

IMSA Media Conference

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Laurin Heinrich

Klaus Bachler

Alessio Picariello

Press Conference



It's so competitive out there. I mean, everything can happen. 30 minutes to go, there was the last restart. To be honest, the chance is always there that you lead the race easy.

We were in quite good position let's say before the last restart because Laurin did an incredible job and the gap was, I would say, 10 seconds or something. For sure you were a bit more relaxed. When the last restart comes, everything can happen again. You can go from P1 to whatever.

It's very special to win such big races with such big competition.

NATE SIEBENS: Alessio, this is your first win here in IMSA, a big one. How does that feel?

ALESSIO PICARIELLO: It feels great. I mean, to be honest with you, IMSA, my first race in IMSA was here in 2018. I didn't really like it because I didn't understand it. Then I came back in '22, I did Daytona, Sebring, then I came back again last year in GTP, which was really different, and that's when I really started to enjoy IMSA because I really understood how to drive it here.

Now I just love it. Every time I come here, I love it so much. I love the racing, the fuel saving, the strategies. It feels so good now to get my first win, Sebring, which in my opinion is probably the toughest race of the calendar, at least in IMSA, I will say in endurance.

Yeah, to share it with Laurin and Klaus is so special because the atmosphere between us is so good. They are good friends. We have so much fun. We have really strong friendship. Then also to be part of AO, to drive REXY is so popular. AO is such a good team. Yeah, it's been such a pleasure to be part of the team so far.

NATE SIEBENS: We'll go to questions.

Q. Laurin, you broke the GT lap record tonight at Sebring, which hasn't been broken since 2022.

KLAUS BACHLER: I think 2020.

Q. You broke it once; then you also broke it kind of

... when all is said, we're done.®

NATE SIEBENS: We're joined by our GTD Pro winners here at Mobil 1 Twelve Hours of Sebring. We have Laurin Heinrich, Klaus Bachler, and Alessio Picariello.

Laurin, champion last year. How big is it to get kind of a signature win like this for you guys today?

LAURIN HEINRICH: Yeah, it's very special I think. Obviously last year we won the championship. We won three races in the process of that. But none of them were, let's say, one of the big three in the IMSA calendar: Daytona, Sebring or Petit.

So this year I want to defend the champion for myself and AO. For sure on my list was to win one of the big three. Daytona unfortunately didn't work where we were trying, but now it worked, so...

For me personally, it's my very first major endurance win in sports car racing. It's a huge achievement. I couldn't have done it without my teammates Alessio and Klaus, my team AO and Porsche.

Yeah, I'm over the moon. I think a moment like this will stay forever. Certainly a day I will remember hopefully for a really long time. I hope it's the first of many.

NATE SIEBENS: Klaus, you've won here before. How does it compare?

KLAUS BACHLER: I mean, I would say was quite equal also two years ago when I won here. It was very special. Obviously first victory in the IMSA championship. Now it's my second victory; two times here. For sure it's very special.

Now it's time to try also to win other races, some sprint races. Laurin did it last year already. But, yeah, I mean, to win this special race for the second time is also something I will never forget.



again within the last five minutes of the race. What was going on with the car? Why was it doing so well the last few minutes?

LAURIN HEINRICH: Yeah, you're right. The car really came alive when the sun went down. It's always the crucial part of this race. Also when you prepare for this race, you always aim to have a quick car at the end when it really matters.

To be honest, AO and our engineer, he's done an amazing job at predicting what we need in these conditions because we don't know. Of course, we have the night practice, but after the night practice the track rubbers in even more. It's never the same. It's something you cannot really practice.

He has experience. He gave me the car to win the race, and I just pushed. I wanted to drive away from the others. I managed to do it.

As a driver, it's something really special when you drive in the night. Sebring, which is probably one of the darkest tracks we have in the world, when you drive at the night.

It feels really fast when it's dark and also front headlight was not 100% working anymore. Yeah, I had to really concentrate, see where I go. The car was helping me to obviously achieve that.

Q. Aside from the significance of this win, the history of the event, how important is it in the context of properly kick-starting a championship defense?

LAURIN HEINRICH: Yeah, it's super important. Daytona was a bit unfortunate. Obviously everyone comes to Daytona with zero points, more or less. After qualifying you already score some. Yeah, you want to win Daytona. Most people go all in. I think that was not really our approach. In the end you fight with these people. It went wrong. We lost some points in Daytona, which is not great.

Obviously we knew at some point if you want to defend the title, you have to catch. The sooner the better (smiling). Now getting that win, also yesterday P2 in the qualifying, great points for the championship.

I'm honest with you, I don't know exactly where we are now, but a win in IMSA is always big points. You have 30-point gap between the winner and second place. We saw last year how tight it can be. In the end it can come down to the very last point. Getting a win is really something big.

We still have eight races to go and we already have our first one. Last year we could win three. I think that was

really important for us and gave us, yeah, some safety margin in case something goes wrong, like we saw at P.T. last year.

I hope we can carry that momentum into the next ones. Last year we managed to win back to back after our first win. Certainly going into Laguna, that was the track where we won our first race last year. Should be a good track for us, as well.

But yeah, I'm just happy. Certainly it's all about the points. Just getting that win, yeah, is incredibly special.

NATE SIEBENS: On the points, you are second unofficially. Minus 17 to the No. 65 group. They've got 653. You have 636.

LAURIN HEINRICH: That's good (smiling).

Q. The fight towards the end. How much of that was waiting for the right moment to strike?

LAURIN HEINRICH: Yeah, to be honest I had a bit of a different approach. I thought I was catching him. Both of us knew it would be a fuel race. Both of us were fuel saving.

I like fuel saving. I think it suits my driving style. I was catching him. My approach was to not wait too long, maybe already take the first opportunity I get. Maybe catch him a bit off guard or by surprise.

Also, I mean, I made the experience last year in the last, yeah, hour of the race, many things can go wrong by taking too much risk or others just defending or taking too hard. I didn't want to spend too much time fighting because in the end it's also a high risk.

Yeah, I think it worked quite well to just take the first opportunity I got. I have to give it to him. I mean, he played safe. We are both young Germans. We are actually both part of the motorsports in Germany, so we are both supported by the ADAC in Germany. It was cool to actually fight with him for the first time on the track between each other.

I hope we going to have some more fights in our career against each other.

ALESSIO PICARIELLO: What time is F1?

NATE SIEBENS: Half hour or so, something like that. We'll get you out of here just in time. Get you a beer and particular back.

ALESSIO PICARIELLO: Thank you.

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