

Rolex 24 At DAYTONA

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Daytona, Florida, USA

Jack Aitken

Earl Bamber

Connor Zilisch

Frederick Vesti

Media Conference



THE MODERATOR: We're joined by our second place finishers here at the 64th Rolex 24, co-drivers of the No. 31 Cadillac Whelen Cadillac V-Series.R from left to right, Earl Bamber, Connor Zilisch, Frederick Vesti, and Jack Aitken.

Jack, take us through that last sequence there. Looked very close there a few times. Tell us about it.

JACK AITKEN: Yeah, I mean, we had a really tough 24 hours, I would say. It was not straightforward at all. Had quite a few setbacks, and the guys all around from the team and the pit box to my teammates here did a fantastic job to get us back into race-winning position at the end of the race.

Having said that, the Porsches were very strong all race. It was impressive. We came after them and tried to challenge as best we could. I got close a few times, but just didn't quite have enough to get the move done.

I think both Felipe and I were struggling with tires in the heat. It was a bit of back and forth all the way. Yeah, just unfortunately fell a bit short, which is really heartbreaking, but we put a great run together, and I'm proud of that.

Q. Certainly there was one time in particular in the final hour where you got alongside, and if you could just talk about that. Did you ever have a point where you thought, this is going to be it?

JACK AITKEN: I think I had a couple of moments where I stuck my nose in there, but it was always from a bit further back and a bit just trying to make something happen. I never got a super, super great run on him into Turn 1. It was always creeping up to his corner.

So yeah, I was trying to find an opening here or there, and it was a fine line between making a gap open up and just

causing a bit of an accident.

I tried as best I could to get alongside, but couldn't get level, couldn't make the move stick. Yeah, I tried, but couldn't do it.

Q. Jack, with about 20 or so minutes to go, we saw Felipe Nasr shut the door on you going into the road course portion. Not sure if that's what Holly was getting at, but what was your view and your experience like in that situation, and was that the last moment where you could have possibly gotten the job done?

JACK AITKEN: It was aggressive, but yeah, I think I would have probably done the same. There was a half of a gap there, so I went for it. The half of a gap turned into none of a gap, and we both did a good job to not have an accident.

It's frustrating, but I'm not going to sit here and say, oh, he should have jumped out of the way or whatever. I think it was just hard racing, and I was trying to make something happen.

Yeah, nothing really safe from my point of view.

Q. I know none of you want to finish second, I get that. Is there something to be said for coming back through and being where you were at the end?

FREDERICK VESTI: Yeah, it was a super tough race, first of all, we had a setback in the middle of the night and kind of felt a bit lost, but then suddenly the full caution yellow put us back into the game and we had go pace in the car, which sort of gave us that opportunity back into the race, fight for top position.

Yeah, I'm very proud of the team, the mechanics and everyone. The engineers kept us pushing and they kept us in the game.

So yeah, it was cool.

Q. For Earl, I wanted to ask about the way the race played out. For a lot of it, it looked like the Porsches maybe had something in the pocket to be able to pull



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away whenever they needed to. They controlled a lot of this one. Did you expect that it would come down to a showdown? Did you expect the Cadillac had something at the end to be that close?

EARL BAMBER: Yeah, I mean, we could see already from the first stint, I think there was just three cars in the race most of the time, which was just the 6, the 7 and the 31. It was similar to what it was last year at the end of the year.

They're a really formidable opponent, and coming here, they're always going to be strong. We put our best foot forward, and I think the team should be proud. If you can't win, then you finish second, right? I think it's an awesome job from everyone on the team, engineers and everything like that.

We had a long drought of podiums last year without one and then we won the last two races and now we're just bitterly disappointed for the second. Just shows the standard that we always want to come here and just expect to win.

Q. For Connor, I know we had you in here a few hours ago and you wore the mistake during your stint. Knowing that you're this close, how do you wear that now? Is it magnified a little bit more?

CONNOR ZILISCH: Yeah, obviously I was upset at myself, but I ended up the cautions fell at the right time and put us back in the race. Maybe it would have helped to have track position earlier, but I don't know if it really affected the outcome.

I think the Porsches were really strong, and I think everybody saw that from testing until now.

Yeah, I definitely kicked myself and was definitely upset, but looking at it from a bird's eye view, I don't know if it really affected the outcome.

Q. Connor, this is your first time in the top class. How did this compare to driving the LMP 2 car a few years ago?

CONNOR ZILISCH: Yeah, it was awesome showing up and learning. When I first showed up I had a lot to make um and figure out, and I felt like come race time I was pretty comfortable and could hold my own on the track.

I'm super grateful for all three of these guys. They took me under their wing and allowed me to learn from them, and they didn't shy back of trying to help me as much as they could.

That definitely made a difference, and I'm grateful that I had such a great team around me to be able to allow me to come in and learn and grow and take the time to figure things out.

But yeah, I'm just so proud of the entire team. It was a long race. We definitely had a lot of setbacks. It was a unique 24. I think everybody can say that.

But for me, I just think learning the car and learning the traffic and figuring everything out was a lot of fun, and it was a challenge racing against the best of the best in the world.

Having to go against a lot of guys who are factory drivers, do this all the time, and for me it's kind of once a year. I know what I'm stepping into when I do it, and I know that I need to step up and be good for my team and not let my team down.

Grateful they gave me the chance, and hopefully I can come back.

Q. The Cadillacs obviously had some changes coming into this year. Now that you've had a chance to properly get a taste of it in the racing scenarios with the aero kit and the brake change, has it achieved its goals? Does it feel like a raceable car when you get into these races and you're fighting through traffic?

EARL BAMBER: Yeah, I think it definitely -- we achieved our goals. It was better in traffic, especially around the GT cars and stuff like that. That was one of the goals was just to get a bit more raceability. Obviously it's still hard to follow.

We could see that with Jack where I think it's just the style of this racing. When you get quite close everyone just stalls out because they're all so close, the cars. Any little bit of loss of downforce is hindering on tire performance.

Then on the brake stuff, yeah, it just made it a bit easier for us to manage and use. Yeah, I think that was a successful upgrade for us.

Q. Jack, looking at your body language here, I know you mentioned earlier that this is heartbreaking, but I also know a racer's mentality is just maximizing the situation. Do you feel like you maximized that final stint and trying to chase down Felipe? If not, what more could you have done?

JACK AITKEN: I mean, I felt like I gave it everything, just like pretty much anytime you're getting in these cars. I think this is the second time I've been second at this race.

I think we all would have been over the moon to have overcome such a tough race and formidable opponents. It's just a bit bitter at the moment, but I think as a team we did everything we could have.

I'm not really looking back at anything with regret. When I just got out of the car I was thinking maybe I should have just hit him, but that's obviously past and faded, and it was a good fair race.

Yeah, it's just bitter right now because it's fresh, but I think we can be proud, and I'm proud, as well.

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