

IMSA Media Conference

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Daytona, Florida, USA

Laurin Heinrich

Michael Christensen

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are joined now by our GTD Pro winners here in the Tিরerack.com Battle on the Bricks, Laurin Heinrich and Michael Christensen. This is the team's third win of the season, also Laurin's third victory.

Michael, why don't you start us off. Always good to win at an historic venue like this. Be interested in your perspective on being able to bring it home today for this group.

MICHAEL CHRISTENSEN: Yeah, Indianapolis is a great venue. Somewhat a home track for another team that I race for in Europe. But, no, it's great to come here and support AO Racing and Laurin for the championship, and that was the whole purpose of being here, to try to support and help as good as I can.

I felt like we accomplished a very, very strong race after a most difficult start to the race. I've had a few of those lately, but this time was a good one.

Yeah, the team did a great job on the setup and the strategy and Laurin, his driving, and I did my part, too.

THE MODERATOR: Laurin, now a 99-point lead with just the season finale ahead of you, and obviously we know what happened yesterday, but talk about putting that behind you and getting the win and building that advantage back up as you look ahead.

LAURIN HEINRICH: What happened yesterday for sure was very disappointing, I said to you already yesterday, and then I started from very last. It was not so great. It was quite tough. But, to be honest, when I came to the track this morning and I saw every team member being so motivated and so fired up for the race, I knew that we can win this.

And it was great to see that mood and that commitment from the team, and I think that also helped Michael and me to keep our heads up. And in the end I really appreciate, also, Michael's support coming here to support me and the

team and the championship because he usually has another much more important, I would say, program in Europe. I think it's not easy to just say, okay, I come to Indianapolis and Road Atlanta just to help. Yeah, thanks for that. Really appreciate it. Great job from him in the rain. That was really difficult conditions. I drove in the safety car, and it was really hard to keep the car in check. I can't imagine how it was during the green flag.

Third win of the season, 99-point lead is good, but it will be a tough race in Road Atlanta, ten hours of racing to go.

Q. There was a lot of traffic and chaos in the beginning of the race. There was a little bit of contact with the 23 car at one point. Can you talk me through that?

MICHAEL CHRISTENSEN: There was a lot of contact. I'm not sure with who, but at least we have a pair of endurance lights in our bumper from an Aston Martin; it was that hard we got hit.

And in turn 8 we got pushed off -- I think it was turn 23, but he was hitting me that hard, he went himself, off, too. So that was a bit weird. But we kept the car in one piece and ultimately passed them and moved on from there.

I thought it was an interesting strategy from various people to be that aggressive in a six-hour race. But, yeah, we managed not to have too much damage and kept our focus on the ultimate goal to win.

Q. How important is this championship --

LAURIN HEINRICH: It's great. As Michael said, we went through a lot in this race, especially with our championship competitors. If they have to catch up 99 points in Atlanta, I don't know what they will do there, but we will find out.

Yeah, I mean, for sure, for the championship, coming from Europe, 99 points, that sounds crazy, but that's not as much as it sounds. We still have to stretch our legs. I think Atlanta is a decent track for the Porsche. I've never been there in a GT3 car, but I'm very much looking forward to one of the greatest tracks in the U.S. I think it's a great place to finish off the season.

Looking back, all these races, Petit Le Mans races, have



been quite chaotic. It's important to keep the nose clean and hopefully celebrate the championship Saturday night in Atlanta.

Q. Looked like you were able to move up pretty significantly; you got up to 20-something overall or third or fourth in class. Can you describe your first stint, especially with the weather coming?

LAURIN HEINRICH: I think starting from the very back and knowing the many cars in front of me were Bronze drivers or slower drivers, it's easy to get overambitious. I really told myself that I want to hold a bit back and don't rush too much because I knew it's a long race, six hours, and we knew rain was coming. That was a bit my approach. I wanted to get them one by one, and I think that's worked out pretty well.

The start was a bit difficult because, I mean, the rain started, and I was in turn 12. So that was a bit weird. I wasn't really prepared for that. I think it was better. You know, it was a bit more stretched out going through the first corners, a bit calmer.

Soon I realized I had good pace and fuel saved when I can, when I needed, and when I needed to attack, I took them one by one. Yeah, that worked out well, and I think it's also good for me to prove it to myself that I can do something like this.

Q. After you received the news yesterday about the issue and inspection, how much of that changed the entire strategy going into the race? Did you just basically throw the whole strategy book away and try something brand new, or was there not much that you had to change because you knew you had such a fast car in the first place?

LAURIN HEINRICH: I didn't have pole by 3/10ths or something. I knew that the others were in fast cars.

Yeah, the thing; the track is so short, so essentially when you do a full pit stop, you lose a lap, and when you start from the back, already when you do any pit stop, you lose a lap.

For sure the strategy changed a bit. We always set the priority to overcut the leaders when possible. And I think that worked well because, yeah, starting from the back, you just need to stay on the lead lap. That's the main priority. That worked well. And I think, also, some (indiscernible) helped us to pack up the field again and be a bit closer to the overall leaders again.

Q. And while winning from the front of the GT field is

not quite as chaotic for the most part, was it fun going through all those cars?

LAURIN HEINRICH: For sure it's fun, but I think it's more fun to have nothing to lose, really. And I think in this race, there was a lot to lose.

It was a bit tense, but I think the key is to just stay relaxed and don't do more than what is possible or what the car can do or what the situation allows. And I think that's also quite a lot where I learned something in that race in that regard.

So very good race for me and for my driving development. And, yeah, I hope in Atlanta, maybe we can start a bit further ahead.

Q. The team move of the race might be your final exit from the pit stall to get in the lead. Was there less fuel time needed for y'all, or was it just the crew executed and you slid the car sideways into the lead?

MICHAEL CHRISTENSEN: Yeah, I don't know. To be honest, I lost a bit of track on what was up and down and where we were and fuel and others and all that.

So, to be honest, I didn't know much of where I would end up. But for sure the team had a good view on strategy, and I think, yeah, we had a good couple of hours in the beginning of the race that put us in a good position. For sure we tried to save some fuel whenever we can. For example, fighting with someone, you probably don't save so much fuel. And, yeah, anyway, I think we did what we could, as good as possible, and in the end that made us come towards the front.

We were a little bit unlucky with the safety car, got a caution, where we could have pitted and we just managed to do it the next lap which forced us a bit backwards again. It's like that, give and take. The main point is we came to the front and we had a fast car, and Laurin did a good job in the end.

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