

LEXUS, VASSER SULLIVAN SHOWCASE VALIANT EFFORTS IN 2025 ROLEX 24

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DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. (Jan. 27, 2025) – The 63rd running of the Rolex 24 at Daytona was up-and-down for both Vasser Sullivan Lexus RC F GT3s, ending with the No. 14 team crossing the finish line in the 11th position in the GTD PRO class, while the No. 12 finished in 15th in the GTD category to open the 2025 IMSA WeatherTech Sportscar Championship.

The No. 14 RC F GT3 began the 24-hour endurance race on Saturday afternoon from the 15th position in GTD PRO with Jupiter, Florida, native **Kyle Kirkwood** behind the wheel. Kirkwood, competing in both Lexus RC F GT3s throughout the 24 hours, ran the first three stints in the No. 14 before handing driving duties over to **Aaron Telitz** just over two hours into the race. Telitz moved the No. 14 up inside the class top 10 during his run, with **Townsend Bell** and Lexus factory driver **Ben Barnicoat** each holding position during their initial runs. However, technical issues would set the team back once night fell.

Telitz experienced contact with a competitor around 12:30 a.m. ET, causing damage to the left front and sending the crew to the garage. Quick, determined work by the Vasser Sullivan mechanics got the No. 14 RC F GT3 back on track in about 30 minutes to rejoin the frantic race taking place. Kirkwood, Telitz, Bell, and Barnicoat kept the No. 14 out of harm's way for the remainder of the 24 hours, coming home to the checkered flag on Sunday in 11th.

After an impressive qualifying result from **Parker Thompson** earlier in the week, the No. 12 RC F GT3 started from the fourth position in the GTD class. Thompson drove inside the top-10 for the first hour of the race before handing the No. 12 over to **Frankie Montecalvo** who completed the next two stints. Lexus factory driver **Jack Hawksworth** climbed in the cockpit at nightfall and began moving his way up the GTD order, to as high as third position. Kirkwood switched over to the No. 12 Lexus to take on the late-night stints for the team, pushing to keep them towards the front of the class field.

Like the sister RC F GT3 in GTD PRO, the No. 12 team also encountered mechanical issues that put them on pit road for an extended amount of time, seeing the team fall a few laps down. Once back on track, the four drivers of the No. 12 soldiered on in hopes of getting laps back and being in contention for a solid finishing position once Sunday afternoon rolled around. Unfortunately, with around four-and-a-half hours remaining in the race, the No. 12 experienced an engine issue and retired from the race, finishing 15th.

The Vasser Sullivan Lexus RC F GT3s return to action at Sebring International Raceway for the 12 Hours of Sebring on Saturday, March 15, where they seek to repeat as winners after their the GTD PRO class triumph with Hawksworth, Barnicoat and Kirkwood a season ago. Live flag-to-flag coverage of the 12-hour endurance race will be found on Peacock for authenticated subscribers. To keep up with all the racing action, follow Lexus Racing on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [TikTok](#) by using #LexusPerformance.

Vasser Sullivan Driver Quotes

BEN BARNICOAT, No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3

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

“Obviously, it was a grueling Daytona 24 hours. It definitely threw its challenges at us, but I’m still very proud of this Vasser Sullivan and Lexus Racing team for just having that never die attitude and always digging deep and trying to make the most of all situations that were presented to us. It was unfortunate that Aaron (Telitz) had his incident overnight, but we’ve still got to take away all the positives we can. I feel like the team did a great job. We’ve had a few new people join in the offseason and they’ve all adapted and bonded with the rest of the group quickly. It’s been great to get the first race under my belt with Aaron and get our relationship going, and obviously it was great to have Kyle (Kirkwood) join us. I also want to say a big thank you to Townsend (Bell), jumping in and doing such a fantastic job. It’s been three years since he raced with us, but you wouldn’t have thought he’s been out of the car for 10 minutes given the job that he’s done. There were a few challenges that were presented to us, and we dealt with them the best we could. I feel like we maximized everything we had here

this weekend to start the season. Our full focus now is on Sebring and looking forward to rebounding there like we did last year.”

AARON TELITZ, No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3

Can you summarize the No. 14 team’s Rolex 24 at Daytona race?

“We finished — that was the top priority. We did finish, albeit laps down. We knew it was going to be a tough race right from the get-go and we knew we had to keep it clean and get to the end. Even knowing that, we still got caught up in on-track trouble, which wasn’t great. The Vasser Sullivan Lexus crew did a great job getting our No. 14 RC F GT3 back together and eventually to the finish line at the end.”

TOWNSEND BELL, No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3

How did it feel to be back with Lexus Racing and Vasser Sullivan these last two weekends?

“It was just incredible for me personally to get a chance to race again. Testing is one thing, and I had very limited time in the car (during the Roar) with my role to step in where needed, but now, I got six, seven hours in the seat (in the race) and I feel pretty dialed in. I was just thrilled to be back with Lexus and Vasser Sullivan. For me, the chance to turn lap-after-lap and mix it up on restarts with some of the biggest names in racing around the world is something I’m really going to treasure. It was cool to feel like I could still do this even after a long layoff. An absolute pleasure and I miss it already.”

KYLE KIRKWOOD No. 12 & No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3

What was your experience like racing in both Lexus RC F GT3s this weekend?

“It was an enjoyable two weeks from my standpoint. It’s been fun driving with six other guys across two cars and working with all the engineers and crew members at Vasser Sullivan and Lexus. It’s made the whole event very exciting. The race didn’t go quite as planned. A lot of unfortunate events occurred that were ultimately out of our hands. Nonetheless it was still a lot of fun with this group, and we gave it our all. Execution-wise we nailed pit stops, I think the drivers did a really good job – driver changes were really solid. We just got caught up in some unfortunate situations, but at the same time, we’re finding the positives from this race to take with us as we go forward.”

JACK HAWKSWORTH, No. 12 Lexus RC F GT3

How was your Rolex 24?

“Obviously, a very disappointing end to the week. The No. 12 Vasser Sullivan Lexus crew worked really hard throughout the Roar weekend and all the way through the last week. No matter what, they all kept trooping on. We got to the race, and we didn’t have the best pace, but we had a decent race going. We were running as high as in the top five at some points, but then had some gremlins arise. The team never stopped fighting and did the best they could for us, but we’ll look at what went wrong and come back strong for Sebring.”

PARKER THOMPSON, No. 12 Lexus RC F GT3

Can you take us through your thoughts after this Rolex 24?

“This was a very tough endurance race. Not exactly sure why, but we kept facing adversity. And then sometime in the morning, we experienced the engine issue that ended our day. With that, it is time to focus forward and I can’t wait to get to Sebring for the next one.”

FRANKIE MONTECALVO, No. 12 Lexus RC F GT3

Can you describe the race today for the No. 12 team?

“It’s a tough one not to finish. Not sure we had a race-winning car today, but the No. 12 Vasser Sullivan Lexus team put all their effort into it. We never gave up. We were on for a top-10 finish which would’ve been a good points race for our championship run as that’s what we’re here for. All the drivers in our No. 12 did a great job. The car was clean. No one really stepped a foot off throughout the race. It’s a hard one to swallow, but we always get better from it with the Lexus and Vasser Sullivan family. We’ll come to Sebring ready to go.”