

FORD GT CAPTURES PETIT LE MANS GTLM POLE, THIRD OF 2016 WEATHERTECH CHAMPIONSHIP FOR WESTBROOK

Friday, September 30, 2016

Tags: [Ford Chip Ganassi Racing No. 67](#) [Richard Westbrook](#)



Two GT Le Mans (GTLM) poles in 2016 just weren't enough, so Richard Westbrook made it three during Friday's qualifying for the Petit Le Mans presented by Harrah's Cherokee Casino Resort at Road Atlanta.

The Brit secured his trifecta thanks to a record-setting lap of 1:18.131 (117.0 mph) around the 2.54-mile, 12-turn circuit in the No. 67 Ford Chip Ganassi Racing Ford GT during the 15-minute qualifying session.

The third pole for Westbrook was the fifth of the year for Ford Chip Ganassi Racing, with co-driver Ryan Briscoe taking the pole at Circuit of The Americas and Dirk Mueller putting the team's Le Mans-winning No. 66 entry on the pole at Road America earlier in the year.

Westbrook and Briscoe, joined by four-time IndyCar champion Scott Dixon, head into the finale trailing GTLM points leaders Oliver Gavin and Tommy Milner by 11 points, 314-303, with only 10 hours of racing remaining. Milner, who will also be joined by Marcel Fassler, struggled in qualifying, taking seventh on the GTLM grid in the No. 4 Corvette Racing Chevrolet Corvette C7.R.

"It's a show of intention, how we're going to attack the race, and we're just going to try to keep it at the front," Westbrook said. "It's all we can do. At Petit Le Mans, you can have a good car during the day but all that matters is what you have at night. (The championship) is a longshot, but it's our intention to keep our car at the front and give us the best chance of winning. But honestly, whoever wins the championship, they thoroughly deserved it. It's been a great fight with the No. 4 car all year and we're going to try to take it to the end."

Starting second in GTLM will be the No. 3 Corvette Racing Chevrolet Corvette C7.R in the hands of Antonio Garcia. The Spaniard posted a time of 118.283 (116.8 mph). He and co-drivers Jan Magnussen and Mike Rockenfeller enter the race looking for a second victory of the season for the No. 3 car.

Toni Vilander qualified third in GTLM with a best lap of 118.294 (116.7 mph) in the No. 62 Risi Competizione Ferrari 488 GTE. He and co-driver Giancarlo Fisichella, also joined by James Calado, are looking for their first victory of the season.

View full results via Al Kamel Systems at Results.IMSA.com

NOTEBOOK

- In GTLM, the five fastest qualifiers were all under Nick Tandy's track record of 1:18.350 (116.7 mph), set in 2014.
- Patrick Pilet, Nick Tandy and Richard Lietz – the defending overall and GTLM class winners of the Petit Le Mans – will start 10th in the class sharing the No. 911 Porsche 911 RSR. While the trio won last year's event that was shortened due to heavy rain, Saturday's forecast calls for sunny skies with temperatures in the low 80s.
- Sunday's on-track activities begin with a 20-minute warm-up at 8:40 a.m. ET. Petit Le Mans will be streamed live from 11 a.m.-9:30 p.m. ET on FOX Sports Go with FS1 authentication. Live television coverage begins from 11 a.m.- noon ET on FS1, resuming from 2:30-6 p.m. on FS2. There will be a three-hour highlight program on FS1 on Monday, Oct. 3, at 7 p.m. ET.