

Rolex 24 At DAYTONA

Thursday, January 22, 2026

Daytona, Florida, USA

Zacharie Robichon

Alexander Sims

Jeremy Clarke

Jack Aitken

Media Conference



This is his second pole here at Daytona. They won the 2021 GTLM qualifying race here. His co-drivers are Antonio Garcia and Marvin Kirchofer. Alex is the 2024 WeatherTech GTD Pro champion alongside his co-driver Garcia. Looking for his first victory in the Rolex 24 at Daytona. His best results here previously were GTLM in 2021 and GTD Pro last year, second place finishes.

Alex, congratulations on your pole position. Seems like the Corvette was pretty fast there today certainly from our perspective. Tell us about it.

ALEXANDER SIMS: Yeah, Corvette was working really nicely in the qualifying session. It's quite a privilege, honestly, to be able to drive here on low fuel and the car just comes alive compared to most of the state that you drive in during practice where you're focusing on race prep.

So yeah, it was just nice conditions, able to get a nice gap, just focus on my own driving for a few laps, and yeah, hook it all together.

As I say, Corvette is working well, and hopefully we can carry that through to the race.

THE MODERATOR: We'll slide over to our LMP2 pole winner, Jeremy Clarke in the No. 43 Inter Europol Competition ORECA LMP2 07. Jeremy's best lap was 1:39.952 seconds. This is his second career IMSA pole, also his second consecutive IMSA pole. He qualified on pole for Motul Petit Le Mans to close out the 2025 season last October.

This is his first Rolex 24 at Daytona appearance. He is co-driving with Tom Dillman, Bijoy Garg, and Antonio Felix da Costa. His pole was just .008 seconds over PJ Hyett, top 6 in LMP2 covered by .882 seconds.

Jeremy, congratulations. Another close field, close margin. What made the difference in qualifying for you today, and what does that mean for the race this weekend?

JEREMY CLARKE: Yeah, I think we spent most of the roar kind of dialing in the car and honestly the temperatures have changed a lot since then. We worked

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everybody. We'll start with our GTD pole winner to your left, Zacharie Robichon, driver of the No. 27 Heart of Racing Team Aston Martin Vantage GT3 Evo. His best time was 1:45.113 seconds. This was his sixth career IMSA pole, second pole here at Daytona. Also started from the pole in GTD class in 2020. His last pole came at Watkins Glen in June of last year.

The first to second place is covered by just .074 seconds. Top 10 covered by .884 seconds. Six different manufacturers in the top 10 in GTD. Zach's co-drivers are Tom Gamble, Dudu Barrichello, and Mattia Drudi, and Zach is the 2022 GTD class winner here at the Rolex 24 at Daytona.

Zach, congratulations on the pole. Obviously a huge field and pretty close margin there. What made the difference today?

ZACHARIE ROBICHON: Yeah, I think to your point, it feels really tight. I think it could have gone to any number of cars. I think I got really good timing. We found a good gap on the track, and as is often the case here in Daytona, it's kind of situational on getting that pole position, getting a good clean lap, especially on the banking if you can get a little bit of a draft it helps.

Ultimately a great place to start a 24-hour race, but as we know, not necessarily a deciding factor.

THE MODERATOR: We'll slide over to the center, and our GTD Pro Motul Pole Award winner, Alexander Sims in the No. 3 Corvette Racing Corvette CO6 GT3R. Alex's best time was 1:45.106 seconds. This is his third career IMSA pole. His last pole came at Canadian Tire Motorsport Park in the GTD Pro Class in July of 2024.



pretty hard to try and figure out where the car window was going to be for this qualifying, and I think the team did a great job of getting the car where we needed it to be able to put down that lap.

As you said, the field is extremely tight. PJ was right there. Really, this track is so technical in some places but yet just takes a lot of courage through some of the fast corners, so it was all about kind of putting in the lap that you really needed to.

Q. It looked like the wind started to play a little bit bigger of a factor in that LMP2 session. Talk about that a little bit going into Turn 1.

JEREMY CLARKE: Yeah, into Turn 1 I had a couple little slides. It was tough to kind of get the right feeling. It felt like the wind kicked in right as the kind of apex crossed over and you'd lose the rear. You just had to really be patient and pay attention to what was happening, but definitely the wind, it felt like every lap it was doing something a little bit different, so it wasn't -- it just wasn't consistent.

Q. Alex, last year a Corvette took a class win here, but it was the 13 car as opposed to one of the Pratt Miller cars. Is there a sense of trying to restore honor for the victory team this year?

ALEXANDER SIMS: Well, I don't think it was lack of honor. To be honest we finished second right behind the Ford. We had a decent race last year, as well. It was great to see the AWAA car get the class win last year.

But yeah, our focus is pretty much on our program and what we're doing this year, trying to optimize everything we've got. Seems like the car is in a decent spot right now, but yeah, qualifying race versus race pace is a bit of a different story, so quite quickly our focus goes back on to high fuel runs and trying to get the car dialed in for that.

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by our GTP and overall Motul Pole Award winner here at the Rolex 24 at Daytona in the No. 31 Cadillac Whelen V-Series.R, Jack Aitken. Jack's best lap was 1:33.939 seconds. This is his third career IMSA pole position, first at Daytona International Speedway. His last pole came in September 2024 at Indianapolis.

Cadillac's last Rolex 24 at Daytona pole was in 2024 with Pipo Derani in the No. 31. Top 9 in GTP were separated by .953 seconds. Jack's co-drivers are Earl Bamber, Frederik Vesti, and Connor Zilisch.

Jack, congratulations on the pole. It looks like as I

mentioned there from front to back a pretty close gap. What do you expect as you look ahead to the race, and what did you have to do to score the pole here today?

JACK AITKEN: Yeah, as always with a qually here it's a little bit going into the unknown because there's not a big focus on qualifying through the practice sessions, and we're very tight on our tire allocation and time on track frankly, so we don't tend to want to spend it on qually sims.

I know some guys did this morning, so we took what we could from those runs to learn as much as we could about this new tire and then just rolled the dice a little bit.

It's a lot of fun because you go into the unknown and you have to judge it lap by lap quite a lot. And the car was a bit loose, which made it a bit scary at times, but clearly it's fast. Yeah, the Whelen Cadillac guys did a really good job to sort out a great car for me. So yeah, it was a lot of fun.

Q. How confident were you? At one point Renger obviously took pole from you. You had it first, then he took it. How confident were you that you were going to be able to come back and get that, and were you surprised there wasn't a little bit more at the very end of the session, that it wasn't challenged even more so?

JACK AITKEN: I could see Renger in front of me actually so it was a good gauge. When we finished the first laps, like flying laps, I could see it going away from me so I was like, that's not good.

Sort of got going after that and put a couple of good laps in even if they were scrappy, and I thought that's as good as I can do. I peeled off into the pits because these tires do have a peak and then a drop, so I was just hoping nobody had done anything really weird and gone out super late or anything because if you're just pounding around you're not going to improve.

But yeah, there was still nervous moments waiting in pit lane. It's a big moment to get your first pole here, so...

Q. This was the first qualifying with the new tire from Michelin. How was your experience with this one?

JACK AITKEN: It was -- there wasn't anything standout. I think most of the improvements and changes are something that you'll see more in the race with cold tire performance and the long stint performance has changed a fair bit.

But for qualifying over one lap, it peaks pretty hard just like it used to. Lap 4 or so is kind of when you get that peak grip and you've got a couple laps to do it, and if you don't,



then it does drop away quite sharply.

It's still a good tire in that sense, but not a lot of changes from last year I would say.

Q. Jack, you mentioned the focus on race running. Kind of talk about your confidence level on long runs, particularly I know you haven't had a lot of representative running yet but stuff like double and triple stints. What do you think that's going to look like?

JACK AITKEN: I think, yeah, we're pretty confident with what we can do in terms of the medium and double stinting because I think that's -- even though the temperatures are getting a bit higher over the weekend, it'll be fun. It's a little bit ugly, but you can get it done.

The soft tire is also not looking bad, I would say. We haven't gone outright for a long run stint equivalent during practice because again, we just don't have the time, so it's lots of short runs, and they never quite behave the same as one big stint.

Looking at what others are doing, everyone was in the same boat a little bit. I think we're in decent shape, but it's very, very hard to tell, as always, at this point in the weekend. You'll get your answers, I think, a few hours into the race.

Q. Jack, a lot was made about this new "One Cadillac" mantra. What might that look like in the early stages of Saturday and Sunday's race?

JACK AITKEN: I don't think there's going to be any changes. It worked well last year, so it's good that we've got more than one Caddy towards the front, and they have been strong all week. The Wayne Taylor cars, as well.

I think the approach will be the same. We'll help each other out where we can and try not to make life too difficult if there's stuff that we can do to help each other in terms of strategy, we'll always look at that, as well, and it's just keeping the communication open.

I doubt there will be a fixed plan. It's always hard to do that with racing. But yeah.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports