

IMSA Media Conference

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Daytona, Florida, USA

Jakub Smiechowski

Tom Dillmann

Nick Boulle

Indy Dontje

Russell Ward

Philip Ellis

Press Conference



teammates. So, yeah, it's been fantastic.

We've been very consistent, intelligent. We did this weekend -- in particular for me it was -- for us it was more of a relief to win the championship because when you come with 100 points lead, you know, you really don't want to lose because it would have hurt for a long time.

I'm really relieved. I think tomorrow when I wake up, I will be really happy. Next week I actually have another championship to win.

THE MODERATOR: Go over to Kuba. This partnership with PR1 team just couldn't have probably gone any better I can't imagine.

JAKUB SMIECHOWSKI: No, no, obviously it was a great partnership, which ended in a great result. Like Tom and Nick said, everyone worked so hard, dedicated so much time to be here and to be part of this amazing win.

It's been a really great year, and I'm really thankful to everyone... engineering, mechanic, all the people that were supporting us throughout the year. It was really fun. Yeah, I hope to do it again next year.

THE MODERATOR: We'll slide down to our GTD champions. We'll start with Russell first. Not unlike the No. 17, you guys took the lead here in the championship standings and took it all the way to the end. How special of a year was this for this team and what does it feel like to finally know that you are the champions?

RUSSELL WARD: Yeah, this is the end goal, right? You come here, and you want to win races. You want to be competitive. All of us have eyes on the championship. You know, it's just an incredible result for the team.

A lot of long nights and hard -- long, hard nights. It's just been difficult but exciting at the same time. It's really good to be able to bring it home.

Looking forward to getting back with the crew and going really celebrating this win because those are the guys who get it done. We just come here. As drivers we come here for the interview session, but in reality all the work is done at home, and we show up here and just try to execute, so...

THE MODERATOR: So from left to right, to identify who we're looking at here, from LMP2, all the way to the left is Jakub Smiechowski and Tom Dillmann and Nick Boulle and then Jakub. Then over to GTD we've got Indy Dontje, Russell Ward, and Philip Ellis. For LMP2 champions, both Nick and Tom, this is their first championship.

Nick, why don't you start us off? We've talked a lot over the last few weeks about what it might be like to win the championship. What is it like now that you are the champion?

NICK BOULLE: Certainly surreal. Everybody has worked so hard in Europol and PR1 Motorsports to make this year happen and to do it at such a high level. We were really consistent. Tom has been so helpful to me personally developing through the year and so has Kuba. Yeah, it's still -- I'll have to wake up tomorrow to make sure I think I understand it. It's been really special.

THE MODERATOR: Let's pass the mic over to Tom. Won the race at Canadian Tire Motorsport Park. That was kind of the catalyst for this. Let's talk about what it means for you to get a championship here in the WeatherTech championship.

TOM DILLMANN: It means a lot. It's my first year in the U.S. to discover all the tracks and all the events, legendary events, which you come to race here. You hope to put one of those races on your CV. That's awesome year.

Yeah, for me personally it was a choice to go to LMP2. I'm fortunate enough to have done that in a really good team. That allowed me to fight for the championship with great



THE MODERATOR: Phil, we'll slide the mic over to you for your thoughts. What's it mean?

PHILIP ELLIS: Obviously, I can just copy what Russell said. I think we have one of the easier jobs on the team as drivers, and the team really made it easy this year.

They made such a perfect job. They always had a great car, great strategy in the pit box. We were always one step ahead of the competition. As drivers we just had to bring it home.

I think we did the heavy lifting earlier this year and the first part of the season, and we had some more difficult races at the end in Indy and also here.

We still kept it together. We didn't really put a foot wrong and put the championship up.

THE MODERATOR: Indy, part of the team for Michelin Endurance Cup. You guys win that as well. Just a really special year.

INDY DONTJE: It's just really cool. If you see where they started seven years ago, and in the end -- I think it's seven years now. In the end winning an IMSA Championship is something special and to be proud of that.

I had a small part of it only in the Endurance Cup to win. Also this championship is for me also something special. It's actually cool because Tom coached me in 2014 in Formula 3, pretty cool to sit here with him.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. For Nick, I believe you join the Jim Trueman Award as well. What does that mean to you, and what about your automatic invite to Le Mans?

NICK BOULLE: Yeah, certainly I was paying attention to that as the race wound down. Tom pointed out that potentially could have been more aggressive in taking some risks later in the race with a few minutes to go, and pointed it out that one finishing position -- our finishing position guaranteed it two back, and that went away. Yeah, I guess we have a trip to France next year.

Q. (Off microphone).

NICK BOULLE: I think we have a pretty good idea, yeah.

Q. Can you talk about that last stint when really you only had to hold station in order to win the championship and yet, you did pass -- I can't remember who it was that was in front of you, but you

did pass them, and then you got -- again, you were racing, not just cruising for a championship, I guess.

TOM DILLMANN: Yeah, it was not an easy position to be starting the race because we had all to lose basically. We had a few setbacks in the race, and it got us a lap down. The Riley was leading at some points together with the TDS depending on the P sequence. We had some tension there because if Riley wins, we have to finish sixth, and we were between sixth and seventh.

Then at the end I knew I just need sixth. I was sixth at the restart, so I just led the other fight on bent wheels. It was kind of crazy to see it. I was just coasting and letting them fight because I didn't want to take any risk.

Then I overtook a couple of cars and was hitting on P4. The podium was really close, but I also decided as a team to not fight for the podium and also validate the Trueman. That's what went on.

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