

IMSA Media Conference

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Zacharie Robichon

Andrea Caldarelli

PJ Hyett

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Zach, do you want to take us through a little bit of how that session went for you? It's been a little while since you've been on a pole position here. How does that feel?

ZACHARIE ROBICHON: Thanks for reminding me it's been a while. Overall, honestly, I don't think we really knew what to expect because the track temps were higher, and going into the race tomorrow we're going to have a little bit more of that.

So we kind of guessed a little bit where we would be on the setup, and honestly, the car was fantastic. I think when you have a car that's easy to drive, it's easy to kind of get to the limit, and that's what we had today with the Aston.

I think we're relatively confident going into the race, but PJ won last week at Le Mans, we were on pole, so I know that pole doesn't necessarily translate to a good result, and it's all too fresh after last week.

I think going into this race, we just kind of want to keep a nice cool head.

THE MODERATOR: We'll slide over to Zach's left, Andrea Caldarelli. Talk a little bit about the importance of starting position in a six-hour race here and what it's going to take to maybe preserve that spot at the front throughout the six hours.

ANDREA CALDARELLI: Well, to start on pole for six hours, not that important, I have to say. But for sure it's a good spot to start. Our start of season wasn't the luckiest one, I have to say. So it feels good to put it on pole for the team because we came here with a lot of work to do from the last race. I'm really, really happy for them.

We've been strong the whole weekend since yesterday, so not really surprising, but I think the car just felt very good, and we were really consistent since yesterday.

THE MODERATOR: We'll slide over to PJ Hyett. PJ came back to the pole position after having to undergo an engine change right at the end of practice. Take us through that, and how important it is for you to get this pole position? Do you feel like you're carrying some momentum into the race given what happened last weekend, as well?

PJ HYETT: Yeah, we're certainly feeling good after last weekend. Never hurts to boost the confidence a bit, first professional race win to happen at the biggest race in the world.

However, we're at a new racetrack, different tires. Some of the crew is different. We still treat it like a brand-new race.

The car was running well this morning the last couple days, but we had an engine issue, so to me, putting it on pole is a testament to the team being able to put the thing back together. I'm super proud of them. The fact that we can start at the sharp end of the field is really, really -- I'm so proud of the team for being able to do that.

Yeah, really happy with the lap, happy with the team. We're all gelling really well together. It's time for a great result for AO Racing and the P2 class.

Q. PJ, I remember when your racing journey started here three years ago in a different championship. It wasn't quite the AO Racing that we know today. Are you still surprised how quickly all the success is coming, a Le Mans win, championships in IMSA and in other championships?

PJ HYETT: I think it's not for lack of trying. Everybody works their tails off at AO, and I think some of it is lucky, some of it is a ton of hard work. So you put those together and you sort of put yourself in a position to be lucky.

At Daytona we were leading the race with an hour to go, and we had a really sort of random mechanical issue. I'm very aware of the trials and tribulations of endurance racing.

For us, obviously winning the GTD Pro championship last year exceeded our wildest expectations, but yeah, just enjoy the moments while they come because a lot of times they don't. So last weekend was one of those moments



where it was, like, completely surreal, can't believe what's happening.

Getting on pole at these IMSA races is also another surreal moment, but we need to actually execute during the race, and we'll see how we do tomorrow.

It's been a hell of a ride.

Q. PJ, obviously it can get even better tomorrow, but it's been quite a week, the last seven, eight days. Anything in your life compare to that, in your business career?

PJ HYETT: I mean, I did all right in business. It allowed me to be able to build this team. It's not inexpensive to go sports car racing. There are certainly moments that I can remember that I was feeling pretty good about how we did. The company I co-founded with some friends of mine was called GitHub, and we did all right.

But there is this roller coaster of emotion in racing that the lows are lower when you have a mechanical failure at Daytona with an hour to go, and the highs are much higher when you're standing on the podium at Le Mans. It's a wild ride.

I'm not sure anything compares to that. It gets kind of both sides from me from a business perspective to see that we can build a sports car racing team that's unbelievably popular worldwide, doing fun stuff with our characters, getting our families involved. Hopefully rising tide lifts all boats with attracting new fans, new generations of fans. But then on track, winning championships, getting poles, winning races, it's so much fun. It's so much fun. I love it.

Q. Zach, you put in a lap pretty early in the session and nobody else could beat it. Could you talk a little bit about that?

ZACHARIE ROBICHON: Yeah, that was kind of our plan on the tire pressures, honestly. We did like a semi-mock qualify sim in practice, and given the temperatures -- the car is very tire temperature dependent, which is one of the characteristics of the Aston, and we kind of knew that. So we definitely probably overpressured on the tires because I tried another one after and it definitely had fallen off a cliff.

I think in an ideal situation, you probably want it to come a little bit later, but given the way the car has been handling, we targeted that second top lap so it actually sort of for once went to plan.

Q. Andrea, can you talk a little bit, it's been a bit of a tough time for Pfaff, particularly given the fact that the

team has changed a couple of times in the last year. Can you talk about how things are starting to come together?

ANDREA CALDARELLI: Yeah, I think the result that we had until now, of course Detroit was good for us with the podium, but as I said before, I think more than missing pace or anything like massively wrong, it was more like -- we were involved in a multiple-car crash, but it was the first time out with the team that they were working, and I think we showed good pace since the beginning.

I was really positively impressed by the guys because it's not an easy car to set up since the beginning when you don't know it. I was really impressed in Daytona that we were already -- I wasn't expecting that we could be up there with the pace.

Then Sebring wasn't good. We had some technical issue at the beginning of the race. Not much to say.

Then after that, it went pretty smooth in Laguna and Detroit. Obviously, yeah, the team had the experience with different cars, and they are still race cars, but I think the way that they learned the Huracan so quickly, even with my experience with other teams in Europe, it's been quite impressive.

I think they really deserved this result today.

Q. For all three of you, obviously very hot temperatures tomorrow. How are you going to deal with that? Basically track conditions will be very different than they were today, and how that will play into things?

ANDREA CALDARELLI: Yeah, it's going to be hotter than today. It's going to be for sure really challenging. It's a long race. I think we still have, for us at least, to decide double stint, single stint. There are plenty of options, at least from our side. We will try to stay as cool as possible until the last couple of hours.

ZACHARIE ROBICHON: In the GTD class we have three drivers, which is going to be kind of nice tomorrow.

I think you are going to see maybe more mistakes than you would in a general six-hour race because I think fatigue will play a larger role than in a normal race like this.

So kind of to what Andrea said, kind of keep cool heads, and if everybody stays calm, that's going to be even more important tomorrow.

Yeah, luckily the AC is pretty good in our car, so I'll be

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

hoping it works tomorrow.

PJ HYETT: I was going to say, the P2 car, the AC is kind of a light warm breeze. So it will feel amazing inside of the car tomorrow.

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