall, everything made sense. You come into a race with a plan and a driver lineup. Plans change on the fly due to strategy, pit stops and caution flags and things during the race. It’s not always as cut and dry as it looks. For as fast as this race went with the limited cautions, a lot was changing on the fly. I think the triple stint was probably a Cup race in my mind and then I was able to get in some more time, too. That was certainly a lot of run time.”

Did you have fun racing the Lexus RC F GT3?

“Yeah, absolutely. I was all about just getting the seat time and having fun and racing with some of these guys.”

Was there something more challenging than you anticipated coming into this experience?

“Getting enough sleep, I guess. So, I tried to lay down and get some rest when I got out around nine o’clock and that just didn’t go very well. I was not going to go to bed at nine. I think I got maybe a 20 or 30 minute nap, maybe. Then I was just ready for the one o’clock, I think. I got out and then got woke back up at 4:30 or 5:00 or something like that. They tried getting a hold of us. We had our cell phones on for text messages and that didn’t work, so they had to come banging on the door to wake me up, then it was ok, hurry up and get a bite to eat quick and get dressed and get out.”

Is getting woken up like that a jolt?

“It’s a jolt, that’s for sure. When I first got in the car, lap times weren’t quite great. I think that was a double or triple stint. My second and third stint times were fine once I got my eyes open. I think I went from running 46.90s to 46.60s, so that was more on pace.”

PARKER CHASE, No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3

How was your race behind the wheel of the Lexus RC F GT3?

“It was a good race. The Lexus RC F GT3 was reliable and consistent throughout the whole 24 hours. Unfortunately, we went down six laps down during the night due to an incident and that’s ultimately what cost us a chance at the race.”

MICHAEL DE QUESADA, No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3

What was your experience like racing the Lexus RC F GT3 in the Rolex 24 at Daytona?

“It was definitely a tough race, but we learned a lot. The moment the sun came down, our pace came to us and we were right there. Unfortunately, we had a small issue that put us back. But, we live to fight another day. P9 is not a bad finish. It gives us some good championship points and I’m just hoping it’s going to help out enough for the real part of the season with Parker (Chase) and Jack (Hawksworth).”

TOWNSEND BELL, No. 12 Lexus RC F GT3

How was your run at the Rolex 24?

“It was rough. First of all, Frankie (Montecalvo) had an incredible start. The best start that I’ve ever seen at Daytona. He passed like eight cars in two corners. It was really impressive. He’s been so strong all weekend. Just a shame we got caught out at night there on cold tires. We were running comfortably in the top five, looking for a solid result. But, this AIM VASSER SULLIVAN team battles back time and time again. Got our Lexus all back together — there was a lot of damage – and we fought on. Good to finish this one here and try to take the positives into our next race at Sebring.”

SHANE VAN GISBERGEN, No. 12 Lexus RC F GT3

What was your experience like driving the Lexus in the Rolex 24 at Daytona?

“It’s been a pleasure driving for AIM VASSER SULLIVAN and being a part of it. We had some good pitting speed and some awesome promise there so it was a shame that it didn’t quite work out. To be running up in the front for a while and we found a lot of speed in the race. The Lexus turned out pretty good. It was a cool feeling and hopefully we can get another shot and keep trying to get better.”

FRANKIE MONTECALVO, No. 12 Lexus RC F GT3

How was your race?

“I had a fun start to the race. It was a nice start I would say. Just opened up for me and I was able to run the outside. This Lexus RC F GT3 turns the tires on a lot faster than I think some of the other cars. It’s just one of our strengths. Just going on through the entire race, I think the guys gave us a great car and a great package to compete. I think we were really, really strong at night which was awesome. Did a couple night stints, which was great running in the top three. Just consistently were there and we just had some bad luck in the end and we’ll take all of this information and this knowledge and roll it into Sebring because that’s another strong endurance race.”

AARON TELITZ, No. 12 Lexus RC F GT3

How did the No. 12 Lexus RC F GT3 perform during the Rolex 24 at Daytona?

“The 12 car was awesome. The Lexus RC F GT3 was hooked up all day and night, especially in the night. We were really running well. Third or fourth place most of the night. Unfortunately, what happened to us there at night – it was just so cold and really tough on cold tires. Everybody did such an awesome job. The drivers were all quick, the team made great pit stops and even the little minor trouble that we had with the car really wasn’t a problem. Close this year, but it’s tough. Second year trying it, and now I know how fortunate we were last year to be standing on the podium. It’s the toughest race I think I’ve ever done.”