

IMSA Media Conference

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Dane Cameron

Felipe Nasr

Laurin Heinrich

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Everybody, as you see here, we're joined by our 2024 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship GTP champions. Dane Cameron and Felipe Nasr, left to right, for the team.

Dane, start us off. Certainly the season was very, very strong really from the outset obviously with the Rolex 24 at Daytona win. Looked like there were seven podiums in nine races. Obviously this is kind of -- you've been part of the Penske Championship in the past. The 2019 one was a little reminiscent of this I think. Talk about that and what it means to get another one.

DANE CAMERON: Yeah, I started racing the last championship I had with Juan, very kind of similar year. A few race wins, and just the consistency I think that it really takes IMSA to -- to deliver a championship, you really need to be there every weekend. Having been in this position, I guess a few times now, I kind of believe in that way of going racing.

You know, it is endurance racing, and at the end of the day, it gets more aggressive as it gets more competitive. At the end of the day, if you don't get to the end of these things, then you don't score points, and you don't end up winning a championship.

You know, my mindset is willing to give up that individual moment, or whatever it may be, to make sure you get to the end of the day and you kind of win the overall war, let's say. But yeah, very, very similar.

Honestly, to lead the year from start to finish, which I have never done before, and normally I have a pretty crap Daytona and have to dig out of the hole. It's certainly a bit easier when you lead from the beginning for sure. But really, yeah, just pretty close to perfect, to be honest.

I think that's really what it takes to win these is you need to be top 3, top 5 every single weekend, which we nearly

accomplished. You need to win two to three races, which we also did. Kind of winning Daytona was a bonus and is always a goal when, I think, you begin the year.

Personally, for me, it was a really big goal, and I think for everybody it's really the way you start the year is to try to win that race.

So, you know, I think the way you start a season in terms of what you want to accomplish, it is really exactly what we did from start to finish. I'm super proud of the effort. Really grateful to be with Felipe. We were competitors for a number of years. He was my replacement when I left to come to Penske the first time. I say he still owes me 15% on his last few years of salary, which I'm still waiting for.

After competing against each other, and obviously I have a lot of respect him, and it was great to share a car together and to have him in your corner against you was phenomenal.

I think he's been super successful on his own, so I was really looking forward to sharing a car with him as opposed to having to go against him for sure.

Yeah, just really proud of what he was able to accomplish, but what we did as a team I think there was a lot of expectation on this project, which we probably missed last year. To make that jump and be in the position to finish one-two with the 2 car and to win everything is really spectacular.

THE MODERATOR: Let's go over to Felipe. You won a couple of championships with a different team. What's it like to do one with this team?

FELIPE NASR: It feels pretty special, I have to say. Like Dane said, after that victory in Daytona, which in a personal level when you join a program from day one, there's a lot of responsibility on the line and things that we want to accomplish together.

Dane and I were pretty much in a very similar position to that, but as soon as we got Daytona, I feel like that dictated the pace of the season. I could see in everybody's desire or in the fire to work harder and dedicate more and get the car better. I just could see everything progressing the way, you know -- I couldn't think of a better way progressing.



The whole year has been incredible. Super consistent, as Dane said. I have a lot of respect for Dane, for all the years he accomplished here in IMSA, all the championships he has won.

Funny enough, we were always fighting against each other on track, and this year we finally got the chance to do it. We executed well. There is no -- when I look back, we ticked all the boxes, and when it came to race day, we were there to deliver. We were there to fight for the win many weekends, and here we are.

It feels amazing to get a third championship.

THE MODERATOR: Felipe, to Dane's right, we are also joined by our WeatherTech Championship GTD Pro champion, Laurin Heinrich. Laurin had three wins this season, five podiums.

Laurin, congratulations. Probably did not go the way you wanted it to out there today, other than the fact you come away with a championship with narrow, narrow margin, just four points.

When you look at pole positions and you look at those types of things that happened over the course of the season, that's really what made the difference. Just tell us what this one means to you?

LAURIN HEINRICH: What a year. In the end, it's decided by four points. And if I think back throughout the season, what are four points?

It's all these small decisions you take in the qualifying or in the race, and I couldn't -- I can't thank my team enough and also my teammates. You know, I've had plenty of teammates this year. First of all, (indiscernible), he did most races with me. Exceptional driver. Got along with him really well. And then also Michael Christensen, Julien Andlauer, and Klaus Bachler, who are all from the Porsche family.

I really appreciate their support because in the end they joined me, and they were not fighting for their own championship, and they were just there to help us the team and me win our championship.

I think it really speaks for them. They understood their role, and they didn't put their own ego in any way into the team. Really, really thankful to share the car and the drives with them.

In the end this weekend, I mean, the pole position made the difference at the end. Yesterday when I crossed the line and I saw 17.8, I was, like, okay, this level is special.

This must mean something. It better be pole. In the end it was pole, and in the end it decided I was in the championship.

You know, after the qualifying for sure we made all these tables. If the 23 finishes P3 or better, we need to finish. I had that all in my mind while I was driving. After the issue in the first hour, yeah, I mean, it was a race where we can't do anything anymore. We were five laps down. We just had to finish and hope for the best.

I think it was a proper test for me and my mind to withstand this because it's a pure nightmare. It's horror. You're just driving the car. You can do nothing. You see, oh, my lap time would have been enough to fight for the win even in PT, but you are five laps down. Then you ask on the radio, where is the 23? 50 minutes ago they told me, yeah, he is half a second behind Serra, and if you don't take Serra, we lose the championship. I'm, like, this can't be true.

In the end it was enough. I cannot explain what happened inside of that cockpit in the last half an hour. It was crazy.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Felipe, can you talk about what this means for Porsche and winning all the titles I think in your class, and then also I think there was nine overall today between the teams and the GTD Pro and what not.

FELIPE NASR: It means everything. It means all the effort. It means all the tireless moments we had and hard work. Like I said, on a personal level to me when I joined this program it was, remember, they're asking me, So why you want to join the program? I said, Well, I want to create history with you guys. I mean, you guys, look at all the statements you made. I want to continue history.

Here we are. 2022 was the development. 2023 was a difficult season. Comes '24, we completely changed the pace of the program and finally getting everything done, winning all the championships possible. That's exactly what I'm here for and representing such two big names in the sport like Porsche and Penske. For me as a driver and as a person, it's a unique moment for sure to cherish.

Q. For Dane, I think that you guys pitted at one point and changed a fuel flow sensor, is that correct? Was there any scare? Were you scared at all at any point that maybe you were having a bigger issue and dropping back in the running order?

DANE CAMERON: I think we were obviously at that point safe with a couple of retirements that had happened. I think for Felipe and I, we were kind of looking forward to --

you don't ever wish something bad to happen to your competitors, but if we were fortunate to have some retirements, then it meant, okay, now that part is closed, and we can just try to win the race.

For me I haven't actually won this race before because you typically come here with the championship in mind, and sometimes you make some different decision to manage that rather than the race. We were both kind of looking forward to hopefully having that done with the margin that we had and just being able to try to go after the race.

Some of these issues were hurting us in terms of performance. We had a brake issue at the end. I don't know where that came from, but we were really wearing the left front rotor at an incredible rate and weren't sure we were going to have to change it. Again, we were going to be losing track position and things like that.

Not really worried in terms of the championship, but trying to figure out what can we do to still try to win the race, but ultimately, we were a little bit lacking in terms of speed there at the end the last few hours of the race.

On the one hand it's okay because we got what we came here for, but on the other hand, yeah, it was a little bit -- it's always a little bittersweet to be out of the fight for the race win. Yeah, I never thought it was anything that was going to cost us the championship on the day. Just more of something that was going to take us out of fighting for victory at the end of the day, unfortunately.

Q. You've both come into this race in intense fights for the championship, including against each other where whoever finished in front was going to win the championship. How nice was it to relax that a little bit and not have to worry, you know, about a close fight?

DANE CAMERON: I would say honestly for me I've had one or two years where it's been, yeah, kind of heads-up like that, but most of the other times I've had a little bit of margin where you just sort of need an average day to win it.

Yeah, I think this is probably the most margin I've ever had, honestly, to be here, which is obviously a really nice feeling at such a chaotic event such as this, especially with the car count we have, which is obviously great for the championship, but very difficult for us on track to manage.

You like to have that in your back pocket for a race such as this. You know, if you end on a 2 hour 40 race, it's a lot simpler deal. To end at this track in particular with this sort of race, you really like to have that sort of padding in your pocket for sure.

I would also like to probably use that moment to recognize the efforts of the 6 car. They did have a really good year. They had a good year last year as well, and honestly have been kind of out of contention for things that are outside of the driver's hands, let's say.

It's worth recognizing the effort they have. They pushed us the whole way. This year in particular. I wasn't in IMSA last year, but doing most of the Euros with them last year, I did feel bad for them and obviously two years in a row for some pretty unlucky and, if we're honest, not performance really DQs that took them out of the championship hunt. It's pretty hard to digest from a driver's seat.

I do feel for them in a lot of ways. We've done a lot of days together. I've driven with them. I've been teammates. I've been obviously on the other side and all that. And, yeah, it's a tough thing for them for sure. I do feel for them. It's unfortunate two years in a row for sure.

Q. This is a question for Laurin. I want to talk about the points gap at the end. Can you talk about the season as a whole and some of the moments that were crucial in your mind on top of the qualifying for the weekend that made the difference with such a narrow margin today?

LAURIN HEINRICH: The IMSA season is long. We did ten races. In the end it came down to four points. I can think of 100 situations where we could have lost the one four points.

The margins are so small. In the end you can say the four points came from our pole in Daytona. They came from our pole here in Petit.

Some key races for sure. Daytona we finished second straight out of the box. It was the first podium for Rexy. It was the first race for AO Racing at GTP Pro and my first race in IMSA, so that was already crazy.

Then winning our first race for the team in Laguna still was super. That must have been one of the best wins I would say. It's such a great race, and winning in Laguna Seca, the Porsche is just wrapping around this track, and it felt so good coming from the back and driving through the field.

Also, two weeks ago our win at Indy from -- we qualified on pole, which was amazing. We got disqualified in Tech and then had to start from the very back. To see that, the team effort. When everyone came Sunday morning to the track at Indy, I didn't see any team member who was still upset about what happened the day before. They were all so motivated and focused that we could score good result still

in the race.

I never had that before, and I think that really also flipped the switch in me. We shouldn't give up, and in the end we proved that we won and we were the best on that day.

I think that will be the most memorable win in that season and also in my still young racing career.

Q. Lastly, obviously you were in the car to cross the line. Can you talk about how special that was knowing you crossed the line, even if it was a few laps down to clinch the championship?

LAURIN HEINRICH: Yeah, it was quite special. In the end I could do nothing. I just brought the car home. Actually the last lap I was going so slow and two cars passed because it wouldn't have made a difference, and I was just constantly asking on the radio where the 23 is and how it's going to play out? Once I crossed the line, I never saw myself like this, but I completely freaked out. I took the fan in the car, and I shook it so much that it ripped off. Then I had it in my hand. This was crazy.

Actually, my engineer was speaking to me in that moment, and he saw it live, and he was, like, Dude, you're going to pay for that. It was incredible. I completely freaked out.

Then it was a -- I will always remember that. There was a big cue up the pit lane, and I had to park on top of the hill under the Michelin bridge coming out of 10B, and I could see the fireworks. That was -- even if I was alone, it was so romantic, and that was really good.

Q. Laurin, were you able to follow the scoring when you weren't in the car? The championship points, it went back and forth. You were up by four for a time and then down by 16, and then you were up by four and then down by 16. Did you pay attention to that when you weren't in the car? Were you watching that?

LAURIN HEINRICH: Yeah, I mean, I didn't leave the pit for the whole race because I couldn't. I was checking our race, which was quite uneventful, checking the race in the front and where the 23 is. That was, for me, probably the hardest part.

Being in the car you are focused on driving. You do your job, but you are hitting your marks, but then sitting on the pit stand where you can do nothing but just look at these screens, yeah, that was quite tough. You know, we had our tables. We knew exactly where -- it would have been difficult for us to finish higher up than 11th, so we were just relying on the 23 not finishing better than third. In the end that's what happened.

Yeah, you are just sitting there. You can do nothing. It's quite hard to stay calm. In the end also not give up. I think that's always the easiest way to say we're not going to win it anyways. It doesn't matter anymore.

Everyone stayed really focused, and also the team helped me to stay sort of motivated because it was for me quite difficult at that moment.

Q. Laurin, how cool is it to be a part of the legend of REXY?

LAURIN HEINRICH: The story is still going on. We're still writing that, but getting the first victory for REXY, the first podium in Daytona for REXY and then winning the championship in REXY, that's incredible. The fans, they love it, and I love it and being part of it, and actually driving that car is such an honor.

It's my very first year racing in North America in IMSA. REXY exists since last year, and I was following obviously, and I got the call. He asked me, Do you want to drive REXY in GTP Pro? I didn't have to think twice about it. Obviously I said, Yes.

All these people were able to sign the car this weekend before the race and receiving all that support, all these messages even during the race was incredible. I think that gives us drivers also that small boost which can make the difference at the end in terms of motivation and although yesterday at the autograph session so many young kids, and I think that's really important also.

I say it every time, but it's really important for our sport to get the next generation close to the sport, get them engaged and interested. It's so cool in less than two years what the team has built.

I think I can tell the story. One time I raced in the United States, and I was at passport control, and I told the officer that I'm driving REXY, and he knew REXY. He went completely crazy. It's incredible.

Everyone knows REXY, and everyone loves REXY. To drive that car, it's incredible really. My phone is full of REXY, and I open Instagram, and I only see REXY. I think my whole life is around REXY. I sleep in the bed with this, so yeah. I also have REXY though too.

Q. Is REXY going to have a whole mouth full of gold teeth?

LAURIN HEINRICH: It's not up to me. I think it's definitely worth the try. I read somewhere that we should give REXY

a platinum tooth, which would be cool. Let's see what the team will figure out. I'm sure they have -- they always have great ideas. I'm sure they will turn over something.

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