

## MAZDA PROTOTYPE TEAM SCORES ANOTHER TOP-FIVE FINISH

### HEARTBREAK FOR THE NO. 55 MAZDA AS WHEEL HUB FAILURE ENDS STRONG PERFORMANCE

BOWMANVILLE, Ontario (July 10, 2016) – For the fifth consecutive race of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, a Mazda Prototype has scored a top-five finish. The No. 70 Castrol/ModSpace machine started third and finished fifth today with drivers Tom Long and Joel Miller at the Mobil 1 SportsCar Grand Prix at Canadian Tire Motorsport Park. Both Mazdas carried special liveries for the second race in a row to honor the 25th anniversary of Mazda's victory at the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

The two-hour, 40-minute race began with the No. 55 Mazda on the pole with 20-year old driver Tristan Nunez, who earned his second pole position of the season. Dropping to second at the start, Nunez stalked the leader until using lapped traffic as a pick to take the lead on lap 12. Nunez stretched the lead almost effortlessly, racing to a margin of more than 16 seconds until pitting on lap 32. The front air jack, which lifts the car in the air to change tires, failed on the stop, which sent the crew into a scramble to manually jack the car high enough to perform service. During the stop, Jonathan Bomarito climbed in for Nunez, and aimed to regain the lost time. Despite Bomarito still turning faster laps than any other car on the track, the day ended on lap 60 when the right rear wheel hub failed, bringing the car to a stop.

Tristan Nunez, Driver, No 55 Mazda Prototype

*Describe the start and your opening stint, leading 25 laps.* "It was kind of a gaggle on the start, but we were fighting for [the lead]. The car was great, and I was following the 10 car (*leader in the opening laps*) very closely. Sure enough, as soon as traffic came our way, I got a little grin on my face because I knew I might have an opening. It came to Turn 10, when the 10 car tried to make an aggressive move on a GT car and I was able to set him up and get him into Turn 1. Then we just took off. It was a great opening stint. So fast and so easy. It's great for Mazda to put the car out there in the lead and for people to see that little orange and green car take off."

*Talk about the growing confidence you've been showing.* "There's definitely some confidence for sure, but you need a good car to do that. If you have a car that you're really not comfortable with, that confidence goes out the door. It's a huge thanks to engineers Marcus Shen and Zach LaGrone for working together and giving us a car that is comfortable yet fast. It's all one big package. I can't go out there and do it myself. Me and Jonathan [Bomarito] work hard together, pushing each of us to always get better. And we need a team behind that. It's 'one team, one goal,' and that's how it is."

Jonathan Bomarito, Driver, No. 55 Mazda Prototype

*Your stint was troubled from the start. Tell us about that* "Tristan did a great job and we were leading easily when he came into the pits for a full service. We had the air jack failure, and I came out of the pits and drove hard into Turn 2, the first time you can really lean on it. I knew immediately there was something wrong in the right rear. It felt like something was out of balance. The car just wasn't handling like it had been all weekend. And then finally we had the issue that put us out of the race."

*Despite the issue, you still turned really fast laps.* "Well, we had a fast race car. And that's the bummer. We were very fast, and we were still able to hang with the leaders even with the issue. If we didn't have that, I think we would have easily gone back to the front and given it to those guys. We had something for the win today. It's heartbreaking for the crew, drivers and the fans – everybody who puts their heart and soul into this program."

Tom Long, Driver, No. 70 Castrol/ModSpace Mazda Prototype

"The team gave us a great Castrol Mazda this weekend. We were on a pretty strong pace throughout the weekend with our car, and especially the 55 car on the pole. The results were there in qualifying and it's always a bittersweet thing with the race when we feel like we have the pace and just come up a little short. We're still

excited as we've got more great opportunities ahead of us."

*Explain how your opening stint progressed within the top-five.* "The tough thing today was that the handling was just slightly off. The car wasn't gripping the road quite as we had hoped - as it had been yesterday. We were managing that and keeping the balance under us on the really high-speed corners. But, it was still a lot of fun driving around this incredible Canadian Tire Motorsport Park with our Mazda. This track really suits our cars so well. To walk away with a top-five is exciting and we're looking forward to the next race."

Joel Miller, Driver, No. 70 Castrol/ModSpace Mazda Prototype

"Today's race was interesting. My entire stint was in fifth place and it was like the lead pack were all just circulating together. Just going around the merry-go-round together. Traffic would cause the accordion effect, where I'd lose or gain time each lap. We had hoped for a yellow to bunch us back up to have a shot, but the caution came only on the final lap of the race."

John Doonan, Director, Mazda Motorsports of North America

"It's fitting that we had the tribute colors on the cars this weekend to honor Mazda's victory at Le Mans. We tried 17 times to win that race, and we finally did it by following the motto 'Never Stop Challenging.' That heart and spirit stays with us today. We know it has been several heartbreaking races for all of our Mazda fans, and our entire team takes that very seriously. Our fans are why we chose to carry the tribute colors, and we appreciate that support around the world. As a team, we're getting better each race. We feel confident that we'll reward our fans with a victory sometime soon."

## **Mazda Motorsports**

Mazda Motorsports boasts the most comprehensive auto racing development ladder system of any auto manufacturer in the world. The Mazda Road to 24 (#MRT24) program offers a number of scholarships to advance drivers up the sports car racing ladder, beginning with the Global MX-5 Cup series and culminating with the Mazda Prototype team. The Mazda Road to Indy (#MRTI) is a similar program that includes Mazda-powered categories of USF2000, Pro Mazda and Indy Lights. In grassroots road racing, more Mazdas race on any given weekend in North America than any other manufacturer. Mazda is also the title sponsor of the renowned Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca in Monterey, Calif. Follow all of the latest news at [MazdaMotorsports.com](http://MazdaMotorsports.com), @MazdaRacing on Twitter, and MazdaMotorsports on Instagram and Facebook.

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