

IMSA Media Conference

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Daytona, Florida, USA

Pipo Derani

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We have our overall GTP class pole winner for the Mobil 112 Hours of Sebring presented by Cadillac, Pipo Derani. This is his 10th career pole in IMSA competition, second consecutive.

PIPO DERANI: 11th.

THE MODERATOR: Maybe it's 11th. We'll check that and confirm.

Anyway, second consecutive in 2024 because you had the pole at Daytona. Also your second consecutive here at Sebring because you had the pole here last year. This is overall your third pole at Sebring. Tomorrow you're going for your fourth win.

PIPO DERANI: Fifth win.

THE MODERATOR: Yes, of course (smiling).

An abbreviated session for the GTP class, but you managed to find the speed. How is it shaping up for tomorrow?

PIPO DERANI: Yeah, no, it was a difficult qualifying session. Never easy when you have a red flag situation where you have to put the lap in.

I was told over the radio that I potentially could have a second lap if I pushed. I obviously pushed, but I was way too close for comfort for the No. 40 Acura. Was able to put the lap in. Was a little bit disrupted because it wasn't such a clean lap. He made a few mistakes in front of me. I literally lost a little bit of time having to control that distance to try and make sure I guaranteed a lap in case I didn't have a second one.

Then obviously I started the second lap. He was able to do let's say an okay sector one. Then I was quicker than him. By the time of turn seven more or less, I have a few 10ths quicker than my previous lap. Then I got way too close and I had to abort it.

For sure let's say there's more from the lap time. It wasn't

a perfect lap because of those things I said: traffic. Nevertheless, it looks like it was enough to be on pole.

It's never, let's say, the nicest way to get a pole when you know, for everybody, for the grid, that no one was able to achieve the full potential of their cars. Nevertheless, it's still the same for everyone. You still got to put a lap in and make sure you make no mistakes in such a pressure situation.

I'm happy with that. Was able to extract to a certain point a good lap out of the car that was enough for pole. Very hot conditions, which obviously makes it even more interesting on how you operate the tires because we all know these tires are in a way not difficult but they operate in very specific temperatures. To be able to go out and put a lap in with such a hot condition and not, let's say, overstress the tires was in a way important to be able to put the first lap in and still have enough.

Had I needed or had I had the option to do the second lap, always trying to find the balance with that because we know also that after a little bit of stress on those tires, you tend to have a big drop. If you don't optimize the performance when they're there for you, you will not be able to be on pole. That's also a tricky situation, especially on a situation where you don't have enough time to prepare to do a slow lap to bring them up the way they should.

We had to go out there, boom, lap. It's difficult, but we managed well. I'm really happy with pole.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Where do you think the Cadillac is best at around the track?

PIPO DERANI: I don't think quite honestly there's a specific place where the Cadillac is stronger. I think, let's say, if we look at the DPi era, the car itself was better throughout the race, beginning to the end.

I think in GTP the Cadillac seems to be, at least here in Sebring, very positive on the heat of the day compared to the others. We tend to lose a little bit that advantage at night, I believe.

Last year we saw Acura and Porsche very strong at the end. We restarted first and we lost some of that edge that we had throughout the day. We led a bunch of the race last year, but at the end we weren't as competitive as in the beginning.

It's an area that as a team we've been working on from last year to try and improve. Obviously also last year at the very beginning of the race I had a contact with a P3 car that spun right in front of me, which damaged the floor of the car. We as a team are not sure how much of that damage influenced the end of the race.

I think my honest opinion is that it's not a matter of having a part of the track that it's better for us, it's more a matter of how the tire is reacting to the temperature.

It still remains to be seen if a good car without any damage, if we are as strong as we were during the day, at night. Obviously the 01 didn't get to the end of the race last year. It's a bit of a question mark on that point.

I would say it's more temperature related as to a specific part of the track itself.

Q. (Question about the short session.)

PIPO DERANI: Well, the reality is that it's the same for everyone. It's not like there was someone who had put a lap in and then all the others were just basically waiting.

In the end of the day, when you think of it this way, you just got to go and do the best you can. I honestly don't feel much pressure in those situations. I feel like I handle it quite well. At the end of the day sometimes it's better to be a bit on the conservative side and put a lap in than try a little bit over and make a mistake.

In our car, I went out with a set of tires, had a red flag. I asked the team to change the tires and go with another new set, which was a risk because we didn't know how much time the red flag was still going to be on. As you guys saw, as we went out, the 40 car, I think he kept the warm tires from the previous run, so he overtook me on cold tires.

That's the only situation where in that situation you don't really know whether you're going to have enough time to get the tire ready to do the lap.

I think what helped us is it's really hot out there and it helped us to bring the tires in a different way on the out-lap so that they were ready.

That's not always the case. It could be in a much cooler

condition be disruptive to one team or another because you might make the wrong choice whether you keep or not the tires, then you don't have enough time to have them in the right window for a lap.

I like pressure situations like that. I was happy to be able to put the lap in.

Q. Did you use three sets of tires?

PIPO DERANI: No, I went out on one, then as we came into the pit for the red flag, I asked them to change.

Q. Some people changed tires right away at the beginning.

PIPO DERANI: They must have scrubbed some tires.

Q. (No microphone.)

PIPO DERANI: No, I think the whole weekend the track is not as quick as last year. At Sebring, it's quite usual to see that happen. Sometimes even during the day there's periods of the day where you're much quicker than others. Especially compared to when we were here a month ago during private testing, we were quicker then than we are now.

It's just the condition that we have right now I think is a track condition and not cars. I would say, let's say, if I had a perfect lap, it's hard to say, but you could possibly be 4/10ths quicker than what I was, which would still be, if I'm not wrong, far from the pole position last year.

What lap time did I do last year?

Q. (No microphone.)

PIPO DERANI: Yeah, it's definitely a track thing. Temperature, asphalt, whatever it is. We wouldn't be able to do that today, I don't think.

Q. (No microphone.)

PIPO DERANI: Just now before I got here. But I don't know, were they quicker than us?

Q. (No microphone.)

PIPO DERANI: By how much? Tiny bit?

Q. 148.0 three.

PIPO DERANI: I'm not surprised. Like I said, had I had a really clean lap, that was doable because it showed on the

first sector of my second lap, the one I aborted, I was already 3/10ths quicker. I'm not surprised that someone with a proper clean lap would be able to do that on the first flying. I'm not surprised.

I did a 48.1? It wasn't the perfect lap. Like I said, I'm happy it's, let's say, enough to be on pole, enough by whatever situation. In such a disruptive qualifying session, it's really not representative of what all the grid could have done. I think even maybe the 47.5 or 47.6, had we had a proper, clear run was doable by a lot of the cars.

It's just a situation that made for it to be that way, so...

THE MODERATOR: Pipo, thanks for coming in.

PIPO DERANI: Thank you.

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