

Bubba Burger Sports Car Grand Prix at Long Beach - Grand Prix of Long Beach - April 7-8, 2017

April 05, 2017

Image not found or type unknown



Sebring Summary ... Both Lexus RC F GT3s crossed the finish line at the Twelve Hours of Sebring in Lexus' second appearance in the WeatherTech SportsCar Championship GTD class in March. The 3GT Racing No. 15 Lexus RC F GT3 finished 13th in the GTD class (28th overall) with drivers Robert Alon, Austin Cindric and Jack Hawksworth behind the wheel. Hawksworth turned the second quickest lap overall in the GTD class (2:01.674) on the 3.74-mile, 17-turn road course. The 3GT Racing No. 14 Lexus entry finished 18th in class (35th overall) with drivers Ian James, Sage Karam and Scott Pruett racing at the historic Florida road course.

Lexus Home Race ... The Lexus RC F GT3 will make its first appearance on the street course in Long Beach on Saturday in the WeatherTech SportsCar Championship race, however Lexus is no stranger to the 11-turn circuit. In 2006, Scott Pruett and his then teammate Luis Diaz were victorious in the Grand-Am Rolex SportsCar Series race at Long Beach after leading 39 laps (of 52) in a Lexus-powered prototype. Lexus is the luxury division of Toyota, who has been the sponsor of the Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach for the past 43 years, marking the longest-running sponsorship of its kind by any brand in America. Lexus headquarters is also located in nearby Torrance, California, just 15 miles from the Long Beach street course. 3GT Racing drivers Robert Alon, Jack Hawksworth, Sage Karam and Scott Pruett recently visited Lexus and Toyota headquarters as part of the manufacturers' motorsports day where the drivers met team members and participated in an autograph session.

Long Beach Legend ... Scott Pruett has experienced quite a bit of success on the streets of Long Beach. During his storied racing career, Pruett has accounted for multiple wins and podiums on the street circuit in sports cars, IndyCar, celebrity races and go-karts. The 2012 Long Beach Motorsports Walk of Fame recipient has two IMSA wins at Long Beach, including his win in a Lexus-powered entry in 2006 as well as in 2014 when he and teammate Memo Rojas won from the pole after leading all but one lap in the event. The Roseville, California native's best open-wheel finish in the Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach was second-place in 1995. Pruett also participated in the Toyota ProCelebrity race twice at Long Beach, winning the event in 2001 and he finished second in the 1984 celebrity event.

Robert Races Near Home ... This weekend's event in Long Beach is also a home race for 3GT Racing driver Robert Alon, who resides in nearby Santa Monica, California. Alon will make his second start on the streets of Long Beach after he finished sixth in the PC class in 2016. The 26-year-old qualified third in the No. 15 Lexus in the GTD class at Sebring last month, marking the best qualifying effort for 3GT Racing and the new Lexus program. Alon previously won four poles in IMSA's PC class in 2016 and finished second in the class point standings before moving up to GTD with 3GT this season.

Lexus High Performance Campaign ... This week Lexus launched a new High Performance 'Leave a Mark' advertising campaign during the month of April featuring its high performance models (RC F, GS F, LC 500 and LFA) along with the RC F GT3 race car that is competing in the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship's GTD class. The commercial, which began airing on April 3, will be shown during the FOX broadcast of Saturday's IMSA race at Long Beach and can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/zM43eCkUv9U>.

Winning Off the Track ... Many technologies from Lexus' racing initiatives have transferred to their production cars, including carbon fiber roofs, suspension design and vehicle handling characteristics. For Lexus in 2016, total F vehicle sales (GS F, RC F and formerly IS F) are 2,415. In addition to these models, many other Lexus vehicles offer F SPORT versions with enhanced bold styling and handling agility that are inspired by Lexus' racing efforts, and F SPORT sales in 2016 totaled 60,269.

Lexus Racing Quotes

SCOTT PRUETT, No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3

What does it take to be successful at Long Beach?

"You need to qualify well, you need to be smart and you need to start as close to the front as you can and then

you're going to have to stay out of trouble. You've got to race hard. It's a quick race and you just go after it from the drop of the green flag, but, with that being said, we're going to be starting 40-plus cars, so it's going to be worse than the LA freeways at rush hour. It's going to be hectic and all of the Prototypes are going to want to get by the GT cars and it just makes for what I'm going to say is going to be a crazy, physical race. With this race being in Toyota and Lexus' backyard, we're excited for this race with the new Lexus program and the RC F GT3 and we feel we're making a lot of headway."

SAGE KARAM, No. 14 Lexus RC F GT3

What are your thoughts heading to Long Beach?

"It's going to be the first race on the schedule for us that's not an endurance, long race. I'm looking forward to getting out to Long Beach. It's a great track and I love street circuits so to get on those is a whole different animal than what we've been racing so far. It will be interesting to see how our race car performs because it's the first time Lexus will be at Long Beach with this new RC F GT3, but I think the cars are going to do well. Every day we improve and work out some of the kinks and the car is much more prepared for Long Beach."

ROBERT ALON, No. 15 Lexus RC F GT3

Are you looking forward to racing at Long Beach?

"I'm just really excited. I think we have a really strong Lexus RC F GT3. Overall really excited and ready to get on track and see what our car can do. Every practice session, every outing in the RC F GT3, the car feels better. We're always making progress. We're always moving forward. The cars are getting better and better and better and we showed that at Sebring with how quick the car was so I definitely think we have a chance to be on the podium here."

What does it mean to race so close to your hometown?

"I love the fact that I live 30 minutes away from the track and the fact that all of my friends can come and watch me do what I do since none of my friends have ever seen me race in the past. Last year (in Prototype Challenge) was the first time that all of my close family and friends were able to come out and support me and I'm excited and looking forward to that again this year."

JACK HAWKSWORTH, No. 15 Lexus RC F GT3

What is your outlook in racing the Lexus RC F GT3 at Long Beach?

"We are really looking forward to Long Beach. It's one of my favorite circuits. It will be the first time out with the GTD Class. We didn't get the results we wanted at Sebring, but the Lexus RC F GT3 was strong all weekend. We think we have a competitive car and are heading to short sprint races now. Looking forward to racing for an hour and half and not really have to worry about the endurance aspect of the race so much. Just really looking forward to getting out there. It's a great circuit, a great atmosphere and a home race for Lexus., so we'll go out there and get a good result."