

IMSA Media Conference

Saturday, June 21, 2025

Daytona, Florida, USA

Renger van der Zande

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Now we have our overall pole winner in the No. 93 Acura Meyer Shank Racing, Renger van der Zande. This is a new GTP track record.

RENGER VAN DER ZANDE: Yeah, are you surprised? I have not done much qualifying actually in the IMSA championship because in LMPC it was always the champ qualifying and with a qualifying rocket like Sebastien Bourdais, you want him to qualify, and honestly I like finishing races, so I have not been qualifying much.

THE MODERATOR: This is the second consecutive pole for the No. 93 car. Nick Yelloly, your co-driver, did take the last pole position at the last race in Detroit, so going for your second straight win. This is your second pole at Watkins Glen, two previous wins at Watkins Glen. Last was in the PC class in 2016.

Renger, seems like you guys are building a little bit of momentum right now. What has taken place over the last little bit here to get things rolling for you guys, and how do you keep it going tomorrow?

RENGER VAN DER ZANDE: Yeah, I think the car has a really good peak on the tire, first of all. I think in qualifying you need that to be a bit ahead of the field.

But yeah, I got to say, man, it's a whole new group that we started with in Daytona. It's a lot of new people from HRC side, from Shank side, and you basically put them in a room and let's see if it works out.

In the beginning you just see that people have to get used to it and make small mistakes, and at the same time it's very nice to see that within this team, there's no big egos. There's always room to improve. There's always people asking how to improve or having each other's back, I think is the key, kind of like, mentality. No pointing fingers, just getting better every time a little bit. With David Salters repeating that every time we go into a meeting, I think it's worked out like that. We've just gotten better and better and better.

At the same time, the changes we made over lunchtime for

sure made the car better, so the guys know what they are doing. I think the drivers know what we need from the car now because also to me and Nick Yelloly it was a new car in the beginning of the year. So everything is coming together nicely.

Pole position in Detroit, I think Nick did a really good job there. We won it. I think winning Detroit was a little bit of weight off the shoulders for the whole group because you want to win at least one race in a year.

Championship is going to be tough. I think Porsche walked away with it here a bit too far ahead. But you never know. Where are they on the grid?

Q. When the time came up on the screen, wow. Were you impressed?

RENGER VAN DER ZANDE: Yeah, I was very impressed. I didn't expect a 31. I was going from a 37. I was expecting a 33, something like that. When I saw 31, I was like, okay, that's a pretty good lap.

At the same time, I went out and I immediately, because it's so hot outside, I felt the Michelin tires were coming in very, very quickly. Turn 1 was very, very difficult today. So I thought, okay, let's give it a push, see where the tires are.

In Turn 1 I overshot a little and I backed out of the lap completely again. So I had a second prep lap, and then I took it a bit easy on my fastest lap, and I kind of nailed Turn 1. It worked out really well, and from there on the lap went really well. I didn't know how to get more out of the lap.

You try a little extra, and the peak of the tire was already gone, so I had boxed that lap and that was it, but for sure I was shocked about a 31. That was faster than I expected.

Q. The No. 6 Porsche is eighth and the No. 7 is 10th.

RENGER VAN DER ZANDE: Where is the 5 Porsche?

Q. 5 is 12th.

You also have a young apprentice driver joining you for this race and Indianapolis. Does getting pole position change how you plan to use Kaku in the race, or is that still to be



determined?

RENGER VAN DER ZANDE: No, I think Kaku will be in the car second. Kind of wanted to give it a go at the beginning of the race, and it's very nice to have him here, especially with the heat. Getting a stint out of the way is something that really helps for our physical endurance.

But it's going to be so hot tomorrow, so having him with us is very helpful.

Q. Straight into the deep end?

RENGER VAN DER ZANDE: Straight into the, yeah, deep end.

Q. Tomorrow it's going to be record heat here. Do you think the Acura will be even better in the heat considering how well you did today?

RENGER VAN DER ZANDE: Not so much (indiscernible) crash there. I hope he's okay. No, I think the heat is not particularly good for us because I know the Cadillac inside out. I think that one is a bit better on the tires than we are with the Acura.

So we'll see what happens tomorrow. But it's going to be preserving the tires, let's say, and not stretch them too much like you would do in qualifying. That's why the peak of the tire you would expect it to be a little longer, especially being here with the hard tire, but the peak came very quickly and disappeared very quickly, as well, which just shows that the heat is really killing it.

Q. So it's going to be more about tire management tomorrow, then?

RENGER VAN DER ZANDE: I think tire management is key for tomorrow. I think obviously we'll have a fast car and it's something where -- that always helps.

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