



For Immediate Release

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## **Mazda Team Joest Prepared for Daytona Challenge**

*- Rethink of Mazda Prototype program faces first test at Rolex 24 at Daytona -*

IRVINE, Calif. (January 23, 2018) – In any circumstance, the Rolex 24 at Daytona is the biggest challenge teams racing in the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship will face. Straight out of the gate the teams are faced with the longest race of the season at the first race.

For Mazda Team Joest, there is the added complexity of competing for the first time in the endurance racing classic. While both Mazda Motorsports and Team Joest have competed and won at Daytona before, the 2018 race is the first time that the two brands will race under the same tent. And when the green flag drops on Saturday afternoon at Daytona International Speedway, the re-engineered Mazda RT24-P DPi will do battle in one of the deepest fields of Prototype competition in recent memory.

Mazda has celebrated class victory at the Rolex 24 at Daytona 23 times. To add to that tally, Mazda Team Joest has assembled a diverse lineup of driver talent made up of Mazda Road to Indy alumni and endurance racing specialists with experience from Joest Racing.

In the No. 55 Mazda RT24-P DPi, Jonathan Bomarito and Harry Tincknell will contest the entire season and will be joined by Spencer Pigot at Daytona. In the No. 77 Mazda RT24-P DPi, Tristan Nunez will be joined by Olivier Jarvis for the season and Rene Rast will round out the driver lineup for Daytona. Bomarito (2010), Jarvis (2013) and Rast (2012) are previous class winners at the Rolex 24 at Daytona.



In the qualifying session held during the Roar Before the 24, the No. 55 Mazda RT24-P DPi driven by Harry Tincknell qualified in eighth position while the No. 77 Mazda RT24-P DPi qualified in the 20<sup>th</sup> position. That qualifying session determined the pit spot selection for the Rolex 24 at Daytona.

Mazda has been eagerly anticipating the 2018 Rolex 24 at Daytona since July 18 of last year when Mazda Team Joest was announced. Extensive reengineering and testing of the RT24-P DPi has followed, resulting in a virtually brand-new car for Mazda Team Joest to take to their first test at Daytona.

#### Mazda Team Joest Quotes

**John Doonan, Director, Mazda Motorsports:** “Mazda Team Joest represents a complete rethink of our Prototype program. As a result, the expectations of success are very high, and there is a singular focus among everyone that we are here to do one thing and one thing only. It all starts with execution. If we have everything prepared – which I know we do – before we pull into the garage at Daytona, we can execute our plan without having to spend a lot of time worrying about what everyone else does. If making it to the end of the 24 Hours puts us on the podium, that’s a great way to kick off Mazda Team Joest, have success for Mazda, and celebrate with our fans – the people who own and drive Mazdas, our dealers, and the grassroots club racers.”

**Ralf Jüttner, Managing Director, Mazda Team Joest:** “This is our first team as Mazda Team Joest, and not only is it our first race, it is the longest and toughest one of the season. We hope to get into a good rhythm during the race, and be around the leading group until the end of the 24 hours – and hopefully, we are in a good position to fight in the final hours. Our driver lineups are strong and come with a lot of endurance racing experience and together with the team’s experience, this should give us the chance to take the fight to the obviously very strong competitors.”

#### No. 55 Mazda RT24-P DPi

**Jonathan Bomarito:** “We finished up the Roar Before the 24 with two Mazda RT24-Ps that ran perfectly in the final session. We learned a lot over those three days. From driver change practice, pit stops, strategy we’ve been through the gamut of everything we could think of to prepare, and it was



very successful. We've spent the last two weeks refining the little pieces and little details. I'm pretty happy with where things are and we'll see where we are at with the race."

**Spencer Pigot:** "I'm excited about the potential of Mazda Team Joest at the Rolex 24 at Daytona. We enjoyed a great test at the Roar Before the 24 – it's always good to be in the car, but it's definitely been nice to see the improvements we've made in the team on lots of different fronts from last season."

**Harry Tincknell:** "We made some good steps forward over the three days. The test culminated for me in the qualifying session where we were P8, so a solid result on the one lap pace is not a bad place to be with the new team and a heavily revised car. Even in the final session we made improvements in our setup. We are confident when we come back for the race we can have a good clean race, running near the front and having no problems as well. As we all know in endurance racing reliability is huge so we are fantastic on that side."

No. 77 Mazda RT24-P DPi

**Oliver Jarvis:** "We've seen the sheer amount of progress already with the Mazda RT-24P DPi. I'm excited as a driver to be a part of Mazda Team Joest but also as a championship this is probably the most competitive field I've ever seen at Daytona. This year if you want to win it, you have to get everything right. Everyone on the team is working well together, and if we can keep that going for the race we'll be in a real good position."

**Tristan Nunez:** "It's really exciting to be competing for Mazda Team Joest in the Prototype class in IMSA, and to see how big the field is compared to last year. It's going to be a really fun race to watch for the fans. We had a great test at the Roar, still working through the kinks with a brand new car and a brand new team, but we'll be in a great spot for the race."

**Rene Rast:** "Mazda Team Joest is still a very new team, but every day that we have worked together has brought us forward. For the drivers, that means that each time we get in the car we get more comfortable. Everyone is very motivated to achieve a good result and the Mazda RT-24P DPi is already much quicker compared to last year. We made big improvements over the winter, and at the



roar, our number one goal was to find a good setup for all conditions – daylight and night, and I think we managed that quite well.”

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