

Magnus Wins GT at 50th Rolex 24

Grand Am >> 2012 Rolex 24 Hours at Daytona

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Daytona, FL – January 29, 2012 – Magnus Racing’s #44 Porsche GT3 Cup seized the 50th Anniversary Rolex 24 stage by capturing their first Grand Am class victory. The #59 Brumos Porsche led most of the race; however, a miscalculated late pit stop gave Magnus an opportunity. With the smooth, error free driving of Andy Lally and two hours remaining, Magnus Racing seized on it and passed the pitting #59 to take the lead and ultimately the glory.

“This crew worked so hard over the last few years and has come so close to reach the top, but somehow missed each time. To win for the first time at such an occasion is something special,” lamented John Potter, team owner and driver.

At 30 years of age, John Potter started Magnus Racing in 2010 and quickly established his team as a force in Porsche racing. Haywood Hurley, making his 40th Rolex 24 start, had hoped to take home the 2012 GT Class

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The DP cars in qualifying grid positions during the 50th Anniversary Rolex 24's first lap.



Rolex watch, but the youthful Magnus team capitalized on sweeping off-season class rule changes to better last year's GT championship #59 team. Brumos settled for a heart-wrenching third place.

Ferrari too lusted after a 50th Anniversary victory by filling the GT grid with five prancing stallions. Despite racing with determination, the cars from Maranello finished the day with disappointment. One of the two Risi Competizione Ferrari entries blew an engine while the other finished fifth in class. The remaining Ferrari stable crossed the finish line in eighth, thirteenth, and twenty-second. On this day, Porsche would take Rolex 24 glory as they took the top three podium spots in GT.

In the DP class, top podium honor was also grasped by a first-time winner. The #60 Michael Shank Racing Ford-Riley beat Ganassi and Gainsco for the 50th Anniversary Rolex 24 win. With a 5.198 seconds margin of victory, Michael Shank

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Racing has triggered a reorganization of the Grand Am power structure. As in GT, the 2012 rule changes made the difference giving Michael Shank the advantage.

"I feel like we deserve it to be honest," declared Michael Shank. "I think we've worked hard. I don't make any excuses. We paid our dues and I hope it can take us to new places in the coming years."

The Ford-Riley teams learned the new rules with stunning success as they took the top three podium spots. Pre-race hoopla had fans believing a Corvette DP victory was a forgone conclusion. However, the four Corvette DP team's best result was fifth some 3 laps behind the winning Ford-Riley.

The Third Hour

Entering the evening, most of the hour was besieged with caution flags. On lap 65, the #70 Audi R8 came to a stop and a clutch problem prevented it from making it to the pits. The yellow flag condensed the field and upon the green flag the #2 Ford-Riley passed the #1 Chip Ganassi Racing for the lead on lap 66. Ganassi's beleaguered fortunes continued as the #90 Spirit of Daytona Corvette DP stole second two laps later. However, a yellow flag again compressed the field as the #4



The Porsche-Ferrari rivalry was in full bloom during the 50th Anniversary Rolex 24. Above: Race fans donned Porsche and Ferrari flags throughout the event's skyline. Below: Illustrating the rivalry, a Porsche and Ferrari duel going into an apex.

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Porsche GT3 was struck from behind and exited the track on lap 72. As expected, many teams decided to pit.

On lap 77, competition was again underway. Excitement ensued as on lap 80 the # 87 Viper stalled on pit road and the #59 Brumos Porsche made an evasive action to avoid being struck. With memories of recent mechanical problems, the #10 Suntrust Corvette DP was forced to retire due to extenuating engine problems.

“Obviously, we have had an engine issue,” explained Suntrust team manager Wayne Taylor. “There was a problem with the valve train and it’s bad enough to pull us out of the race.”

On lap 84, the #60 Michael Shank Ford-Riley executed a darling pass on the #99 Gainsco Corvette DP going into the Tri-Oval to take the overall lead. The #94 BMW M3 flew off the track and made its way to the pits. In the garage the team replaced upper left-frame damage and an electrical issue during an 8-min pit stop.

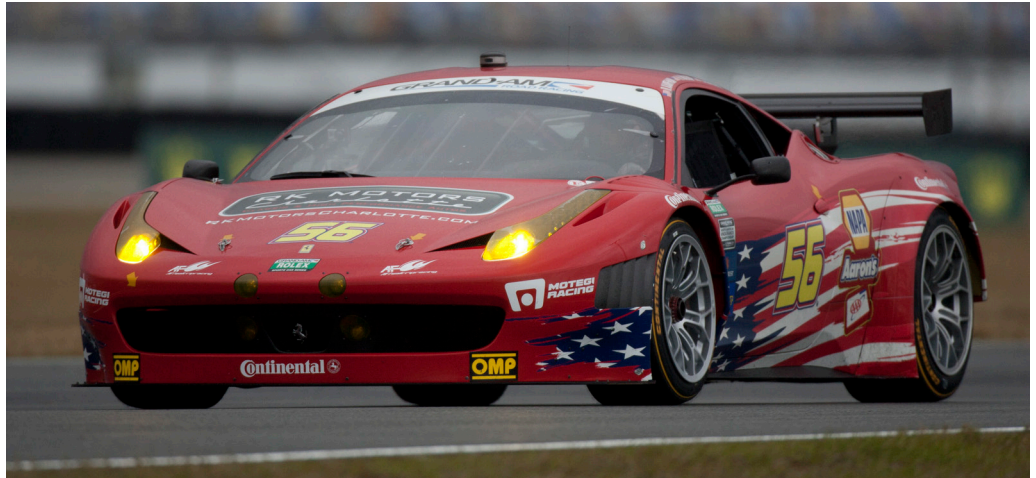
At the end of three hours, the #9 Action Express Corvette DP took the lead by passing the #60 Ford-Riley. In the GT class, the #88 Autohaus Camaro GT.R remained in the lead with five Porsche GT3s and a Ferrari 458 making gains.

The Sixth Hour

Pit stops, lead changes and a crash were the extent of the sixth hour’s highlights. On lap 156, the #59 Brumos Porsche gave up the GT class lead by making a pit stop, thus giving the GT lead to #44 Magnus Porsche followed by the #66 TRG Porsche and the #23 Alex Job Porsche. On lap 162, the top three DP cars made pit stops giving the overall lead to Ganassi’s #2 BMW-Riley.

However, life in DP was not easy as the next two laps saw lead changes. At the end of lap 164, the #99 Gainsco Corvette DP led overall. Also on lap 164, the #57 Camaro GT.R captured the GT lead after the #23 Alex Job Porsche pit. Hurley Haywood driving the #59 Brumos Porsche spun on lap 167, but miraculously was able to recover without losing eighth place. On lap 178, the #62 Ferrari 458 of Risi Competizione crashed and had to retire.

After six hours of racing, it was anyone’s event. In GT, the #57 Stevenson Camaro GT.R led followed by the #44 Magnus GT3 and the #23 WeatherTech GT3.





The Twelfth Hour

At the 12-hour mark, nine different leaders had paced the field with the defending race and series champion # 01 Chip Ganassi BMW-Riley and its sister #02 BMW-Riley dominating large portions. However, on lap 339, the #02 BMW-Riley was passed by the #60 Michael Shank Ford-Riley to take third position. Shortly thereafter on lap 342, the #02 Ganassi BMW-Riley went to the garage to repair a broken shifter. The repair took only five minutes but the car returned to take ninth place. A few laps later, #02 made another extended stop shortly before 3 a.m. opening things up for the # 8 Starworks Ford-Riley and the #60 Liveon.com Ford-Riley. Both #8 and #60 swapped lead changes twice within 3 laps. Finally, on lap 351, the #8 Ford-Riley retook the lead and in doing so completed the fastest lap of the race at 1:41.702 at 126.015 mph.

At the end of 12 hours, the #59 Brumos Porsche continued to lead GT by a full minute over the #23 Alex Job Porsche and the #44 Magnus Porsche.

The Eighteenth Hour

With only six hours to go, it didn't appear any of the leading GT teams were going to outrun the others, so victory would come down to endurance.

"We don't have any questions about the endurance of the Porsche GT3 Cup car, so we have to focus on our pit stop strategy and fuel planning," said TRG team owner Kevin Buckler, whose #67 Porsche won the Rolex 24 last year, and currently ran second after 18 hours.

"We really have it easy compared to our crew," said Hurley Haywood, team manager and team driver of the #59 Brumos Porsche, "And their mistake-free performance is likely to make the difference today between first place and a lower finish," he said. After 18 hours of hard-nosed racing Brumos led GT. Haywood also detailed that the new smaller GT fuel tank rule meant more frequent pit stops thus increasing the changes of costly mistakes.

The #44 Magnus Porsche was third, while the WeatherTech Porsche was fifth, and the #66 TRG Porsche was eighth.

The Final

After 24 hours of racing, the #44 Magnus Porsche won the GT class in the hands of Andy Lally, Richard Lietz, Rene Rast,





Hurley Haywood made his 40th Rolex 24 start driving #59 Brumos Racing



and John Potter. The victory made it the fourth GT class win for Lally.

"I absolutely knew we had the potential win," Lally explained. "The people that were assembled by John Potter to start Magnus Racing, just two years ago, were top-notch guys. He took direction from some really well-seasoned vets and he steered the ship in the right direction. He basically put together a really solid, strong effort. It was absolutely epic to come home on the top step, especially at the 50th."

Porsches finished second and third, with the #67 TRG entry of Steven Bertheau, Marc Goossens, Wolf Henzler, Spencer Pumpelly, and Jeroen Bleekemolen crossing the finish line one lap ahead of the Brumos GT3 driven by Mark Lieb, Leh Keen, Andrew Davis, and Hurley Haywood.

Fourth in GT went to the Stevenson Motorsports Camaro GT.R that finished on the same lap as the Brumos 911. The best of the new Ferrari 458s, the No. 63 Risi Competizione entry, rounded out the top-five. The best Mazda – the #70 SpeedSource entry – finished one spot be-

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TRG owner Kevin Buckler strategizing with his pit crew manager
Below: Two TRG Porsche GT3 Cup cars racing bumper-to-bumper



hind the Ferrari. Both Turner Motorsport BMW M3s had problems, finishing 16th and 43rd, respectively, in GT. The new Audi R8 Grand-Ams could manage no better than 31st and 32nd in class, though Lally said he foresees the Audis posing a challenge later in the year.

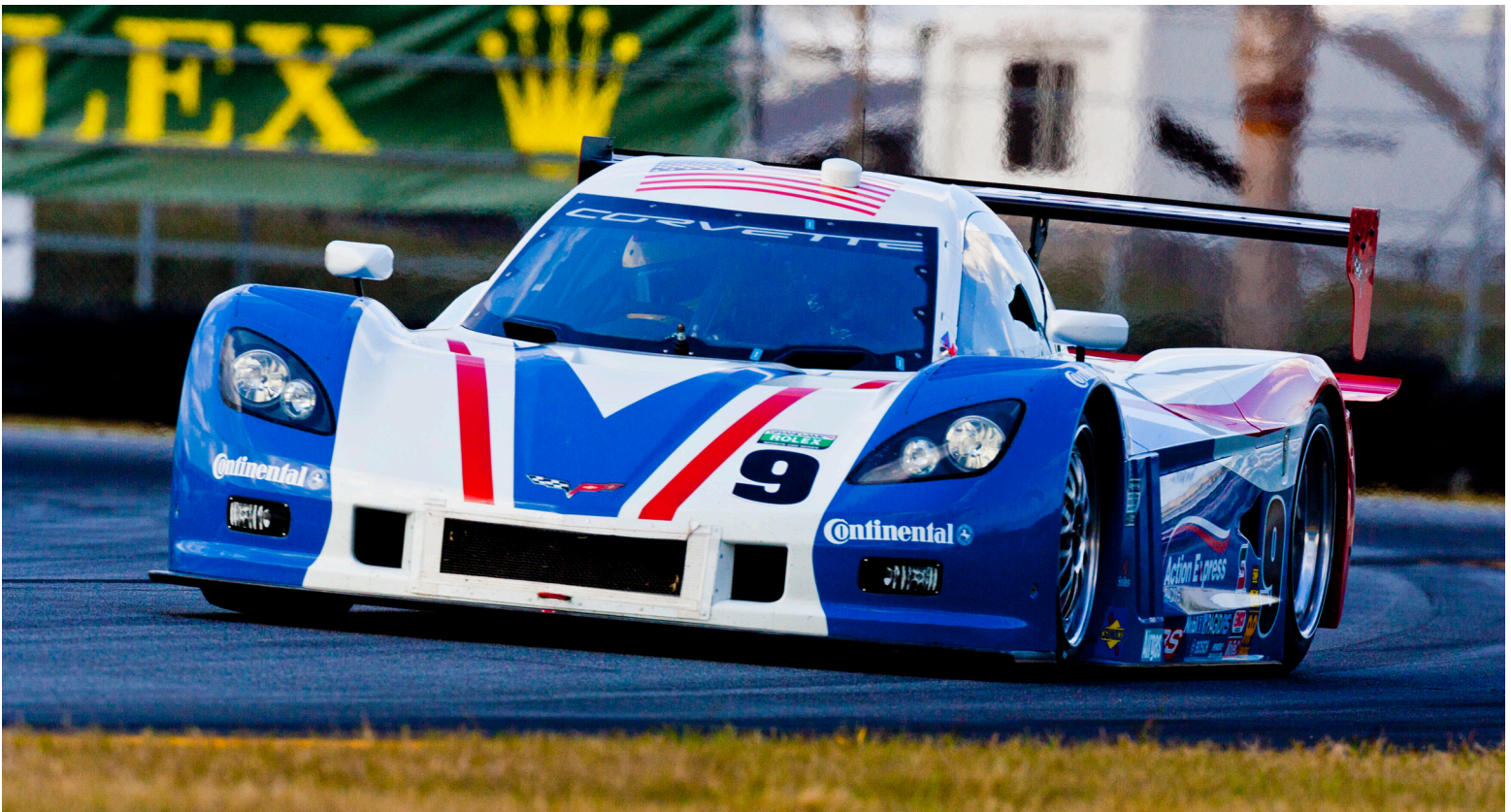
The Ford-powered DPs dominated leading 544 of 761 laps and sweeping the top-three spots in the 50th running of the event. The Michael Shank Racing Ford-Riley walked away with the win as AJ Allmendinger, Justin Wilson, Oswaldo Negri, Jr., and John Pew combined to lead 295 laps en route to finishing ahead of the pole sitting Starworks Motorsports Ford-Riley shared by Allan McNish, Lucas Luhr, Ryan Dalziel, Alex Popow, and Enzo Potolicchio.

Allmendinger and McNish bounced off of each other several times while racing for the lead with about two and a half hours to go in the race. But once Allmendinger took the lead, neither McNish nor Dalziel could catch him.

"It's some of the best racing I've ever done in my life," said Allmendinger, "Right now it's the biggest win I've ever had. I feel very fortunate." **AA**



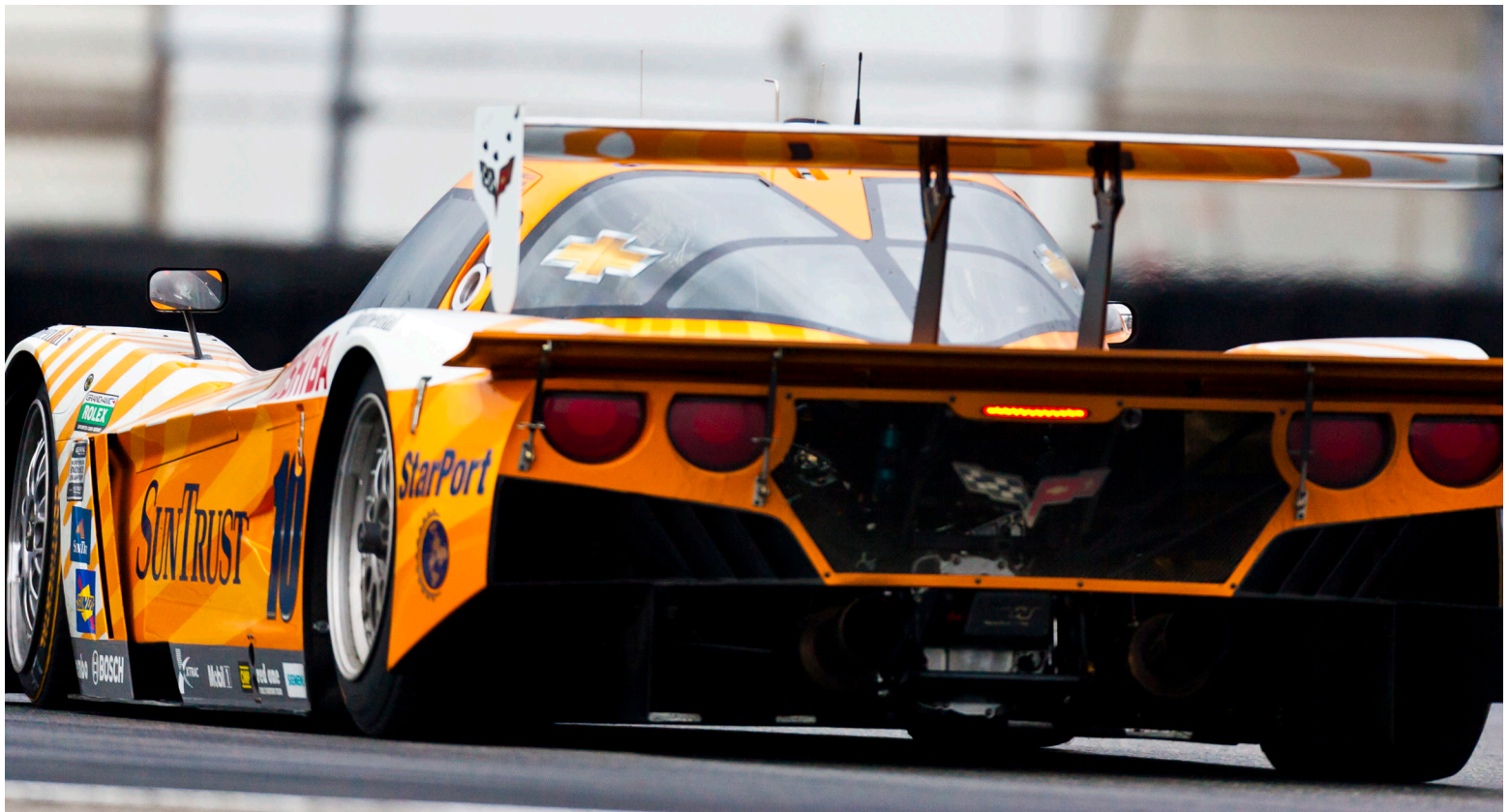
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Magnus Racing rolls out their #44 Porsche GT3 Cup to the grid to begin the 50th Rolex 24...



...And Magnus Racing celebrating a GT Class victory to conclude the 50th Rolex 24.

