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Mercedes-AMG Motorsport Customer Racing Teams Competing in Saturday's IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship Petit Le Mans at Road Atlanta

Press Information

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Mercedes-AMG Motorsport Customer Racing Teams in Championship Battles at IMSA Season-Ending Petit Le Mans

ATLANTA. Leading one championship and ranked no lower than second in five other GT Daytona (GTD) class title battles, Mercedes-AMG and Mercedes-AMG Motorsport Customer Racing teams will bring their first year of competition in the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship to a close this weekend in the season-ending 20th Anniversary Motul Petit Le Mans at Road Atlanta, October 5 – 7. The 12th and final round of the 2017 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship season, the 10-hour Motul Petit Le Mans is scheduled to start at 11:10 a.m. EDT this Saturday, October 7. Competing Mercedes-AMG customer teams at the Petit Le Mans finale are the No. 33 Mercedes-AMG Team Riley Mercedes-AMG GT3 of co-drivers Ben Keating, Jeroen Bleekemolen and Mario Farnbacher, and the No. 75 SunEnergy1 Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3 that will be co-driven by Kenny Habul, Tristan Vautier and Dion von Moltke.

Petit Le Mans will decide not only the season-long IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship manufacturer, driver and team championships, but also the four-race Tequila Patrón North American Endurance Cup (NAEC) titles. A championship within a championship for the year's quartet of endurance races, the Tequila Patrón NAEC also awards manufacturer, driver and team championships in all IMSA classes.

Mercedes-AMG comes to Road Atlanta with a three-point lead in the NAEC GTD manufacturer championship, 33 – 30, on the strength of finishes no lower than fourth in the first three rounds at the Rolex 24 At Daytona, 12 Hours of Sebring and the Sahlen's Six Hours of the Glen. The strong run began with a third-place finish by Keating, Bleekemolen and Farnbacher in the No. 33 at Daytona and was promptly

followed up with a breakout victory by the team one race later at Sebring – the first for Mercedes-AMG in IMSA competition.

Keating, Bleekemolen, Farnbacher and the No. 33 Mercedes-AMG GT3 squad are also contenders in the NAEC GTD driver and team championships, just one point behind the leaders, 30 – 29.

In the full-season IMSA WeatherTech Championship GTD title battles, Mercedes-AMG is second in the manufacturer championship standings, nine points out of first place, 327 – 318. The pressure will be kept on championship leaders Ferrari from the drop of the green flag at the 10-hour Petit Le Mans race.

The No. 33 Mercedes-AMG GT3 team and Bleekemolen currently rank second in the final two GTD point races – the full-season WeatherTech SportsCar Championship team and driver championships – that will be decided at Petit Le Mans. Both the No. 33 and Bleekemolen trail the championship leading Ferrari team and drivers by 26 points, 318 – 292, but will do everything they can to close the gap and defend their second-place standing from the moment the green flag drops at Petit Le Mans.

SunEnergy1 Racing has also contributed to the on-track success of the Mercedes-AMG GT3 in 2017. Vautier won the pole at Sebring – the first top qualifying effort for the Mercedes-AMG GT3 in IMSA competition – and joined Habul co-driver Boris Said for a third-place race finish.

The Mercedes-Benz presence at the 20th Anniversary Motul Petit Le Mans will extend beyond the Mercedes-AMG GT3 competitors racing at Road Atlanta this weekend. Mercedes-Benz USA, headquartered just north of downtown Atlanta, has partnered with Road Atlanta as the new Official Pace Car and Safety Car of this weekend's race. A Mercedes AMG GT R painted in "Green Hell Magno" will be starting and pacing the field of IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship competitors throughout the 10-hour season finale.

The Road Atlanta race weekend begins with a pair of one hour daytime practice sessions on Thursday, October 5 at 11:10 a.m. and 3:15 p.m. and concludes with the only Petit Le Mans night practice that evening from 7:30 – 9 p.m. EDT.

The schedule on Friday, October 6 starts with a final one-hour practice at 11:40 a.m. before GTD qualifying later that afternoon at 4:20 p.m. EDT.

Race-day on Saturday, October 7 starts with a 20-minute warmup at 8:30 a.m. with the featured 10-hour Motul Petit Le Mans scheduled to go green at 11:10 a.m. EDT.

Beginning with an opening-hour of live coverage on FOX Sports 1 (FS1) at 10 a.m. EDT on Saturday, October 7, the majority of the 10-hour Motul Petit Le Mans will be telecast throughout the day on both FS1 and sister network FOX Sports 2 (FS2). Air times on FS2 are from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. EDT and again from 5 p.m. through the race finish at 9:30 p.m. EDT.

Ben Keating, Driver – No. 33 Mercedes-AMG Team Riley Motorsports

Mercedes-AMG GT3: “The main benefit of Petit Le Mans is that it is a 10-hour race. We have a great driver lineup, we have the best team in the pits, and I expect us to be in the mix even though the BoP (Balance of Performance) formula has caused the Mercedes-AMG GT3 to be pretty good everywhere, but at its best nowhere. The car is amazing, even with the amount of weight we are carrying being so much more than any other car in the field, and that is evidence of how amazing the Mercedes-AMG GT3 is. For sure, the Tequila Patrón North American Endurance Championship is what we are racing for at Petit. We have a shot at winning this award as drivers, a team and as a manufacturer. This will require a different strategy than just racing for a win. This is very exciting for me, but also means there is a lot of pressure to perform well at all stages of the race. We will need a perfectly clean race with no mistakes.”

Mario Farnbacher, Driver – No. 33 Mercedes-AMG Team Riley Motorsports

Mercedes-AMG GT3: “I have always been an optimistic person in the past and I am still. So, I am optimistic for the race, even if we don't have the best BoP for our car, I always know in racing anything can happen. At the long races it's more about consistency and strategy than always going 110%. Like always, we need to stay out of trouble and drive a good pace with smart decisions. Petit Le Mans has always been a highlight race, with many strong worldwide drivers. To win that race is an honor and a great way to end the season, hopefully this year with the Tequila Patrón North American Endurance Championship title in our pocket!”

Tristan Vautier – No. 75 SunEnergy1 Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3:

“Road Atlanta should fit the Mercedes-AMG GT3 pretty well. It's smooth with lots of high and medium-speed corners. There is the long back straight where for sure we will be at a handicap but I'm confident we can make-up the lap time in the corners. All endurance races nowadays are more like short sprints put together! There isn't much management, you are flat out 100% of the time. As a team you need speed and good execution. In 10 hours you have more time to recover from small mistakes than in the

regular races, but as we have seen this year, there are not necessarily going to be a lot of full-course yellows, if any, so we need to be perfect.”

Dion von Moltke – No. 75 SunEnergy1 Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3: “The SunEnergy1 Racing team has done a great job all year through a lot of adversity. We are all determined to end the season on a positive note, and the guys have all been working flat out. Road Atlanta is a track that has a little bit of everything, the racing between every car always seems to be extremely close, so I have no doubt the SunEnergy1 Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3 will be a strong car there. We have done well in the medium to high speed corners and on the brakes all year, so I believe our strongest areas at Road Atlanta will be Turn 1, down into the Esses, and then braking down into Turn 10a at the end of the back straight.”

Contacts:

Jochen Übler Tel.: +49 (0) 7144 302-92 470 jochen.uebler@daimler.com

Robert Moran Tel.: +1 770-705-2270 robert.moran@mbusa.com

Further information from Mercedes-Benz, Mercedes-AMG and Mercedes-Benz USA is available on the Internet: www.media.daimler.com, www.mercedes-benz.com and www.mbusa.com.

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