

Lexus RC F GT3s To Compete at Season-Finale Petit Le Mans

3GT Racing Drivers Ready for 10-Hour Endurance Event at Road America

BRASELTON, Ga. (October 5, 2017) – Lexus and 3GT Racing will close out their first season racing the Lexus RC F GT3 in the GTD class of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship at Road Atlanta in the 10-hour Motul Petit Le Mans on Saturday.

The Lexus RC F GT3 will make its Road Atlanta race debut this weekend in the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship season-finale, however 3GT Racing drivers have quite a bit of experience at the 12-turn, 2.54-mile road course located on the outskirts of Atlanta. Scott Pruett earned podium finishes in his last three starts at Road Atlanta, including a win from the pole in 2013, a third-place finish in 2014 and a runner-up result in 2015 – all while driving a Prototype. Robert Alon was victorious most recently at the Atlanta road course, winning from the pole position in the Prototype Challenge class last year. Jack Hawksworth competed in the Petit Le Mans at Road Atlanta in 2014 and 2015, earning a pole position in the Prototype Challenge class in 2014. Sage Karam finished runner-up in the Star Mazda Series race in 2012, where he ran the fastest lap of the race around the 2.54-mile circuit.

Along with the four full-time drivers, 3GT Racing welcomes back two familiar faces to the team's lineup for the season-finale event with endurance racers Austin Cindric and Ian James. Nineteen-year-old Cindric will join Hawksworth and Pruett in the No. 15 Lexus while James will return to the No. 14 RC F GT3 sharing driving duties with Alon and Karam for the first time since competing with the team at Sebring International Raceway in March. Cindric, who also competes full-time in the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series, won his first career NASCAR national series race recently at Canadian Tire Motorsports Park and is currently competing in the series' Playoffs. James has earned six wins and 10 podiums in Pirelli World Challenge competition this year.

There have been quite a few highlights throughout the inaugural season and 3GT Racing drivers will look to step on the podium for the first time this weekend. The No. 14 Lexus has recorded seven top-10 finishes in 11 races this year, including a season-best fifth-place result in Canada, while the No. 15 has registered four top-10 results, including a fifth-place finish at Watkins Glen.

Lexus RC F GT3s have led laps in five races this season, including the No. 15 Lexus pacing the field for 26 laps in its debut at the Rolex 24 at Daytona. Karam earned the first pole position for the new program in the No. 14 Lexus with a track record time at Canadian Tire Motorsports Park in early July and went on to lead a season-high 35 laps in the race at Canada, while Hawksworth led 29 laps in the No. 15 RC F GT3 around Lime Rock Park later that month.

Hawksworth also ran the quickest lap in the GTD class behind the wheel of the Lexus RC F GT3 in two races this season, including the six-hour endurance race at Watkins Glen and at Road America.

The 10-hour IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship endurance race at Road Atlanta will be broadcast live Saturday, October 7 beginning on Fox Sports 1 at 10:30 a.m. ET. The race will also be broadcast throughout the way on Fox Sports 2 from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and again from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m. ET.

Lexus Racing Quotes

JACK HAWKSWORTH, No. 15 Lexus RC F GT3

Do you enjoy racing at Road Atlanta and do you think it will suit the Lexus RC F GT3?

"I love Road Atlanta. It's a great track. I always says it's got really good flow. The track has really good rhythm and I don't think there's any circuit like Road Atlanta. The race itself is a 10 hour race. A really nice distance and I think it's a good distance for three guys. I've always run well there in the past. I had the lap record there in LMPC. I think our Lexus is going to work well around there. I think when we tested there, the guys were all pretty happy with our RC F GT3, and it is one of the few tracks that we've actually tested at, whereas a lot of the tracks we've turned up to, we haven't been there

before, so I think that will be good for us. I think we should be able to make the 10 hours pretty comfortably without an issue. I think that's our best chance this year and I've said that before but I genuinely think it's a really good opportunity for us. If I could win any of the races, apart from Daytona, it would be Petit. I love that race. You can also pass at that track so that also makes the race great."

SCOTT PRUETT, No. 15 Lexus RC F GT3

What has it been like to be a part of the development of the Lexus RC F GT3 this season and what is your outlook for the season-finale this weekend?

"It's been quite exciting being involved in the Lexus RC F GT3 program. We've made huge gains all season long and we're anxious and excited to get to Road Atlanta, which was one of our very first tests. For me personally, I'm anxious to see how much we've gained by going back to a track that was one of our very first tests. It is a little bit bigger, a more clean track, and a higher speed track with a surface more like Watkins Glen, Mosport and Elkhart Lake, so we're cautiously optimistic that we'll have a solid weekend. I'd love to wrap up with a podium this weekend. At times it seems like it's been a long season, but right now it seems like it's ending sooner than I'd like it to. However, I'm excited to get to Road Atlanta and hopeful we'll have a great race to end the season."

AUSTIN CINDRIC, No. 15 Lexus RC F GT3

Are you excited to get back in the No. 15 Lexus for the season-finale at Road Atlanta?

"I'm very excited because I haven't been in the RC F GT3 since July. I've had a lot of time to think and prepare for the race. It's one of my favorite tracks and the car has shown a lot of speed at tracks similar to this, so I think we know what to expect. I think without weather, it's really all about us executing. The speed will be there, so it will be a matter of executing pit stops, executing on the race track and staying ahead of traffic. We can't make mistakes."

SAGE KARAM, No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3

What is your outlook for the final endurance race of the year this weekend at Road Atlanta?

"I'm excited to get back to an endurance race. The sprint races have been fun and all, but to get back to endurance races – it adds another element, more chance for opportunity, but also more chance for something to go wrong. Endurance races are definitely very challenging, but for the most part I enjoy them because I think our Lexus can go the distance for sure, and if we keep our nose clean, we should be competitive and there at the end. I love racing at Road Atlanta and it's one of my favorite tracks. We've tested there and we ran well there in testing, so I know a lot of us are excited to get back there. It's one of those historical tracks, so you love going to tracks like that. It's just one of those tracks that I've always clicked well at. I've had good results there whenever I've raced there."

ROBERT ALON, No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3

What makes endurance races different than sprint races and how do you prepare for a 10-hour event?

"It's a different kind of race and it's a completely different mental approach coming into the race. You have to be more patient on the race track and more calm throughout the race and know that the result is going to come. You can't push every lap as hard as you can like you do in a sprint races throughout the season. You really have to try to be consistent over long stints instead of pushing all-out all the time. I train physically harder and come in with a different mental approach for endurance races."

IAN JAMES, No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3

Are you looking forward to being back in the No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3 at the Petit Le Mans this weekend?

"I'm very excited to be back with the team. Since I last raced with 3GT Racing, I've been racing in different series and had a successful season with six wins. I'm looking forward to capping the year off in style with 3GT Racing at the Petit Le Mans. Road Atlanta is one of my favorite tracks in the country. Petit is especially exciting because it is an endurance race into the night on what can be a very tricky track. Road Atlanta is different than a lot of tracks because of the elevation change. It makes it challenging, especially in multi-class racing. Petit is always a race to the three-quarter mark to stay out of trouble and then it becomes a fight to the finish. The weather could include a little bit of rain and may mix things up a little bit. The Lexus has been strong and there's no reason why it should be any different in Atlanta."

MARK EGGER, motorsports manager, Lexus Division

What is the outlook for the final race of the year in Lexus' debut season with the RC F GT3?

"The Lexus RC F GT3 and 3GT Racing are off to Road Atlanta for our last race of the season. The team has taken everything they have learned from this year and put the whole package together to come out with what we think will be a strong setup for the Lexus RC F GT3. 3GT Racing tested at Road Atlanta earlier in the year so they have some data, which is good to fall back on and gives us a better starting point. The Lexus RC F GT3 is very mechanically sound and the reliability has been fantastic. There have been some ups and some downs this year, but we're very happy with the development of our program. We've had measured expectations this season and it allows us to build a good foundation for next year. We just need to put all of the pieces together and we'll get on that podium step."