

Another Solid Season Comes To An End At Petit Le Mans

Written by TRG Admin

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While TRG's quest for its American Le Mans Series championship fell short with third and fourth place finishes at the season finale at Road Atlanta's Petit Le Mans, team owner Kevin Buckler couldn't help but look back at the season and call it one of the most memorable and successful in TRG's history.

"While things didn't quite work out here the way we had hoped," said Buckler, "we had some amazing wins, comebacks, podiums and some just fantastic racing. During the middle of the season when we reeled off three straight wins including two one-two finishes, well, that was pretty special. I can't tell you how proud I am of all our drivers and crew. We truly have laid the groundwork to build upon for next season where we will again be in position to make a very serious run at a championship – because after all, that's what TRG is all about, winning on all fronts."

TRG entered Petit Le Mans with an outside chance for a team championship. It needed a win coupled with a third place finish by Black Swan Racing, but that never came despite some great comebacks all day during the 1,000-mile endurance classic ... and despite a late race caution that almost put Black Swan driver Jeroen Bleekemolen over the maximum time limit for a driver, which could have resulted in a DNF for TRG's number one competitor and a championship for TRG

The No. 68 team of Dion von Moltke, Dr. Jim Norman and Ben Keating sustained a tough blow early during the first caution that put the team nearly 100 laps down after intense garage work. With von Moltke leading the charge once the PR Newswire/South African Airways/Parathyroid.com/ViperExchange.com Porsche 911 GT3 Cup got back on track, Keating and Norman added nearly flawless drives the rest of the way and at times had one of the fastest cars in the GTC class. Each of the drivers put in some spectacular driving in this highly intense competition.

The No. 66 trio of Spencer Pumpelly, Duncan Ende and Peter Ludwig battled for first all day, holding the P1 position on several occasions despite an early stop-and-go penalty and a nudge from an overly aggressive Ferrari. From that point on, the No. 66 STANDD/Racer's

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Roast/World Technology Ingredients/LiveOn.com Porsche seemed to be in a constant ebb and flow, playing its strategy perfectly but as cautions went against the team, the leading gap they had earned was closed on 3 separate occasions.

The latter part of the race was not as kind to the No 66 as cautions worked against it in the late going. Nevertheless, with less than 10 laps to go, the race's final caution appeared, giving TRG one last run. In the end, the gap proved too much while Bleekemolen barely eked in under the driver maximum drive time to wrestle the team championship away from TRG.

All told, TRG concluded the nine-race season with eight podiums and second in the team GTC championship. Pumpelly and Ende finished second in the drivers' championship, with Team Driver von Moltke finishing fifth.

"I am so proud of the job Duncan, Dion and Spencer did this year---it was incredible" said Buckler. "We went into the season thinking we had a pretty good team, but those guys kept getting better and better all season long and really showed us some great racing and incredible driving talent as the season wound down. Peter Ludwig, Marc Bunting, Mike Piera, Alain Li, Emilio Di Guida, Brendan Gaughan, Dr. Jim Norman, and Ben Keating all contributed to the success of this team this season and deserve some strong recognition. I look forward to working even harder next year, myself included, and to have these guys at the top of the podium on a regular basis. We are, pound for pound, the best team out there and our drivers and crew really stepped up this year---it was a really fantastic effort. We are already working on winning next year!!!"