

# Rolex 24 At DAYTONA

Sunday, January 28, 2024

Daytona, Florida, USA

**Russell Ward**

**Philip Ellis**

**Indy Dontje**

**Daniel Morad**

Media Conference



THE MODERATOR: As mentioned here, we have our GTD class winners, the 62nd Rolex 24 at Daytona in the No. 57 Winward Racing Mercedes AMG GT3, Russell Ward, Philip Ellis Indy Dontje, and Daniel Morad.

This is the third Rolex 24 victory for Mercedes, the second Rolex 24 win for Winward Racing. They also won in 2021 in the GTD class. Philip, Indy, and Russell were all part of that 2021 victory. This is their second win in the Rolex 24. Daniel won in the GTD class in 2017.

Guys, congratulations.

**Q. Russell, this car really seemed to come to life after sunset on Saturday night. What kind of adjustments did you make to really get this car in the window to where it can compete for what in the long run turned out to be quite a dominant victory?**

RUSSELL WARD: A lot of this work was done at the BOP test. We had a bit of an advantage there and got to experience the new tire, which was quite a bit different from last year's tire. We just kind of set the call for the long run. That's what we all like, and it's nice to put a fast lap together, but at the end of the day, you just want to be good on the long run. I think the engineers did a great job of doing that.

**Q. Daniel, not bad for a Twitch streamer. Talk to me about that. Did it seem at any point like, oh, no, after this caution flag came out that it -- did it ever feel like the win was being ripped away from you guys or did you feel like you had it under control?**

DANIEL MORAD: I was just reading Twitch Chat the whole time and having a good time. No, absolutely not. Obviously I wanted it to be an easy victory. We all did an amazing job building the gaps throughout all the stints. It

wasn't just me. It was every single person on the team, engineering staff. The whole prep on the car was phenomenal. A lot easier this year than last year having a car that was designed for the race.

But if that didn't happen, then I probably wouldn't be here right now. Everything happens for a reason, and I'm super pumped to be driving with these guys. We all did this together. It wasn't one specific person. We all put in a hell of an effort.

**Q. Indy, you're now part of the -- it's been quite a successful run for Dutch drivers in the last couple years, the two wins for Renger, he's known as "Rolex Renger," as you know in the Netherlands. We've had the wins for Rik Breukers, for Catsburg, now yourself being part of that group of two-time winners, and also given the role that Renger played in the earlier stages of your career, what does it mean to you?**

INDY DONTJE: Yeah, obviously it's a great feeling. It's a shame that Renger couldn't be on the podium with me because it would be an awesome feeling.

But two-time winner of the Rolex 24 is an amazing feeling, and I'm really happy that I could do it together with Winward Racing and all my teammates from this car.

Daniel wasn't there in the first one, but I'm really happy that we joined this race together, and it came all together. It was a really exciting race in the end. I couldn't watch. But in the end we won it, so really happy with that.

**Q. Russell and Philip, after winning in your debut this race, you've come back, you've done it again. How does that speak to what you built as a team and what does it say about Winward Racing?**

RUSSELL WARD: It's a constant evolution in racing. If you're not pushing the limits and trying to improve every year and someone else is, someone else is going to beat you.

That's kind of the passion that we have. We've had a pretty consistent crew over the past five years who have



stayed with us and really helped us be successful. We try to keep the same drivers on board. We want to develop as a team and move forward as one.

This one is pretty special to me. The first one wasn't luck, of course. Everybody put their work in. But to come here and do it again, we've been pretty close the past two years, but just really haven't had the luck to get it done, and to come back and close it off for the second time in 2024 is a great feeling.

PHILIP ELLIS: I can just agree with Russell, to be honest. I think we've had a great time since we started actually ^ mission pine challenge. First took steps there in GT4. Immediately the team was successful.

And then as I said the first entry in 2021 starting off with a win at the Rolex was the best start you could hope for.

I think we had a strong season and both last years for the full season, not only spin but also endurance. Not always super lucky, but I think it shows the potential of the team, and now today we just nailed it, or the entire last two weeks everybody nailed their job, and I think that's the outcome.

RUSSELL WARD: Just to add on to it, the key to winning this race is just keeping the car clean. The car that we won in 2021 is sitting in the shop in the same condition without a scratch on it, and this one, likewise, not a scratch on it. Really awesome to see it.

**Q. Daniel and Philip, I'd love to get some thoughts on the model I think of winning in GTD here. I expect Mercedes AMG GT3 to be in the mix driving around all the other models out there. What do you see about this particular mark that makes it stand out here at Daytona?**

PHILIP ELLIS: Look, I think the Mercedes itself has always been -- since it's been in GT3 has always been one of the most consistent cars in pretty much every championship it has been running in.

It's always been one of the front runners. It's never been like a super dominant car at a particular track, but has always been very good and has always had the potential to win pretty much every race, which is certainly a very good point to have with a car, and the brand of course that we always are in the mix. But we never go to a track where we have a super big advantage over another car.

So it's a bit of both, but I think that's the main thing we have with the brand from AMG, which we as drivers just can just derive gratitude for.

DANIEL MORAD: Having driven for a few times, I can probably share a bit more about that. I've been with some teams that let's say were less experienced and some teams that are really top-notch, and obviously you can tell which one is top-notch.

But yeah, just driving the Winward car, it's really nice. It's always prepared well. But with the AMG platform, it's really hard to get it wrong. You can be a new team and not have a lot of experience and the window is really large.

You hear earlier the Ferrari guys were saying they had to do a lot of development to get it in that window. I think the Porsche guys also struggled with that with their 992, and with the AMG it seems like drivable with almost anything on the car, and it's easy to adapt.

Whether the setup is perfect or not, you can drive around it just with the tools, the simple tools in the cockpit actually. It's a very, very simple car.

I think that's what's beautiful about it, as well. It's not too complex. It's just a raw race car.

The moment I started driving the AMG I fell in love with it. Also because I got results straight away.

To win Daytona with AMG now, it's definitely ticked off one big box on my list.

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