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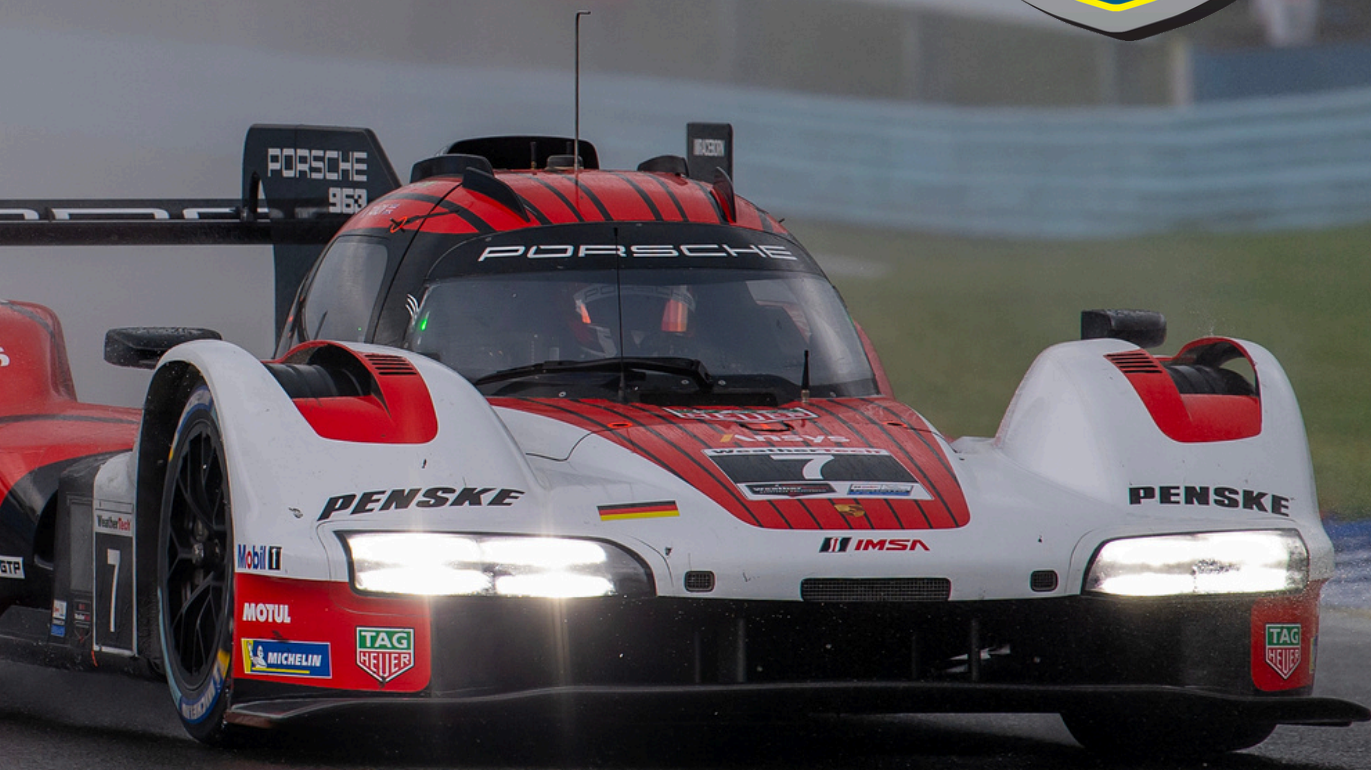
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Photo by Anthony Bristol



“If It’s Hot, It’s Watkins Glen!”

Sahlen’s Six Hours of the Glen

By Luis A. Martinez
Photos by: Anthony Bristol



Watkins Glen International, New York, June 22, 2025 – Which is worse during a race? Overcast and windy with the threat of rain? Or a sunny steam bath after the rain? How about one of each? At an altitude of 1,588 ft above sea level, the geographic position of Watkins Glen International lends itself to a relatively cool and breezy microclimate. In fact, it’s uncomfortably cool and breezy weather in the spring and fall at the track. But the six-hour race today contained the worst combination—ambient temp in the afternoon reaching 93F with a track temp of 111F followed by humid sunshine. But fans at the Glen know that this is part of the appeal of sports car racing—that we should by all means necessary keep racing!

The first race at the Glen took place in 1948 on the public roads of the Village of Watkins Glen, a very small town with a beautiful gorge, which still attracts thousands of tourists. In the early 1950s, the road race was moved to a professional setting, where it still resides. This

enduro, today lasting six hours, first took shape in 1968. The current major sponsor, a 156-year-old meat packing company called Sahlen’s, has been involved in this enduro since 2001.

The Glen racing track has a length of 3.4 miles with 11 turns in a mostly clockwise direction. All corners are aided by palpable camber pitch at each apex (except Turn 9—the “off camber”). This design creates high cornering loads close to the apex and facilitates massive grip with incredibly fast cornering speeds even for old classic racers without aerodynamics—but often with consequences. Experienced drivers at the Glen are thrilled attacking the right and left sweepers at triple-digit speeds, then pressing pedal to the metal on the fiery straights, followed by an exhausting combination of high G’s under heavy braking, frightening downhills (one drop is 11 stories deep), and everywhere immovable Armco steel barriers all painted light blue (the

“blue bushes”). The Glen is a Grand Prix track—the fastest road course in North America.

In the village of Watkins Glen there are many attractions. One is the International Motor Racing Research Library. Another is a very small bar at the Seneca Lodge that has hosted Formula 1, IMSA and NASCAR driving legends for over 50 years. Not to be missed are the dozens of wineries on hundreds of miles of beautiful shores encircling the Finger Lakes.

Adding to the excitement and delivering solid racing content for the fans, there were other races leading up to the featured Sahlen’s 6-Hour finale on Sunday. One was the Porsche Carrera Cup with races on Friday and Saturday. Another was the Lamborghini Super Trofeo with two races also on Friday and Saturday. Then the Michelin Pilot Challenge’s LP Building Solutions 120 (miles) with 39 entrants on Saturday, including two classes (Grand Sport and Touring Car). Indeed, fans

interested in all events must plan to stay for at least 3 days for a good return on their investment.

The exciting start for this annual Sahlen's enduro marks the 6th of 11 events in 2025 for the IMSA WeatherTech series. This year, prior to the Sahlen's Six Hours of the Glen, only the Rolex 24 Hours of Daytona and the Mobil One 12 Hours of Sebring rocked the full schedule of four competitive classes—GTP, LMP2, GTDPro and GTD. The Grand Prix of Long Beach had 27 entries (11 GTP and 16 GTD), then at Laguna Seca there were 26 (11 GTP, 7 GTDPro and 8 GTD), and at the Detroit GP Street Circuit there were 22 (11 GTP and 11 GTDPro). Many of the drivers have also been busy in June at Nürburgring (Germany) and at the Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps (Belgium). But at the Glen, those fans who gathered at the track or were watching on media enjoyed a full house of competitors filling every pit box—all four classes with 56 entries:

Grand Touring Prototype: 13 entries—Acura ARX-06 (2), Aston Martin Valkyrie (1), BMW M Hybrid V8 (2), Cadillac V-Series R (3), Lamborghini SC63 (1) and Porsche 963 (4).

Le Mans Prototype 2 (LMP2): 12 entries—all Oreca LMP2 chassis with Gibson 4.2-liter normally aspirated V-8 engines.

GT Daytona Pro: 10 entries—BMW M4 GT3 Evo (2), Corvette Z06 GT3 R (2), Ferrari 296 GT3 (1), Ford Mustang GT3 (2), Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo 2 (1), Lexus RC F GT3 (1), Porsche 911 GT3 R 992 (1).

GT Daytona: 21 entries from 9 manufacturers – Aston Martin Vantage GT3 Evo (3), BMW M4 GT3 Evo (1), Corvette Z06 GT3-R (2), Ferrari 296 GT3 (6), Ford Mustang GT3 (1), Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo (2), Lexus RC F GT-3 (1), Mercedes AMG GT3 Evo (3), Porsche 911 GT3 R (2).

One way to view these long enduros with four car classifications is that they're four races in one. Some fans may favor the highly aerodynamic LMP2 entries over sports cars. Others prefer street-like, identifiable sports cars (BMW's, Corvettes, Ferraris, Mustangs and Porsches), which private teams (privateers) can buy and race instead of investing in the exceedingly expensive, highly sophisticated rocket ships in GT prototypes. These expensive GTP projectiles are like an F1 car with a roof.

What's one thing that all classes have in common? All racers in this WeatherTech series use Michelin tires.

Who is likely to win? It's difficult to guess,

given that so much is decided during the last few laps. Looking back, the winners have been: in 2024 – Porsche, in '23 – BMW, and in '22 – Acura. For the manufacturer's trophy, the standings to date are Porsche leading GTP, with BMW leading GTD Pro and Ferrari first in GTD.

Adding to the stress felt by 146 world-class drivers, with all the preparation and travel and practice and qualification chores, this has all taken place only seven days after many of these same teams returned from the 24 Hours of Le Mans in France.

Now at the Glen, the Six Hours of brutal enduro racing began successfully with the roar of 56 entries as planned on Saturday at 12:10pm. The Safety Car (formerly known as the Pace Car) shepherded all 56 entries around the circuit for one formation lap and then ducked into the pit lane as the cars came through Turn 11 and into the front straight. The Grand Marshal (Buffalo Bills offensive tackle and four-time Pro Bowler Dion Dawkins) decided all was in order for the Green Flag and released the first wave of 25 GTP's and LMP2's. The 25 engines roared, and the crowd was on their feet as the racers rocketed up to speed on the front straight, only to then stand on the brake in the downhill brake zone going into Turn 1, a 90-degree right-hander and the most important turn on the track—the turn before the longest straight.





About 30 seconds later, the second wave of 31 GTDPro and GTD entries was released by the Safety Car, and they boomed down the front straight under the green flag towards T1—with wipers clearing the light rain and the striped yellow/red debris flag out—slippery conditions. Drivers know that from the first acceleration on the opening lap to the very last sprint to the checkered flag 6 hours later today, this track requires high commitment, high speed, and expert navigation of tricky segments—like running at 100+ mph through the “bus stop” but tiptoeing through T9, which has no camber (less grip) at the apex.

Leading the first lap, we had the #93 car—the Acura Meyer Shank Racing GTP with Ranger van der Zande—followed closely by the #31 Cadillac Whelen with Jack Aitken at the wheel and their headlights already shining on the damp pavement. The weather became ominous, and then a deluge fell beginning 35 minutes into the race, causing many to substantially lose grip with racing slicks in standing water. Some drivers that crashed had to go into pit lane for repairs and incur penalties given strict rules about when to enter the pit lane.

Amazingly, in the rain, the #7 Porsche Penske 963, with Felipe Nasr at the wheel, fought from P10 on the grid to P1 by the 4th lap and began building a significant lead. He held on until lap 13 and gave it up to the #31 car, the Whelen Cadillac. The two 963s began to fade as the wet weather waned, the track dried and the temperatures rose. On lap 16, the #45 car of Wayne Taylor Racing DEX Imaging Lamborghini in GTD with Trent Hindman at the wheel straddled the exit rumbles exiting T1 when the rear tires lost contact, wiggled right/left, went backwards into the outside wall, hit the right

rear quarter, and crushed the drivetrain for the first of many Full Course Yellows (FCY). This problem on the exit of T1 would show up again later with disastrous consequences for a championship contender.

During the first FCY, which lasted 19 laps for cleanup, cars invaded the pit lane to switch from racing slicks to ‘wet’ tires. On lap 38, the #93 Acura ARX-06 of Meyer Shank Racing with Curb Agajanian was leading for 16 laps with the #7 car with Nasr in hot pursuit. While all were still on ‘wet’ tires and with continuing rain, there was an awful incident on exiting T9 where Madison Snow in the #1 car, the Paul Miller Racing BMW, punted the left rear of the LMP2 #52 car, the PR1 Mathiasen Motorsports Oreca with Rodrigo Sales. This caused Sales to spin left, ending up facing backwards on the exit of T9, which caused 2 others to crash head-on into him, including the #11 car, wherein Steven Thomas’ LMP2 somehow continued driving even after losing the windshield. This was another FCY for 6 laps.



When leaving the pit box, GTP cars take off using just their electric motors at a pace not to exceed 35 mph, and then they switch on the ICE (internal combustion engines) as they cross the yellow demarcation line exiting the pits. Using their full power up the Esses and

onto the back straight, their combined 670 hp propels them up to 190 mph before braking hard for the ‘bus stop’ (a chicane—right, left, left, right), which they do at an unbelievable 100+ mph. Wait, there’s more—the most advanced sports cars in history, the GT Prototypes, have no ABS. It’s strictly up to the driver to modulate braking inputs from extreme speeds.

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With 4 hours to go, the Pfaff Lamborghini #9 car with (British) Sandy Mitchell was speeding downhill at the Laces of the Boot and began braking for the tight right-hander of T7 when he locked up the tires, went on the wet grass, and hit the tire wall nose first, so another FCY.

At the halfway point with 3:09 hours to go, the track went green, and it was a pleasing sight to see the green/white/red Lamborghini GTP, the #63 car with F1 driver Romain Grosjean, leading the 53 racers still running. Grosjean maintained that lead for 23 laps before the #6 car, of Porsche Penske Motorsport, passed him to take the lead.

At 2:56 the #12 Vasser Sullivan Lexus came to pit lane using the (short course) NASCAR straight, which sacrificed a whole lap, because it was running minus the left rear wheel, which had not been secured during the pit stop in the previous lap, and it came off exiting the bus stop. The car was stranded on the racetrack, with no traction, waiting for the hook, bringing out a FCY.

Another incident occurred on lap 68, when the #5 Proton Competition Porsche 963 in GTP was working on the straight between T7 and T8 and tried a late pass into T8, but the #80 Lone Star Racing Mercedes AMG did not see the #5 car, resulting in contact near the apex in which the #5 went onto the exit pavement and crashed heavily in the exit tire wall for another FCY.

During the FCY, NBC Sports interviewed Romain Grosjean about the #63 Automobili Lamborghini Squadra Corsa SC63 he had been driving for a long stint of two hours and 45 minutes. By the time his stint was over, he had been in a closed cockpit with an outdoor temp of 93F but no cool suit to help cool the driver,



no A/C and no relief from the heat of a pavement temp of 111F. Another driver, Jordan Taylor of the Wayne Taylor Racing Cadillac, mentioned on air that he loses as much as 3 lbs. of body weight every hour in the car—from perspiration. Colin Braun of the #60 Acura GTP lost so much body weight in almost 3 hours of driving that he kept tightening the 6-point belts while driving until they could not be tightened any more. The GTP class is made up of all professional drivers, so there are two assigned drivers per car. But GTD drivers are a mix of professionals and amateurs, and IMSA requires a 3-driver team.

With 2:12 to go, the number 25 BMW GTP Hybrid with Marco Wittmann was working lap 103, running on the outside of the downhill outer loop when the back end stepped out, spinning right and strangely hitting the Armco hard on the right rear, bringing out a FCY and retiring the car.

The flag went green with 1:57 to go in the race, with Earl Bamber leading in the #31 Cadillac on lap 111, followed by two Porsche Penske cars, #7 and #6, in second and third. Just a few minutes later, the #19 car, the van der Steur Racing Aston Martin Vantage GT3 Evo, with

Valentin Hasse-Clot, went into the tire wall of T6, straight in by itself, evidently from mechanical failure on the right side, bringing out the 8th FCY. Then, with 1:39 to go, the green flag came out with Bamber in the #31 Cadillac in the lead, followed by the #10 Wayne Taylor Racing Cadillac and the Acura Meyer Shank Racing #93.

The Glen is a very physical track. It has a layout that results in high lateral g-loads, large elevation changes and serious consequences for a driver who can't thread the needle in high-speed traffic. Navigating among 18 cars per mile, with four variations of car/driver combinations and significant speed differentials, is quite difficult.

Speaking of the physical challenges presented by The Glen racetrack, the #7 car, the Porsche Penske 963 with Championship points leader Nick Tandy at the wheel, came into the brake zone for T1. Tandy entered the apex normally, began accelerating while unwinding the wheel and crested the rumble strips on the exit, but very suddenly the car pivoted to the right on top of the rumble strip and went into the inside tire wall, bouncing back out across the track to the exit tire wall before coming to a stop with no front end. The video from the inside of the car shows clearly Tandy's clean

entry into the right-hand apex, a transition from brake to throttle and application of throttle as he was exiting T1 normally, straddling the painted rumble strip. But then the car rotated almost 90 degrees to the right and crashed heavily into the inside tire wall. Evidently the aerodynamic downforce caused the car to bottom out on the rumbles, with the metal chassis undertray riding for a fraction of a second on concrete; the tires lost sufficient grip to point it forward, and the inertia caused it to spin right and into the tire wall. The frontal impact was immense, but the design engineers won and Tandy walked away. FCY number 9 for the serious impact of the Championship leader with 1 hour and 21 minutes left on the clock.

After the FCY, the green flag came out with 1:00.49 to go on the six-hour enduro, and Earl Bamber came out to lead with Yelloly in second and Albuquerque in third overall.

The tenth FCY came with 9 minutes 52 seconds to go when the #36 car, the DXDT Racing Corvette Z06-GT3R with Charlie Eastwood, had a left rear failure and rolled to a stop at the exit of T1. Some minutes later, with only 5 and one-half minutes left on the

race clock, the situation became unpredictable because the two overall leaders had only 3% and 4% energy available to reach the checkered flag, which was at least two laps away. Concluding the tenth FCY, the lights of the Safety Car went out while descending to the Toe of the Boot with only 4 minutes 40 seconds left on the clock.

In an incredibly unfortunate situation, with one lap to go, the overall leader, the #31 car with Earl Bamber, which had started P2 on the grid and had led for a total of 69 laps, including the white flag lap, ran out of energy and went into the pit lane, ending 5 hours and 59 minutes of racing—out of gas. That left British native Tom Blomqvist in the 60-car doing the final lap with 1% energy on hand. He rounded T8, T9, T10 and T11 with just fumes to win the Sahlen's Six Hours of Watkins Glen overall. Yet another FCY formed on the final lap as the #021 car in GTD, driven by Alessandro Balzan, was shoved to the right by Dan Serra in the #34 Ferrari exiting T9 and went straight into the tire wall, ending 5 hours and 59 minutes of racing about 300 yards from the checkered flag.

During six hours and 10 Full Course Yellows (over 30% of the race clock), drivers muddled through overcast skies, wind and diluvial rain, followed by a sunny steam bath after the rain. The geographic position of Watkins Glen International adds an unpredictable variable to the excitement of this classic six-hour enduro.

Results

GTP

Class and Overall winner: Tom Blomqvist #60 Acura ARX-06, Acura Meyer Shank Racing with Curb Agajanian, 169 laps.

Runner-up: Louis Deletraz #40 Wayne Taylor Racing, Cadillac V-Series.R, 169 laps.

Third place: Filipe Albuquerque #10 Wayne Taylor Racing, Cadillac V-Series.R, 169 laps.

LMP2

Class winner: Paul DiResta #22 United Autosports USA, Oreca LMP2 07, 167 laps.

Runner-up: Dane Cameron #99 AO Racing, Oreca LMP 07, 167 laps.

Third place: Malthe Jakobsen #04 CrowdStrike Racing by APR, Oreca LMP2 07, 167 laps.

GTD Pro

Class winner: Dan Harper #48 Paul Miller Racing BMW M4 GT3 EVO, 160 laps.

Runner-up: Alexander Sims #3 Corvette Racing by Pratt Miller Motorsports, Chevrolet Corvette Z06 GT3.R, 160 laps.

Third place: Christopher Mies #65 Ford Multimatic Motorsports Ford Mustang GT3, 160 laps.

GTD

Class winner: Tom Gamble #27 Heart of Racing Team Aston Martin Vantage GT3 EVO, 160 laps.

Runner-up: Fredrik Schandorf #70 Inception Racing Ferrari 296 GT3, 160 laps.

Third place: Kenton Koch #32 Korthoff Competition Motors Mercedes AMG GT3 EVO, 160 laps.



Victory Lane Podiums



**IMSA GTP
Podium**



**Michelin North American Endurance
Cup Podium**



**IMSA LMP2
Podium**



**IMSA GTD Pro
Podium**



**IMSA GTD
Podium**



Sahlen's Six Hours at the Glen

Race Photos







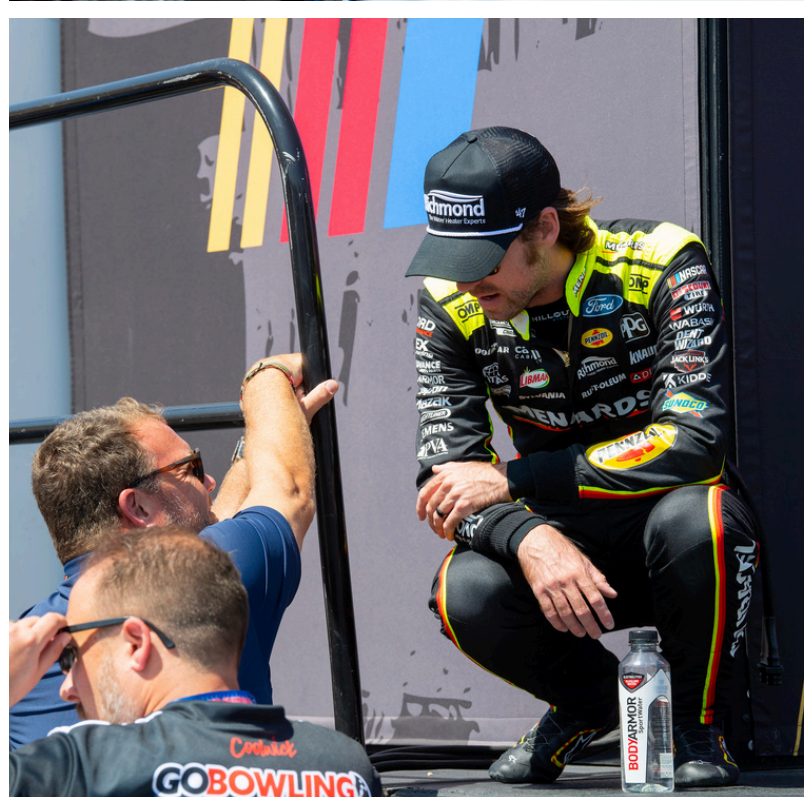
Photo by Anthony Bristol



Go Bowling at the Glen

Pre Race Photos









GO BOWLING

NASCAR
CUP SERIES

GO BOWLING

GO BOWLING

GLENOR

GO BOWLING
BY THE BOLT

WeatherTech

NASCAR
CUP SERIES

Photo by Anthony Bristol

BUSCH LIGHT

Coca-Cola

xfinity

CLIP SERIES



BUSCH
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 Coca-Cola
 xfinity



SIEMENS

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