

IMSA Media Conference

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Daytona, Florida, USA

Steven Thomas

Mikkel Jensen

Hunter McElrea

Max Hesse

Danny Harper

Connor De Phillippi

Press Conference



end for me, but we were ending on this victory, and maybe the best stint I've ever driven, it was like a dream. It was the perfect ending.

Unless one of you out here can find me a sponsor for next year, this will be the last IMSA race for me. I'm going to keep racing. I love racing more than anything in the world. I'll be doing much more cheaper racing, amateur racing. I might be able to do some stuff in Europe next year. We'll see. It's cheaper, but IMSA has been unbelievable. It's been the best experience in my life, honestly.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for being here. Mikkel, to you. I know coming out of the car or coming out into this there were some emotions there. What has it meant to you to race with Steven and Hunter and the team?

MIKKEL JENSEN: It's just amazing to finish on top. It's been three awesome years together with ups and downs, but Steven is not only my Bronze driver, he's also become a great friend and a relationship I really appreciate. We have created memories for life here. That's why emotions are really, yeah, outside -- or really showing tonight.

It's just been an incredible end to the season. Steven has done his best driving ever, starting from the back of the field after getting his pole taken away, giving me the kind P1 after two and a half hours.

It's sad that the story is finishing here, but really appreciating to have been part of this program with Steven and TDS and Hunter as well. Yeah, great way to finish the season.

THE MODERATOR: Mikkel and Hunter, four wins now, back-to-back times two the last year and this year. What's it been to you?

HUNTER MCELREA: It means a lot. Yeah, it's been a crazy journey with Steven and Mikkel. I wouldn't be racing without this. It's been pretty crazy. Kind of went by really fast in a way. It feels like I just -- I actually got this drive because Mikkel sent me a message on Instagram asking many I wanted to drive. It was crazy for me.

It's been a life-changing opportunity. Yeah, I have to thank obviously Steven and Emily so much the last few years because it's been a lot of ups and downs. It hasn't been

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with our LMP2 winners from left to right, Steven Thomas, Mikkel Jensen, and Hunter McElrea. This is the sixth IMSA victory for TDS Racing, second consecutive win. Also the team's second straight win here at Motul Petit Le Mans.

Steven, just take us through kind of the emotions of this moment, having finishing up the season here with back-to-back victories for the second consecutive year (off microphone).

STEVEN THOMAS: One thing you left out, this is our second season Endurance Cup championship, which we also won tonight. I will say, before we got to Indianapolis, we thought we had no chance

So I would say, yeah, this is my final IMSA race, and it was actually really emotional. I was able to put it on pole in my final race, which was super exciting. Then like an hour later, they said, no, you failed scrutineering, you're out, you're starting in the back.

And then I started in the back, and it was just so much fun. When I got out of the car, I had done my drive time, and that was the end for me. Racing has been so wonderful to me, but then I handed it to the two best prototype drivers I think around, and I was pretty confident.

The NBC guy came by, and I told him, What do you think is going to happen? I said, I think we're going to win because I got Mikkel Jensen in the car, and he's the best in the business.

I would say as we got through the night realizing it was the



easy at times. I feel like results like this make it worth it, and he deserves it more than anything. He put it on pole and drove from last to first. Yeah, makes your life a little easier when your Bronze gives you the car in the lead.

Yeah, well-deserved for everyone. Yeah, deja vu of last year. Just ending on such a high. Really happy for everyone. Yeah, just trying to soak it up.

THE MODERATOR: We'll slide over to our GTD Pro winners and get questions going again, Paul Miller Racing BMW M4 GT3 EVO. From left to right, Max Hesse, Danny Harper, and Connor De Phillippi. Let's start with Max. This is the second win, but certainly a crowned jewel in IMSA, if not in all of sports car racing. What does it mean for you?

MAX HESSE: Yeah, it's awesome. A really big thank you to the team, to BMW, to my teammates. As you've mentioned, second victory. We won The Six Hours of Watkins and also now here. So being on the podium in Sebring and Indy. So Endurance Cup-wise we have done really, really well.

Had some potential I think in the sprint rounds, which we left on the table, so a bit disappointed we couldn't fight more for the championship in the end. But, yeah, we've got the Endurance Cup, so super excited for the first year here.

THE MODERATOR: Over to Dan. You started racing from the GTP pole. Obviously a good sign going into the roads. Tell us about it.

DAN HARPER: Max summed it up very well. It's been a very up-and-down season. The Sprint Cup not so good. Endurance Cup very good. It will be nice to go for a second attempt and put it all together in a championship fight, but that's not up to us.

Yeah, a great way to end the year, two poles in a row in Indy and here. A podium in Indy and now a victory here. It's all going to the guys. The pit stops were fantastic all race. They always brought us in at the right time. A bit of fortune has to go into that, but they were fast, no mistakes. Also, my teammates, no mistakes, and extremely fast and giving me the car in the lead and was able to bring it home.

Very happy and a great way to end the year.

THE MODERATOR: Connor, you had the -- how does this one compare?

CONNOR DE PHILLIPPI: It's amazing, honestly. It's been a while since I've won. This is my first one with BMW. Just happy to have that box checked. Obviously when I did win

that one, I was these young whippersnappers here, their age.

It's just great to see both of them. They've risen to the occasion all season. Especially this weekend. Started off with a bang on pole, and the whole race they both executed flawlessly, and we got to the lead early on and got the track position in clean air. And around this track clean air was everything. And we tried to maintain that the whole race, and we managed to do that.

We had great people calling strategy. At IMSA level, especially in the pro category, to get a win, it's literally an effort of, like, 25 people. It has nothing to do with only us. It's so many others. When everyone does a perfect job, whether it's pit stops, tire pressures, and all these little intricacies that you have to get right to get a win, and everyone did that today.

Just super proud of the entire team, both my teammates, and happy to get the win today.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Dan, you just said there is a bit of uncertainty regarding your BMW and GTD Pro and who is going to go and where? Do you think these boys have delivered -- you have left the impression that you'll be able to give it a second run next year?

DAN HARPER: Yeah, I mean, I think we've done good. Of course, there's always room for improvement from everyone's side, from the team. They made a mistake at some stage, I made a mistake at some stage. We for sure have learned so much. And yeah, it's always nice to go for a second attempt, I think, from what we've all learned and progressed through the year, that's what we want to do, so let's see.

THE MODERATOR: Anything to add, Max?

MAX HESSE: As Dan mentioned, generally the team has been doing really, really well this year having for the first time two cars, it's a huge effort. The guys really stepped up on it. Yeah, would be very happy to do another year. If not, I'm sure we will be busy somewhere else.

Q. For you guys, this was your first Petit. From us, the 48 was pretty much up there all race long. Was this a dream run for you guys in terms of coming here for the first time?

MAX HESSE: I would say so, yes. I think as Connor has mentioned, the track position was really key, so once he got that move down on the Porsche, I think around the



three-hour mark, I would say, that was really helping us a lot. I think we had great pace. Also towards the end of the race with the temperatures coming down, that normally helps our car a bit. Everything came together in the end.

Q. Connor, you drove both cars. How did that work out, and did it go to the plan that was sort of planned out before the race?

CONNOR DE PHILLIPPI: It went to plan, yeah. I think, unfortunately, with the 1 car having the problem early on, the focus shifted more towards the 48 and using more my drive time there versus the 1.

Overall, yeah, the weekend was pretty seamless. It was able to use me for different setup things throughout the weekend, and I think it led us down the path where we are now with having a fantastic race car.

The race was pretty straightforward. Just had to manage that four-hour rule and really just having to have two helmets, because each car wants the radio on the other side, so that was the most complicated part of it.

Q. Was that the first time you've done double-duty in a sports car race?

CONNOR DE PHILLIPPI: Actually the only other time I've done was 24 hours (indiscernible) the year I won it. So now I'm 2 for 2 doing double-duty. So hopefully I get another shot.

Q. Connor, Steven, and Mikkell have said they're moving on to new horizons in 2026. Where does this leave you?

HUNTER MCELREA: I don't know yet. Anybody able to drive?

Q. What was your reaction when they told you about the mechanical black light for the brake lights?

HUNTER MCELREA: I wasn't in the car for that.

MIKKEL JENSEN: You were.

HUNTER MCELREA: I didn't get the -- I didn't get told about it.

MIKKEL JENSEN: You blocked your chance --

HUNTER MCELREA: Oh, I don't know. I just found out. I got told to pit, and last year I got in trouble because I made fun of my engineer because I can't understand him because he's very French, but I'm not going to say that this

time. Yeah.

MIKKEL JENSEN: That's why you balked 15 laps earlier than planned and where why our whole race got into shit (laughing).

HUNTER MCELREA: No comment.

STEVEN THOMAS: I just wanted to say thanks to the media. In the five years that I've been involved in IMSA the sport has grown so much, and I think a lot of it is the great coverage and the story telling that you guys do. So, thanks, it's been really something to see the sport grow like this.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Steven.

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