Prototype battle looms

Carving out a racing career

OLIVER GAVIN USES AN OLD SCHOOL “HACK” TO SUCCESS
Chevrolet enters the Rolex 24 At Daytona as the defending 2014 race and Series Prototype Manufacturer champions. Chevrolet has updated the new Corvette DP bodywork to reflect the styling of the C7 production Corvette.

Leading the Chevy charge are defending Rolex 24 and series champions from Action Express. The team triumphed in 2014 with four championships including team, and driver titles for Joao Barbosa and Christian Fittipaldi, who are joined here again by Sebastian Bourdais.

Joining Action Express for 2015 is the Whelen Engineering Corvette DP with drivers Dane Cameron and Eric Curran and for Daytona, veteran Max Papis plus Brit Phil Keen.

Adding to the bowtie brigade is a pair of 2014 race winners. Last year’s Daytona and Championship runners up from Wayne Taylor Racing have Max Angelelli returning to partner with brothers Ricky and Jordan Taylor. The former Spirit of Daytona team is now rebranded as VisitFlorida.com Racing with drivers Richard Westbrook and Michael Valiante joined by Mike Rockenfeller.

Ford enters a second season with a pair of Ford EcoBoost Riley DPs entered by the five-time Rolex 24 winning Chip Ganassi Racing with Felix Sabates.

Veteran ace Scott Pruett and new teammate Joey Hand combine with Charlie Kimball and Sage Karam while IndyCar’s Scott Dixon and Tony Kanaan join Kyle Larson and Jamie McMurray.

The team has been quick in the official tests and is certainly a major threat as the eight driver combined tally is 144 race wins and 11 championships.

Honda, BMW and Mazda powered prototypes and a pair of potent independent threats. Here is a brief rundown of the top Prototype class for 2015:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>CHEVROLET</th>
<th>HPD</th>
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<td>Michael Shank Racing is celebrating ten years in sports car racing and looking for a second win here. The winners of the 2012 Rolex 24 have partnered with Honda Performance Development to power their new Ligier JS P2. Longtime drivers John Pew and Ozz Negri will team for their 58th start together. Joining them here will be AJ Allmendinger and Matt McMurry, the youngest driver to have competed in the 24 Hours of Le Mans. Scott Sharp’s Tequila Patrón Extreme Speed Motorsports team enters its sixth year in sports car racing with two new Honda Performance Development ARX-04b coupes. The Florida-based team features Sharp and Ryan Dalziel paired with David Heinemeier Hansson while Ed Brown and Johannes van Overbeek are teamed with Jon Fogarty.</td>
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### BMW

The Florida-based Starworks team lives up to its name at Daytona with F1’s Rubens Barrichello, 2014 Indy 500 winner Ryan Hunter-Reay, factory Porsche LM P1 driver Brendon Hartley, Tor Graves and Scott Mayer, aboard their Riley-BMW DP.

Meanwhile after a 12-year hiatus, FOX commentator Dorsey Schroeder joins Bryon DeFoor, David Hinton and Jim Pace in their Fifty Plus Racing Endures for a Cure, Inc. / Highway to Help Race Team Riley-BMW.

A multiple championship driver, Schroeder now 61 years old, has shed 20 pounds in training for his chance to race again in the Rolex 24.

Making its Rolex 24 debut after acquiring a Dinan BMW- powered Riley DP from Michael Shank Racing is a new Ohio-based team formed by Robert Gewirtz. The start-up team will feature Gewirtz, Mark Kvamme and Shane Lewis.

While the big manufacturer tied Prototype teams will lead the marketing, if not on track battles, two highly capable independent entries pose outside threats.

### MAZDA

The Speed Source MAZDA factory team returns with their SKYACTIV prototypes for 2015.

The Multimatic-built, Lola-based P2 cars have undergone extensive updates – concentrating on enhanced cooling.

This has produced solid gains for the turbo-diesel prototypes – both in lap time and straight line speed.

New signing Jonathan Bomarito joins nineteen year-old Tristan Nunez in one car with team owner Sylvain Tremblay while Tom Long and Joel Miller are joined by Ben Devlin.

### INDEPENDENT

Tracy Krohn’s veteran Le Mans Krohn Racing team trades his GTLM class Ferrari F458 for a new Onroak-built Ligier JS P2 prototype for 2015. Krohn Racing was the first American team to commit to the Ligier and is the first prototype fitted with the Judd V8.

Speeding the development are the two primary Ligier JS P2 development drivers, Alex Brundle and Olivier Pla, who will pair with Krohn and team regular Nic Jonsson.

Dr. Don Panoz’s Georgia-based DeltaWing Racing Cars team returns with their radical DeltaWing DWC13 featuring a number of off-season improvements for the Elan-powered prototype. The team ended the 2014 season with a solid fourth place finish in the ten-hour Petit Le Mans.

Drivers Katherine Legge, Gabby Chaves, Andy Meyrick and Memo Rojas have all shown strong race pace.
Long before “hacking” became the nightmare that kept corporate IT professionals awake at night, young Oliver Gavin experienced the most memorable “hack” of his distinguished racing career.

A former British Formula 3 series champion and McLaren Autosport Young Driver of the Year award winner, Gavin – a native of Cambridgeshire, England – was in France helping the Renault F1 team conduct some straight-line and development testing.

After trying to get the F1 seat fitted just right after a couple of previous adjustments, he asked the team for yet one more update.

While the race cars were high-tech, the process by which race seats were made was then not. A large, black plastic garbage bag was placed inside the car. The “part A” and “part B” chemicals were mixed and poured into the bag as Gavin settled inside the cockpit.

There was just one catch. “They started pouring and kept on pouring – way more than I was expecting,” said Gavin.

“As the foam started to form it quickly engulfed me in the cockpit. I was stuck in the car. There was foam everywhere. They had to free my hands from the steering wheel.”

The team mechanics were all having a big laugh. One of them handed Gavin a hacksaw blade to cut himself out of the cockpit while they headed to lunch! “It took me nearly an hour and a half to cut myself out,” laughed Gavin.

Since joining Corvette Racing in 2002, Gavin, now age 42, has been fitted for a lot of seats and helped the team find solutions to the endless cycle of racing challenges.

Along the way he has claimed 44 GT endurance race wins around the world – 40 in the American Le Mans Series and four at the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

In 2014, the debut of the new Chevrolet Corvette C7.R produced four wins for Corvette Racing’s Jan Magnussen and Antonio Garcia, but surprisingly none for Gavin and co-driver Tommy Milner who had taken four wins and the 2012 ALMS GT Championship and a pair of wins in 2013. Opening the 2014 TUDOR United SportsCar Championship with the two longest races in the series, the Rolex 24 At Daytona and the Mobil 1 Twelve Hours of Sebring, the new Corvettes showed speed but experienced teething problems.

“We were quick here at Daytona and at Sebring with the new car last year but ran into some of the inevitable mechanical new car issues,” said Gavin.

Indeed, Gavin set the fastest GTLM race lap at Sebring and Milner did the same at Long Beach, but the two were winless in 2014.

Magnussen and Garcia went on a mid-season tear, scoring four consecutive TUDOR Championship GTLM Class wins before the dreaded Adjustment of Performance (AOP) changes reeled the Corvettes back to the GTLM class mid-pack.

Any disappointment over the 2014 season is long since passed as Gavin, Milner and the fabled Corvette Racing team find further refinements, car setups and adjustments for 2015.

“We are heading into the 2015 TUDOR Championship with great excitement,” said Gavin. “We have a full year with the Corvette C7.R under our belts.

“Tommy and I have had some good offseason tests. We feel confident that we have a competitive package and everyone has a bit of ‘AOP’ changes. We can’t wait to see where we stack up,” said Gavin.

Quiet, confident and with the ability and persistence to hack away at any problems, Gavin and Milner, who are joined here by IndyCar star Simon Pagenaud, intend to build a successful 2015 TUDOR Championship run.

The 11 races in the 2014 TUDOR Championship season saw 11 different drivers claim GTLM class race poles and 10 drivers set fastest race laps.

With top teams like BMW Team RLL, Porsche North America, Risi Competizione Ferrari, Falken Porsche and joined here by Aston Martin Racing and AF Corse, the drivers are all top shelf and the competition is exceptionally fierce.

Often it is a blend of speed, experience, feedback and even a bit of humor that determines the winner.

“We are quietly confident,” said Gavin, who still laughs at the memory of using a hack saw blade to cut himself out that car. And with that, the 10-month long, high-speed hackathon is officially underway.
Popular sports car announcers Greg Creamer, John Hindhaugh and Jeremy Shaw return to the airwaves as the voices of IMSA Radio, providing live audio coverage of the TUDOR United SportsCar Championship and support races. For the Rolex 24 Shea Adam, Paul Truswell, Joe Bradley and Jonny Palmer will try to keep them under relative control. IMSA Radio will be broadcast through IMSA.com, radiosports.com and other affiliates as well as the public address system & scanner frequency 454.000 at every TUDOR Championship event.

2015 Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Classes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 24-25</td>
<td>Daytona International Speedway</td>
<td>All classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 21</td>
<td>Sebring International Raceway</td>
<td>All classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 18</td>
<td>Long Beach Street Circuit</td>
<td>P/GTLM</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 3</td>
<td>Mazda Raceway</td>
<td>P/GTLM and PC/GTD</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 30</td>
<td>Detroit Belle Isle</td>
<td>P/PC/GTD</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 28</td>
<td>Watkins Glen International</td>
<td>All classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 12</td>
<td>Canadian Tire Motorsport Park</td>
<td>P/PC/GTLM</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 25</td>
<td>Lime Rock Park</td>
<td>PC/GTD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug. 9</td>
<td>Road America</td>
<td>All classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug. 23</td>
<td>Virginia International Raceway</td>
<td>GTLM/GTD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 19</td>
<td>Circuit of The Americas</td>
<td>All classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 3</td>
<td>Road Atlanta</td>
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Michelin ready

Following its successful return to the Rolex 24 At Daytona in 2014, Michelin prepares to defend the GTLM class honors with a diverse range including BMW Team RLL, Corvette Racing, Risi Competizione Ferrari, AF Corse Ferrari, Aston Martin Racing and the defending class champions from Porsche North America. Chris Baker, director of motorsport for Michelin North America says: "I know you can’t all win the pole and you can’t all win the race, but one of you sure better!"

World traveller

Sportscar365’s journalist John Dagys had a crazy 2014 travel year with 24 trips, to 14 countries, on 4 continents covering races in 2014. The Chicago-based Dagys spent 190 days on the road and flew 185,000 air miles last year. Will he top that in 2015?

The band is back!

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Corvette Racing began its journey 16 years ago at the 1999 Rolex 24 At Daytona. Ron Fellows, Chris Kneifel and John Paul Jr. completed 600 laps and 2,136 miles to finish second in the GT2 class driving a Corvette C5-R.

Since then, Corvette Racing has logged nearly 210,000 racing miles and more than 58,000 racing laps over the past 16 seasons. That’s the equivalent of racing more than eight laps around the equator.

Corvette returns a the Rolex 24 At Daytona with Simon Pagenaud joining regulars Oliver Gavin and Tommy Milner in the No.4 car and Ryan Briscoe joining Jan Magnussen and Antonio Garcia.

**The road to success**

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**Comeback “kid”**

Dorsey Schroeder returns to the cockpit for the first time in a dozen years as he joins Bryon DeFoor, David Hinton and Jim Pace aboard the Team Riley-BMW DP. Schroeder claims he dropped 20 pounds in training for his return to competition. The team suffered a set-back at the “Roar before the 24” test when a dramatic crash by DeFoor put the team’s Riley upside-down on its roof. The team are determined to return for the Rolex 24 At Daytona.

**NEW PORSCHE FACTORY DRIVER EARL BAMBER ON FOLLOWING UP ON PORSCHE’S SUCCESS AT THE ROLEX 24 IN 2014**

"Those were quite a few boxes ticked last year so we have a bit to do to try and better what we did last year.”

**Thursday, January 22, 2015**

- 9:25 am - 10:25 am Practice #1 - TUDOR (All Classes)
- 10:45 am - 11:30 am Practice #3 - Ferrari
- 11:45 am - 12:15 pm Practice #3 - CTSC
- 1:20 pm - 1:50 pm Practice #2 - TUDOR (All Classes)
- 2:10 pm - 2:25 pm Qualifying - CTSC ST
- 2:40 pm - 2:55 pm Qualifying - CTSC GS
- 3:10 pm - 3:40 pm Qualifying #1 - Ferrari
- 4:00 pm - 4:15 pm Qualifying - TUDOR (GTD)
- 4:25 pm - 4:40 pm Qualifying - TUDOR (GTLM)
- 4:50 pm - 5:05 pm Qualifying - TUDOR (PC)
- 5:15 pm - 5:30 pm Qualifying - TUDOR (P)
- 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm Practice #3 - TUDOR (All Classes)

**Friday, January 23, 2015**

- 9:00 am - 9:30 am Qualifying #2 - Ferrari
- 9:45 am - 10:05 am Practice #4 - CTSC
- 10:20 am - 11:05 am Race #1 - Ferrari
- 11:25 am - 12:25 pm Practice #4 - TUDOR (All Classes)
- 1:45 pm - 4:15 pm Race - BMW Performance 200 - CTSC

**Saturday, January 24, 2015**

- 9:35 am - 10:20 am Race #2 - Ferrari
- 11:30 am - 12:15 pm TUDOR Driver Autograph Session
- 2:10 pm Start: 53rd Rolex 24 At Daytona Race for the TUDOR United SportsCar Championship - 24 Hours
Check out this video review of Porsche's 2014 Rolex 24 At Daytona victory.