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### NGT MOTORSPORT OVERCOMES PENALTY TO REACH SECOND PODIUM OF THE SEASON

ELKHART LAKE, WI (August 20, 2011) – NGT Motorsport came back from a weekend seemingly filled with adversity to earn a hard-fought third place in the Grand Touring Challenge (GTC) class in the Time Warner Cable Road Race Showcase at Road America, Round Six of the American Le Mans Series presented by Tequila Patron.

Porsche Carrera Cup point leader Sean Edwards shared driving duties during the four hour endurance event with IMSA GT3 Cup Challenge by Yokohama standouts Henrique Cisneros and Carlos Kauffmann, taking the #30 NGT Porsche from its last place starting position to first at the white flag, as the team gambled on fuel strategy in an attempt to earn their first ALMS victory. In the end, NGT duplicated their maiden effort at Sebring with a third place finish.

#### **Qualifying**

The NGT Porsche had its share of difficulties in the Thursday afternoon and Friday practice, including breakages to the damper and the drive shaft. Edwards put the car on the pole and posting a new track record, but lost the time due to a rule that requires all three drivers have stints in the car during official sessions. Instead of starting from the front of the GTC pack, NGT would start from the back, 9<sup>th</sup> in class and 35<sup>th</sup> overall.

#### **Race**

Carlos Kauffmann, who had only seen action in the car during the morning warm up, started the event and had his share of adventures on the race's first lap.

"I had an awesome start and got up to fourth," said Kauffmann, "but I got tapped by another car on the back straight, flat spotted the tire and went back to sixth – the third time this weekend that I've been hit on the back straight! I had a bad vibration in the car since the tire was damaged, but I got back up to third and spun by myself in 13, then got hit by the Ferrari in 13 late in the stint, which knocked my right mirror off."

Kauffmann had the NGT Porsche back up to fifth position in class when he came in for tires and fuel on lap 35. Cisneros, the IMSA GT3 Platinum Cup class point leader, took over in fourth position, only to have stewards order him back into the pit lane to repair the mirror. The NGT crew did an outstanding job of replacing the mirror in do we have a time?, getting Cisneros back into the fray without going a lap down. Cisneros passed the Green Hornet car of fellow GT3 competitor Peter LeSaffre before handing off to Edwards on lap 58.

"I didn't have any pressure out there, I was mostly by myself," said Cisneros, "so I was able to stay relaxed and not use up that much energy. My only close call was a run off in the kink - the Aston Martin LMP came into the corner with me side by side and I didn't have time to get back in."



**Ramez Wahab**  
NGT Motorsport Inc.  
13329 NE 17 Ave Miami, FL 33181  
phone: 305 899 6999 [ngtmotorsport.com](http://ngtmotorsport.com)



The team lost valuable seconds in the pit lane as the engine start problem that had dogged them at Sebring returned, as Edwards tried repeatedly to get the Porsche to refire after the stop. Once underway, Edwards made his way to the front of the field as one by one, the cars ahead peeled off for the pit lane.

Back in the pit box, an idea was forming; perilously close on fuel, the team made the decision to keep Edwards on the track instead of coming in for a splash and go late in the race, gambling on yellow flags assisting their efforts to keep the top spot. Knowing that only the second and third place cars were on the same lap, and that a pit stop would put them in third place anyway, the call was made to stay out.

Adding to the drama was the rapid approach of the two LMP leaders, running together in what would be the closest finish in ALMS history. The LMP leaders came through the GTC battle between turns 11 and 12 and allowed the #66 TRG of Spencer Pumpelly and the #54 Black Swan of Jeroen Bleekemolen to catch right up to the back of Edwards. Edwards took the white flag at the start of lap 96 in the lead, but with just four corners to go, the car began to sputter as the fuel ran low.

Trying to make his car as wide as possible, Edwards tagged Pumpelly exiting turn five, earning Edwards a 150-second penalty for avoidable contact. Bleekemolen and Edwards came together in 12 as the NGT Porsche ran out of fuel, with Bleekemolen going on for the victory, followed by Pumpelly. Edwards nursed the NGT Porsche home with a right rear puncture, but earn the team its second straight podium finish.

Edwards was understandably disappointed with the result, but happy to have helped earn the team its second podium finish in two races this season.

“We knew it would be tight on fuel and even though I was leading, I had to save fuel, so the other two cars caught up. I was on fuel override already and with three corners to go, it started cutting out. With two corners to go, it completely cut out. I tried to defend from Jeroen and we hit, it was a bit of a bad move from me, but I was trying to keep the win at all costs. We got a puncture, so we didn’t get the win and got the penalty besides. At least we got a podium but I’m gutted we didn’t get the victory, with only three corners to go.”

By the time the podium ceremony was complete, Cisneros was able to get past the disappointment to feel the satisfaction of the podium finish.

“It was an emotional roller coaster. We knew we could almost make it on fuel and decided to gamble just in case a yellow came out which would give us some breathing room. We thought the penalty put us back in fourth, but we got third, so we couldn’t be happier. The whole crew did a fantastic job, we had a great pace and I think it shows we’ll be a team to beat next year.”

NGT Motorsport team owner Ramez Wahab felt the gamble on fuel was the right call.

“It’s our second race in ALMS this season and we finished both on the podium.” Ramez said. “We are not in the championship hunt so we had two choices, either come in for a splash and hand the first place trophy away or gamble - stay out and fight for it. Worst case would be third place. Last lap, three turns to go we went from leading the race to getting a penalty for avoidable contact, a tire puncture and running out of fuel ending in a third place finish. I’ll take that, the drivers and crew did an awesome job and we can’t wait for the next one!”

NGT Motorsport will be in action at the ModSpace American Le Mans Monterey Presented by Patron September 15-17 at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca. To see all the results for NGT Motorsport and for more information, visit <http://www.ngtmotorsport.com/>.

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