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Alex Gurney Takes Checkered Flag at Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series Porsche 250 at Barber Motorsports Park

BIRMINGHAM, AL – Sunday's Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series Porsche 250 presented by Legacy Credit Union at Barber Motorsports Park was a fight to the finish as Alex Gurney out-dueled Scott Pruett and a hard-charging Michael Valiante in the final laps to take the checkered flag. Gurney, along with teammate Jon Fogarty took both the overall and class wins in Birmingham in their No. 99 GAINSCO/Bob Stallings Racing Pontiac Riley Daytona Prototype racer. GT Class winners Andrew Davis and Robin Liddell co-drove to victory in the No. 57 Stevenson Motorsports Pontiac GXP.R.

What was expected to be a very warm weekend – with forecasters fearing a repeat of last year's blisteringly hot temperatures – turned out to be cooler than expected as overnight rain fell during the three-day event. The downside to the atmosphere-cooling rain was that it washed away most of the rubber on the challenging 2.3 Barber Park circuit. Fortunately, Pirelli provided grip once the circuit turned surprisingly slippery, a situation similar to that encountered last month at the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course during the EMCO Gears Classic.

"We didn't have any tire issues and the Pirellis looked great when they came off the car," said Fogarty, who drove over 90 minutes in the first half of the race. "There are just so many corners here and you are just leaning on the car so hard, of course you are going to have some wear on the tires, but no problems at all. The balance of the car maintained over the course of the stint. On this track... the Pirellis did their job and we won the race."

Gurney and Fogarty won a series-leading third race this season and are now tied with Pruett, his teammate Memo Rojas and the No. 01 Ganassi squad with 231 points apiece in both the Grand-Am Rolex Series Daytona Prototype Team and Driver Championships. The No. 10 SunTrust Ford Dallara of Max Angelelli and Brian Frisselle is third in the championship with 215 points after finishing 14th at Barber.

"The Pirellis were great, especially right at the beginning of a stint when we need to be fast," said Gurney, who also co-drove with Fogarty to win the 2007 race at Barber. "After the long yellow at the end, for whatever reason, I struggled with Turn 2 and under braking a little bit, but otherwise the tires hung in there and were good enough to win."

Valiante finished third at Barber in the No. 6 Michael Shank Racing Ford Riley with co-driver John Pew, who had one of the best performances of the season.

"The Pirellis were fantastic and with the Michael Shank Racing set up on the car it was like a dream came true," said Pew, who was running fifth in the lead pack when he

turned the No. 6 over to Valiante. "The track is normally pretty greasy, but our car was evenly balanced and the tires lasted the whole stint. I could have even gone longer on our opening set of tires but I was trying to pass a GT car and got forced into the grass a little bit. We had grass in the radiator so we decided to come in early for the full stop."

Lidell and Davis won in GT for the second time this season and once again found the Pirelli P Zeros to their liking.

"We knew from last year we really had to watch our front tires in the heat, but the new Pirelli(s)...did a great job. For my entire stint, the tires stayed underneath me. For the Stevenson Motorsports Pontiac GXP.R the Pirellis were awesome."

Four races remain on 2009's 12-event Grand-Am Rolex Series schedule and next up is the Crown Royal 200 at The Glen on Friday, August 7. The race can be seen in same-day coverage on SPEED at 8 p.m. ET.

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