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## **Grueling Petit LeMans Pays Off...The Red Dragon and Secures Fourth in IMSA Championship**

MOTUL Petit LeMans  
Round 10 of the 2018 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship  
Road Atlanta, Braselton, Georgia  
No. 99 GAINSCO Auto Insurance®/ORECA/Gibson  
Stephen Simpson/Misha Goikhberg/Chris Miller

October 13, 2018

The 2018 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship wrapped up late Saturday evening with the Petit LeMans, a 10-hour race on the challenging Road Atlanta course, a 2.54-mile permanent road course, featuring major elevation changes, tight turns and fast sweeping corners.

The race weekend began on Thursday and featured four practice and one qualifying session leading into the 10-hour race. The JDC-Miller MotorSports team focused most of that track time on developing an ideal race setup. The race setup was not necessarily the fastest one for qualifying but was focused more on the overall handling of the car, managing tire wear or degradation over a race stint and handling performance related to the ambient and track temperature changes from day to night. The qualifying/starting position over a 10-hour race is not as crucial. Running three drivers this weekend for the long race rather than just two meant more rotation and another person's feedback to consider when adjusting the car. By the time the night practice happened Thursday night, all three drivers had several laps under their belt in the Red Dragon at Road Atlanta, and they were satisfied with their car for the race. On Friday, it was determined that Stephen Simpson would be the qualifying and starting driver. The team used the final practice session to simulate qualifying to determine how much qualifying pace they could get out of the car. The green flag fell for qualifying at 4pm on Friday and Stephen was one of the first cars to hit the track. The biggest challenge would be to find a clear lap. His tenth-place result wasn't what they were hoping for, but it gave Stephen the opportunity to test a few more adjustments, and his feedback to his engineers was that he was confident they had a good race car.

Saturday morning brought perfect racing weather, a sellout crowd and 60 GAINSCO guests! Agents and territory managers drove in from various Georgia locations to attend the GAINSCO Racing Road Trip! They were greeted by the exciting sights and sounds of pre-race grid at one of

the world's most famous Sports Car races. Drivers representing 19 different countries were honored with the national anthems on grid. Fans from around the world packed the grid in anticipation of the 10-hour race and season finale.

Going into the Petit LeMans race, the No. 99 Red Dragon and its drivers were ranked fifth in the series championship, just 10 points out of third. Without question, the goal for the weekend was to maximize the points opportunity and secure a top five finish in the championship. With ten hours of racing from daytime into the night with 37 cars, representing three different classes of cars and three actual races happening at once...ANYTHING could happen...to us and to our competitors...and it did!

The green flag fell at 10:05 am. Stephen Simpson started the race and immediately picked up positions when the No.22 Patron car of Pipo Derani, the race lead, punctured a tire. Drama continued in the first two hours, the most significant being Juan Montoya's accident in the ACURA Penske. Juan and his teammate Dane Cameron were our nearest competitors in points and while we never want to see accidents happen, this made fourth place in the championship much more likely. Stephen held steady throughout his first two "stints" behind the wheel, with no problems, and he was there to maximize the opportunities that were presented by our competitors' bad luck and mistakes. Unfortunately, that was the end of our drama-free race. Stephen brought the car in for a pit stop and driver change. Four tires and a full load of fuel were to be expedited by the talented JDC-Miller MotorSports crew while the driver change from Stephen to Misha took place. Suddenly all the focus was on the left front—the tire would not come off. Eventually the crew chief had to pound the tire off with a hammer. Once he was able to do that, the change was complete, and Misha was on track for his first time in the race. The crew found debris lodged between the tire rim and brake, which had made the tire change so difficult and caused the lengthy pit stop. The Red Dragon lost five positions, but the race was still young with 8 hours to go. Misha worked with his spotters Andy Jordan and Bob Perona to get back into the thick of the competition. He was up to 10th when he returned to the pits for another load of fuel and tires. Temperatures increased into the midafternoon with the track becoming greasy and the car developing a few small handling problems in the changing conditions. Late into his second stint, Misha locked up the brakes trying to defend his position and spun off-track, leaving the Red Dragon helpless in the gravel trap. The track safety workers retrieved him, and Misha returned to the pits for service and the next driver change. This time it was Chris Miller's turn. An endurance specialist, Chris co-drives the Red Dragon at the "long races"—Daytona, Sebring, Watkins Glen and Road Atlanta.

While the team was lucky the car did not receive significant damage, they did lose a lap in the process. Chris jumped in looking to get that lap back to move up the charts. Unfortunately, it wasn't that easy. He was hit on track and did not lose additional positions, but it did create damage to the rear block, and the body work rubbed a groove into the left rear tire. The team was forced to pit immediately to change the tire and rear block. They were successful and lucky to return to the pit lane without the tire puncturing. The troubles continued into the sunset and the radio transmissions from the car to the pits were often plagued with interference, making it difficult for the pit crew to anticipate changes or needs in the pit stops.

The race progressed, and the Red Dragon held steady in 11th position a few laps down. Stephen completed another cycle, as did Misha and Chris. The racing was intense...nearly every team had some sort of problem, and some teams had multiple incidents. The cars and drivers were forced

to be gladiators to get to the end...that was the goal...no matter what the position. By the time the checkered flag flew, the Red Dragon had two new rear blocks (rear body work assembly), a new front nose and 17 pit stops. The No. 10 Konica Minolta Cadillac of Wayne Taylor Racing won the event. They were ranked third in the points going into the event, and their victory secured that points position. But the Red Dragon persevered, they secured fourth place in the 2018 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship...the most respected SportsCar championship in the world. They beat the big names like Team Penske and Action Express and they beat several factory efforts by Cadillac, Acura, Nissan and more. It was a very impressive result for the JDC-Miller MotorSports team and it was a result of determination...they are driven, and they NEVER GIVE UP! The No. 99 Red Dragon finished every race in the 2018 IMSA championship.

Of note:

\*The No. 99 GAINSCO Auto Insurance "Red Dragon"/ORECA secured fourth in the 2018 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship.

\* Misha Goikhberg was presented with the Truman/Akin award for the second consecutive year.

Stephen Simpson: "It was obviously a tough race for us, but I wanted to make sure the GAINSCO Auto Insurance car finished strong. We have a never-die attitude here at JDC-Miller MotorSports. I wanted to keep on pushing all the way to the checkered flag and one day I feel that we'll be at this racetrack and I'll see the fireworks from the front straight...not the back. I'm proud of the entire team and the Red Dragon was put through its course today, but I am really looking forward to a very competitive season in 2019."

Misha Goikhberg: "The race for us was difficult. Unfortunately, we all made small mistakes that cost us in the end and unfortunately there weren't any yellows to help us out of it, so we ended up finishing 10th. More importantly we finished the season in 4th in front of big teams, factory teams like Joest, Penske, Nissan and others. We finished fourth last year as well, but the competition was much, much tougher this year. I can't wait to see what we can do with the Cadillacs next year. It's an honor to win the Truman/Akin award again and I hope next year we can find the finances to compete with JDC-Miller MotorSports at LeMans."

Chris Miller: "It was one of those races where everything that could go wrong did go wrong. Too many issues, we made too many mistakes, and I made a couple mistakes out there as well. We didn't have the speed to really challenge today. All in all, it was a fun year. Thanks so much to GAINSCO for being a part of it; we really enjoyed partnering with them and are glad we could get the win for them. We certainly have something to be proud of, beating the factory Mazda's, Acura's and Nissans. I'm just disappointed we didn't end the season with another great race result."

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About GAINSCO/Bob Stallings Racing™: Committed to excellence in road racing since its formation in 2001, GAINSCO/Bob Stallings Racing's legacy includes two Sports Car Championships, 16 victories and 31 pole positions in the Rolex Sports Car Series. Its legacy of all-star drivers includes Bob Stallings, two-time Daytona Prototype Champions Alex Gurney and Jon Fogarty, seven-time NASCAR Sprint Cup Champion Jimmie Johnson, two-time IndyCar Champion Jimmy Vasser, GT Champion Darren Law, C.A.R.T. Champion Cristiano da Matta and celebrated American drivers Memo Gidley and Rocky Moran Jr. The team ceased operations after the 2017 season, opening the door to partner with JDC-Miller Motorsports in the 2018 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship. For more information, visit [www.gainscoracing.com](http://www.gainscoracing.com).

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Additional information on JDC MotorSports can be obtained from the team's website @ [www.jdcmotorsports.com](http://www.jdcmotorsports.com) For direct contact, please contact John Church @ 612-963-3352 or [jchurch@jdcmotorsports.com](mailto:jchurch@jdcmotorsports.com)

### **### About JDC MotorSports / JDC-Miller MotorSports:**

Involved in formula car racing since its inception in 1994, JDC MotorSports originally founded by Minnesota natives John Church and Gerry Kraut, established itself as one of the leading junior open-wheel teams in North America before also becoming involved in IMSA SportsCar racing.

Kraut a Minnesota investment banker also competed with the team in numerous JDC open wheel and IMSA SportsCar programs and still races as a driver/owner on regular bases in the team's LMP 3 prototype program. He also was part of the team's first driver lineup during the 2014 12 Hours of Sebring, after the team made the move into the now called IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship under the entry JDC-Miller MotorSports.

### **Early success**

Initially making its mark in the F2000 class of club racing competition, JDC MotorSports was soon a team worth watching in the pro ranks. Expanding into the Pro Mazda Championship in 2005, the Minnesota-based team remained focused on not only challenging for top honors, but also helping develop young drivers. Over the years, JDC MotorSports has won numerous races and championships.

JDC captured both the driver and team titles in the 2007 Star Mazda Championship, with Rookie of the Year Dane Cameron scoring a series-high three wins. The Minnesota-based team followed that up with a second Star Mazda Championship title with Rookie of the Year Adam Christodoulou, and the F2000 Championship Series title with Chris Miller in 2009.

JDC continued its winning ways one year later, earning the Rookie of the Year award in the Star Mazda Championship with Connor De Phillippi, and scoring a non-points win in the USF2000 National Championship with Misha Goikhberg.

The junior formula car standout secured its third Star Mazda Championship title in 2011 with Tristan Vautier, in addition to scoring a win in the USF2000 National Championship with Luke Ellery, as well as making its Prototype Lites Championship debut, earning five podium finishes.

In 2014 JDC MotorSports captured the Cooper Tires Prototype Lites driver and team champion with drivers Misha Goikhberg (2014 overall driver champion), Matt McMurry and JDC MotorSport owner and partner Gerry Kraut.

2014 was also the first year JDC MotorSports entered under JDC-Miller MotorSports with new program partner John Miller a program in the TUDOR United SportsCar Championship Prototype Challenge class, finishing 4th at its maiden race the 12 hours of Sebring and scored its first podium finishing 3rd at Road America.

### **Re-writing IMSA history**

JDC Motorsports added to the tally in 2015 with another team and driver championship in the Cooper Tires Prototype Lites Powered by Mazda Championship. But there was more to celebrate along the way than the championship. In the 2015 Prototype Lites season, JDC Motorsports won every race and pole position. They won 32 out of 33 IMSA prototype Lites races dating back to August 2014, which marked one of the more remarkable streaks in North American sports car racing.

In their second season competing in the TUDOR United SportsCar Championship Prototype Challenge fulltime driver Misha Goikhberg finished 4<sup>th</sup> overall in 2015 prototype challenge class driver championship including three podiums and the team's first pole position at LimeRock Park.

In the 2016 season JDC-Miller MotorSports accomplished its biggest success so far winning the legendary Rolex 24 Hours of Daytona and later the Long Beach Grand Prix. Misha Goikhberg and regular full season teammate Stephen Simpson finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in the overall IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship Prototype Challenge class driver championship. The team also finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in 2016 Tequila Patron North American endurance cup driver championship and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Tequila Patron North American endurance cup team championship.

Additional to the success in the 2016 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, JDC secured the overall IMSA Prototype Lites driver championship with Clark Toppe, as well as the team and Masters Class championship with Joel Janco in 2016.

### **Current programs**

In 2017 the team moved its JDC-Miller MotorSports program into the main Prototype class of the IMSA WeatherTech Sports Car Championship running an ORECA 07 Gibson WEC spec LMP2 prototype. After two consecutive 2<sup>nd</sup> place podium finishes and seven top five finishes overall, JDC-Miller MotorSports finished 4<sup>th</sup> in the overall driver and team point's championship which made the team the most successful non-manufacture LMP2-spec program in the series.

The team also campaigned a BMW 228i with drivers Michael Johnson and Stephen Simpson in the IMSA Continental Tire SportsCar Challenge and under the entry of JDC MotorSports with partner Gerry Kraut a multi-car program in the IMSA Prototype Challenge Championship.

### **2018 programs**

For 2018 JDC-Miller MotorSports IMSA WeatherTech Sports Car Championship program will expand to a full season two car program with a second ORECA 07 Gibson WEC spec LMP2 prototype.

In the IMSA Continental Tire SportsCar Challenge championship the team will move into the new TCR class campaigning at least one Audi RS3 LMS TCR for Michael Johnson and Stephen Simpson.

In addition the team will run several Ligier JSP3 LMP3 prototypes under the entry of JDC MotorSports with partner Gerry Kraut in the 2018 IMSA Prototype Challenge Championship.

As of today all JDC programs combined secured a total of 18 Championships, 58 wins, 57 Pole Position and 190 podiums.