



## **Koch Reaches Double Digits with Wire-to-Wire Victory at Road Atlanta**

**BRASELTON, Ga. (Oct. 1, 2015)** – The 2015 victory counter has ticked into the double digits for Kenton Koch.

Koch, 21, from Glendora, California, won Round 13 of the Cooper Tires Prototype Lites Powered by Mazda on Thursday, Oct. 1 at Road Atlanta in the No. 60 JDC Motorsports entry. He started from the pole and beat teammate Matt McMurry to the finish by 4.871 seconds.

It was the 10<sup>th</sup> victory in 13 starts this season for 2015 Lites 1 Drivers Champion Koch, the first double-digit win total for a Lites 1 driver since Tristan Nunez won 11 of 14 races en route to the 2012 championship.

“Nice and smooth,” Koch said. “I just did my thing, kept my head down and had some fun. I can’t thank the JDC guys and Mazda enough for giving me an awesome car.”

McMurry, from Phoenix, earned his seventh podium finish of the season in the No. 20 JDC Motorsports entry. Robert Alon, from Encino, California, finished third in the No. 00 Performance Tech Motorsports car for his fifth podium finish of the season.

Austin Versteeg, from Sandy, Utah, placed fourth in the No. 16 Performance Tech Motorsports entry. Jon Brownson, from Breckenridge, Colorado, rounded out the top five and was the top Lites 1 Masters finisher in the No. 34 Eurosport Racing car.

Todd Slusher, from Las Vegas, won the Lites 2 class in the No. 62 ONE Motorsports entry.

Koch pulled away from the pole at the start and never trailed during the 30-minute race. He built a 2.158-second lead after just two laps around the 12-turn, 2.54-mile circuit

The only time Koch was threatened came after the only full-course yellow of the race, which occurred nine minutes into the race when Lites 1 Masters driver Don Yount made contact with the wall in Turn 7. Koch led Robert Alon by 5.859 seconds at that point.

The field bunched up for the restart, giving Alon, McMurry and Clark Toppe a chance at hanging with Koch.

Not a chance.



**CONTACT:**  
Paul Kelly  
paul@grand-solutions.net  
315.715.1291





Koch pulled away on the restart with 16 minutes remaining in the race and cruised to the finish.

“I’m not going to just take it easy on them,” Koch said of the competition. “I want to go out there and have some fun and do the best I can, show them what I can do.”

While Koch was on easy street at the front, Alon, McMurry and Toppe produced a fantastic, ebb-and-flow race for second place.

Their tight race started on the first lap, when they went side by side from Turns 10 through 12 and down the front straightaway. It didn’t let up until there were about 12 minutes left in the race for the International Motor Sports Association (IMSA) Official Development Series.

McMurry repeatedly looked for spots to pass Alon until the full-course yellow, taking a peek but unable to make the decisive move. Finally, after the restart, McMurry passed Alon for good in Turn 3 with about 13 minutes left.

Toppe was in the mix among McMurry and Alon, but he slowed on the backstretch in the No. 10 JDC Motorsports entry with 12 minutes left and was forced to pit. Toppe was credited with 21<sup>st</sup> place.

“It was a fun race,” McMurry said. “Just constant battling, figuring out where to get him. Eventually I got Robert into Turn 3. It was just strategy, really.

“After a whole bunch of laps, I would always get him going into (Turn) 1. He would go right; I would go left. Then he would get screwed up, and I would get him up the hill. I just had to get everything together to finally get by him.”

McMurry then pulled away to beat Alon to the line by 8.533 seconds. He pulled to within three points, 164-161, of Alon in the race for third place in the standings behind Koch and Toppe.

“It was pretty close racing up there with Matt McMurry and Clark Toppe, but that’s the fun of it,” Alon said. “We had some close racing for a majority of the race, and then my car just fell off and I didn’t have the pace to stay with them.”

## Masters



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Paul Kelly  
paul@grand-solutions.net  
315.715.1291





The race for the top step of the Lites 1 Masters podium opened considerably before the green flag flew to begin the race, as two-time reigning class champion John Falb didn't start due to mechanical problems suffered in qualifying in the No. 77 ONE Motorsports car.

So with Falb's absence, two-time Lites 1 Masters series champion Brownson emerged for his second class win in just five starts this season.

Brownson started from the Lites 1 Masters pole and never trailed in the No. 34 Eurosport Racing entry. He beat Gerry Kraut to the finish by 17.137 seconds.

"That was a thrilling race; there's no other way to put it," Brownson said. "To be up there and feel like we're competing again toward the top of the ladder is a wonderful sensation. Thanks to the lovely car that Eurosport gave me to race today. It felt good. All that training on my spin bike in the sauna is paying off."

Much like the race for the overall victory, Brownson cruised while a ferocious chase for the remaining podium spots unfolded behind him.

Kraut, from St. Paul, Minnesota, earned his second podium finish in just his fifth start of the season in the No. 55 JDC Motorsports entry. He finished eighth overall after qualifying 15<sup>th</sup>.

Gary Gibson, from Riverwoods, Illinois, placed third in the No. 13 Comprint Motor Sports entry in his first start in the series since 2013 at Road Atlanta.

"First time back in a fast car in a long time," Gibson said. "I needed two more sessions before the race, but I'm slowly getting there. The car was really good. We had some good racing, side by side."

Kraut and Gibson took the final two podium spots after separate incidents involving Michal Chlumecky and Gerhard Watzinger.

Chlumecky, from Windsor, Ontario, was running second when he spun in the No. 31 Eurosport Racing car with 15 minutes left in the race. Watzinger, from Miami, was running second in the No. 32 ONE Motorsports entry when he was nudged from behind and spun with about seven minutes remaining in the race.

Those incidents allowed Kraut and Gibson to climb into the podium spots.



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paul@grand-solutions.net  
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Gibson's timing couldn't have been better. He passed both Chlumecky and Joel Janco shortly before those two drivers waged a side-by-side fight for fourth place over the final two laps, with Janco prevailing for fourth in the No. 25 Performance Tech Motorsports entry. Chlumecky then spun on the final lap, dropping him to seventh in class.

## Lites 2

Slusher earned his first victory since Round 5 in June at Watkins Glen International, also stopping a five-race winning streak by two-time reigning Lites 2 champion and current points leader Brian Alder.

The race for the top step of the Lites 2 podium was a microcosm of the racing throughout the 22-car overall field – fast and thrilling.

Alder, from Dublin, Ohio, started from the pole in the No. 22 BAR 1 Motorsports entry, but he and Slusher exchanged the class lead at least three times during the 30-minute race.

The decisive sequence between the two came with five minutes left.

Slusher had passed Alder for the lead but then was caught in traffic, nearly spinning. Alder closed on Slusher, running in his tire tracks.

Then a spin on the final lap by another driver forced Slusher to slow quickly, and Alder regained the lead. But Alder went off track in Turn 10 on the final lap, and Slusher drove past for the victory by just .170 of a second.

"That was probably the most competitive race between me and Brian all year," Slusher said. "I think there were two or three lead changes. An absolute battle, dealing with traffic, dealing with changing track conditions and tires.

"Hat's off to Brian for not giving up. Hat's off to myself for not giving up and just going for 30 minutes of the best competition we could muster. It was good stuff. If we had cameras, you guys would have been on the edge of your seats."

Alder's lead in the Lites 2 standings reduced to 240-232 with one race remaining. He only needs to start Round 14, which starts at 8 a.m. (ET) Friday, to win his third consecutive Lites 2 Drivers Championship.



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“Great battle with Todd out there all day,” Alder said. “I think we swapped the lead three or four times. Good, clean racing. I passed him on the last lap. Then I got squeezed off in (Turn) 7, and he got me back. And he took the win.

“Best race we’ve had together all season. I’m looking forward to another good one tomorrow.”

John Salmon, from Lynchburg, Virginia, placed third in the No. 46 ODU Engineering Race Team entry.

### Up Next

Round 14, a 45-minute race, will start at 8 a.m. (ET) Friday, Oct. 2.

For live timing, visit [scoring.imsa.com](http://scoring.imsa.com) or the new IMSA mobile app for iOS, Android or Windows. For live updates on all the action, follow @IMSA Live on Twitter.

### ROUND 13 POST-RACE QUOTES

**KENTON KOCH (No. 60 JDC Motorsports, winner):** “Nice and smooth. I just kind of drove. I just did my thing, kept my head down and had some fun. I can’t thank the JDC guys and Mazda enough for giving me an awesome car.” (Did the car behave differently today in cooler conditions?): “The track was greasier yesterday. It was bit hotter, and we were struggling for grip. We were trying some stuff out yesterday. Today for qualifying we put on the original setup we would normally be running, and it worked. I got pole, and that helped out for the race.” (How important is it for you to end this season on a winning note?): “I’m not going to just take it easy on them. I want to go out there and have some fun and do the best I can, show them what I can do.”

**MATT McMURRY (No. 20 JDC Motorsports, second):** “It was a fun race. Just constant battling, figuring out where to get him (Robert Alon). Eventually I got Robert into Turn 3. It was just strategy, really. After a whole bunch of laps, I would always get him going into (Turn) 1. He would go right; I would go left. Then he would get screwed up, and I would get him up the hill. I just had to get everything together to finally get by him.” (Did the car handle differently in the cooler conditions?): “Yeah, I think so. It felt a little bit better than yesterday. I couldn’t feel a huge difference, but there was a little bit. There’s always going to be more straight-line speed when you’re in cool weather and a little more mechanical grip.”



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[paul@grand-solutions.net](mailto:paul@grand-solutions.net)  
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**ROBERT ALON (No. 00 Performance Tech Motorsports, third):** “Going into the race I felt good. We had a good qualifying session. P2 is pretty strong for us. We had a strong car. It was pretty close racing up there with Matt McMurry and Clark Toppe, but that’s the fun of it. We had some close racing for a majority of the race, and then my car just fell off and I didn’t have the pace to stay with them. Hopefully we can have the car tomorrow to keep it up there.”

**JON BROWNSON (No. 34 Eurosport Racing, first Lites Masters):** “That was a thrilling race; there’s no other way to put it. To be up there and feel like we’re competing again toward the top of the ladder is a wonderful sensation. Thanks to the lovely car that Eurosport gave me to race today. It felt good. All that training on my spin bike in the sauna is paying off. I think if the weather stays similar to this, we won’t change a thing.”

**GERRY KRAUT (No. 55 JDC Motorsports, second Lites Masters):** “At least I redeemed myself from an awful qualifying session. I was reasonably good in practice. I just blew it today, started 15<sup>th</sup>. So this is a good finish for me, eighth overall and second in Masters. I’m happy.”

**GARY GIBSON (No. 13 Comprent Motor Sports, third Lites Masters):** “It was fun. First time back in a fast car in a long time. I needed two more sessions before the race, but I’m slowly getting there. The car was really good. They kind of hit it in the middle. Sometimes there was push; sometimes there was oversteer. I was spending a lot of time moving the bar around. But overall the car was really good. We had some good racing, side by side. I had a lot of fun. I got to pass a lot of people, went from 18<sup>th</sup> to ninth.”

**TODD SLUSHER (No. 62 ONE Motorsports, winner Lites 2):** “That was probably the most competitive race between me and Brian (Alder) all year. I think there were two or three lead changes. An absolute battle, dealing with traffic, dealing with changing track conditions and tires. Hat’s off to Brian for not giving up. Hat’s off to myself for not giving up and just going for 30 minutes of the best competition we could muster. It was good stuff. If we had cameras, you guys would have been on the edge of your seats. I’m pretty happy with the result. Taking first is a nice feeling at this point. It’s been a while since I’ve been on the top shelf. Just a great, great day. I had a blast out there. I’ve got to give it to my guys at ONE Motorsports. They’re just a fantastic crew. I’ve had a great car all season. This was no different today.”

**BRIAN ALDER (No. 22 BAR1 Motorsports, second Lites 2):** “The Top 1 Oil car was awesome today. Best car I’ve had all weekend. We were running quicker than we qualified. Great battle with Todd (Slusher) out there all day. I think we swapped the lead



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three or four times. Good, clean racing. I passed him on the last lap. Then I got squeezed off in (Turn) 7, and he got me back. And he took the win. Hat's off to him. Best race we've had together all season. I'm looking forward to another good one tomorrow."

**JOHN SALMON (No. 46 ODU Engineering Race Team, third Lites 2):** "That was awesome. That was one of my best races. Our position doesn't show it, but that was great racing. There was a lot of green flag, and I stayed on pace and felt like I could fight the whole time. Unfortunately, I had some spins in front of me and some action that pushed me back a little bit, so I couldn't really be in contention with Brian (Alder) or Todd (Slusher). But the whole year has been to try to get on pace, and I think we were able to do that, so that makes the whole year a success for me."

### **Cooper Tires Prototype Lites Powered by Mazda**

Cooper Tires Prototype Lites Powered by Mazda, an International Motor Sports Association (IMSA) Development Series, is in its 10<sup>th</sup> season in 2015. The series provides thrilling action and grooms drivers for future TUDOR United SportsCar Championship competition in the Prototype and Prototype Challenge classes.

The two classes of competition in the Cooper Tires Prototype Lites Powered by Mazda series take drivers and teams down unique, exciting roads of prototype sports car racing. Nimble, high-tech, purpose-built Lites 1 machines pack in the power with a 230-horsepower, 2-liter Mazda engine designed to prepare aspiring professionals for prototype competition in the TUDOR United SportsCar Championship and offer a challenging environment for mature semi-professional drivers, including competition in a Masters Championship. Equally capable and cost-effective Lites 2 machines offer new competitors a perfect introduction to the world-class competition offered by IMSA.

For more information about Cooper Tires Prototype Lites Powered by Mazda, visit [www.imsa.com](http://www.imsa.com), follow hashtag #CTPL @IMSA on Twitter or IMSA on Facebook.

### **About IMSA**

The International Motor Sports Association, LLC (IMSA) was originally founded in 1969 with a long and rich history in sports car racing. Today, IMSA is the sanctioning body of the TUDOR United SportsCar Championship, the premier sports car racing series in North America, which will become the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship in 2016. IMSA also sanctions the Continental Tire SportsCar Challenge and the Cooper Tires Prototype Lites Powered by Mazda, as well as four single-make series: Porsche



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GT3 Cup Challenge USA by Yokohama; Ultra 94 Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge Canada by Michelin; Ferrari Challenge North America; and Lamborghini Super Trofeo North America. IMSA – a company within the NASCAR Holdings group – is the exclusive strategic partner in North America with the Automobile Club de l'Ouest (ACO), which operates the 24 Hours of Le Mans as a part of the FIA World Endurance Championship. The partnership enables selected TUDOR Championship competitors to earn automatic entries into the prestigious 24 Hours of Le Mans. For more information, visit [www.IMSA.com](http://www.IMSA.com), [www.twitter.com/UnitedSportsCar](https://www.twitter.com/UnitedSportsCar) or [www.facebook.com/UnitedSportsCar](https://www.facebook.com/UnitedSportsCar).



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