

Jack Hawksworth, Aaron Telitz Team Up for AIM VASSER SULLIVAN IMSA GTD Victory at Daytona

July 07, 2020

Image not found or type unknown



DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. (July 6, 2020) – Jack Hawksworth and Aaron Telitz were victorious in the GTD class at Daytona International Speedway in Saturday’s return to racing for the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship. AIM VASSER SULLIVAN (AVS) teammates Townsend Bell and Frankie Montecalvo followed the No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3 to the finish line to earn a runner-up result and give Lexus and AVS their first one-two podium sweep.

The No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3 led 81 laps (of 87) in class to score the first win of the season for AVS in just the second start for the series after the break due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Telitz, who joins the team as a full-time driver after serving as an endurance driver for five races in 2019-20, led the GTD field to the green flag after the pole sitter had a pre-race penalty. He went on to lead the first 26 laps before handing driving duties over to Hawksworth who led 55 laps en route to the victory.

Saturday’s win was the fourth career IMSA victory, third in GTD, for Hawksworth and marked the first IMSA win for Telitz in just his sixth series start.

Montecalvo started the race third in the No. 12 RC F GT3 and moved into second during his stint before Bell took over behind the wheel of the No. 12 Lexus and ran behind AVS teammate Hawksworth for the majority of the two hour and 40-minute sprint race to give AVS a one-two podium sweep.

The victory the third for AVS after scoring two victories in the team’s first season in 2019. The double podium finish marks the second for the AVS RC F GT3 race cars, having also accomplished the feat at Detroit’s Raceway at Belle Isle Park one year ago with a first and third-place result.

Lexus and AIM VASSER SULLIVAN compete next at Sebring International Raceway for a newly scheduled sprint race on Saturday, July 18 at 5:30 p.m. ET. 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

Was your Lexus RC F GT3 as strong as it appeared to be in tonight’s race?

“I’m wearing a mask, but I can tell you I’m smiling. That was an awesome. To be honest, my job was quite easy because Aaron (Telitz) quite frankly put all of the hard work in the beginning with a good qualifying lap, started up front and then managed to get out front and get us a gap. Then, after that once I got in it was just about maintaining and making sure we kept everything under control. The fuel windows were very tight for this race for either a two stop or a three stop, so we had to monitor fuel a little bit. I didn’t see another GTD car all day so I’m not complaining. The Lexus RC F GT3s were absolutely on rails all day. I’m super stoked to have Aaron in the car for the rest of the season. A great job by all of the team at AIM VASSER SULLIVAN and can’t wait for the next one.”

What was your stint like trying to maintain the lead that Aaron had set for the No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3?

“To be honest, Aaron (Telitz) did most of the hard work there at the beginning. The conditions were obviously tricky. It was really important in qualifying to start at the front and Aaron put in a good lap and got us up there. Those conditions – drying track on slicks usually suit our Lexus RC F GT3 quite well. We’re able to generate temperature and Aaron got a really good jump and put a nice gap on the field. It was great to see the number 12 car up there as well to make it a Lexus one-two. Once I got in at the stop, the track was pretty much dry. A couple of puddles but nothing really on the racing lines. At that point for me, we already had a gap and I just tried to maintain position and maintain the lead and bring it home. Fortunately, the Lexus RC F was working

really well, and I'm absolutely delighted for myself, for the team, for Lexus and for everybody involved. A great job to everyone."

AARON TELITZ, No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3

What does it mean to get your first win in the Lexus RC F GT3 as you join the team as a full-time driver?

"I told Jack (Hawksworth) earlier in the week that my job today was going to be to make his job as easy as possible, so I'm happy that he thought it was easy to just cruise around out there. Our Lexus RC F GT3 was incredible today. Obviously, the two Lexus cars finishing one-two, we can't ask for much more than that. Great team racing today for AIM VASSER SULLIVAN."

How does it feel to earn your first career IMSA victory here at Daytona?

"Obviously, it feels great. It doesn't get much better than this. The AIM VASSER SULLIVAN guys gave us a great Lexus. We put it up in the front, managed to start on the pole after one of the cars had a problem and then it was tricky conditions to start the race. I just managed to keep it on the race track, get a huge gap and hand it off to Jack (Hawksworth) and he took it home from there."

How much did your past experience help with the tricky conditions to start today's race?

"I think having a lot of experience on mixed conditions in my open wheel career definitely translated here. Like Jack said, the drying track seems to suit the Lexus pretty well. We're able to generate tire temp pretty easily even on a damp track. Just kind of played into our favor there at the start of the race. I just had to keep it on the track there and we were motoring ahead."

JAMES 'SULLI' SULLIVAN, team owner, AIM VASSER SULLIVAN

What does this one-two podium finish mean for the AIM VASSER SULLIVAN program?

"This is huge for us. I've got to give a shout out to IMSA and John Doonan and the team for putting together an event in really challenging times. That was big for us. What an honor today. We had the Lexus LC 500 lead us to the green. Fantastic there and then a dream day having the two AIM VASSER SULLIVAN RC F's going one and two. This is certainly a we can and we will moment for these cars and for this organization. We couldn't be prouder to be racing them."

TOWNSEND BELL, No. 12 Lexus RC F GT3

How do you feel after your busy weekend in Indy and then finishing second here in tonight's IMSA race?

"I don't know what day it is. I'm pretty sure I'm in Daytona. I've been in four or five states, we've had airplane issues, some drama in the skies, a lot of fun in Indianapolis earlier today. Second place here at Daytona, not bad for an old guy that only was here for a few hours yesterday. So proud of my Lexus team, the AIM VASSER SULLIVAN guys. We just rolled off the truck prepared and ready to go. We had great pit stop and I kept trying to catch Jack (Hawksworth), but every time I would push though, I would heat up my tires and I just couldn't do much so congrats to the guys on the 14 car."

Were you frightened that you weren't going to make it to Daytona in time for the race?

"Frightened is probably accurate because we had an issue in the sky. Any time the pilot pulls out the owner's manual it's generally not a good sign midflight. It was one of those things where we could tell on takeoff that the pressurization was kind of in and out. You could feel your ears plugging up and then releasing. I could hear the

pressurization fan in the back of the plane going. I went up and talked to the pilots and they were like, “We know. We’re working on it.” So, we had to level off at like 12,000 feet while they were working on it and they said they weren’t going to be able to do this and we were going to have to go back to Indy. And, I was like there’s no way after all of the effort put into this that I’m missing the race. So, Jimmy Vasser and I kind of huddled with the pilot and we came up with the plan to fly low. The only problem is when you do that you burn fuel, so we didn’t have enough gas, so then the pilot said we’ll have to drop you guys and you’ll have to jump on another charter. We were like ‘Splash and go. Splash and go.’ So, we had a whole splash and go strategy worked out, but in the end, we were able to manually pressurize the cabin and climb to 27,000 feet, get better efficiency. It’s a long way of telling you we were so determined to be here tonight and I’m so glad we did because it was the first one-two for AIM VASSER SULLIVAN and Lexus. What a great feeling!”

Are you getting more used to no fans in the grandstands or does it still seem odd?

“Today really hit home showing up at Daytona and Indianapolis. Two of the most significant race tracks in the world and two of the largest race tracks in the world with the biggest attendance. When you show up at those two facilities in the same day it really hammers home what a unique time it is for all of us. You miss that energy. It’s kind of bizarre just doing the podium like we just did. The fans are what make this sport wherever you are and so we miss them tremendously and excited to get back to that electric environment of 100,000 people or 300,000 people at the Indy 500. I miss those days and hope they’re back here soon.”

FRANKIE MONTECALVO, No. 12 Lexus RC F GT3

What does it mean to the whole AIM VASSER SULLIVAN team to get a one-two podium finish tonight?

“I think it’s great. It’s coming out of a long break. It felt like a completely new off-season to get back out here on track and just shake the rust off to come out of here one-two, it was incredible. Really, hats off to the AIM VASSER SULLIVAN guys. They made great calls going out on slicks because they were bouncing back between rain tires and it was really smart.”