



Contact:

Drew Cary, Mazda North American Operations, 949-727-6525

Efrain Olivares, Mazda North American Operations, 818-254-7196

Pla and Mazda Qualify First, Set Unofficial Daytona Course Record

Pla takes pole position in Sunday's qualifying at Roar Before the 24

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. (January 5, 2020) – Olivier Pla and the No. 77 Mazda RT24-P set the standard for the Daytona Prototype international field in Sunday's qualifying session at the Roar Before the 24, the annual preseason test held at Daytona International Speedway for the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship.

Pla drove the Arctic White Mazda RT24-P to a time of 1:33.324 (137.321 MPH), which is an all-time but unofficial course record. The time was faster than the official Daytona International Speedway course record of 1:33.865, set by his teammate Oliver Jarvis in the No. 77 Mazda RT24-P in qualifying for the 2019 Rolex 24 at Daytona.

His teammate, Jonathan Bomarito, qualified the No. 55 Mazda RT24-P in fifth position with a time of 1:33.660. The two Mazda RT24-Ps combined to lead six of the eight sessions of the weekend.

The team will return for the Rolex 24 at Daytona on January 22-26.

QUOTES

Nelson Cosgrove

Director, Mazda Motorsports

"Our focus this weekend was to work on our cars for the race to give our two cars the best chance for success when we return at the end of the month. Our plan was to show our true pace and work through the items we needed to work through and give each of the drivers plenty of opportunity to improve the cars. But it has been great to have both Mazda RT24-Ps lead sessions and be fast throughout all three days. Olivier put together an amazing lap and the team is confident in the car that we have for the race. One of our primary goals this season is to be successful in the endurance races, and even though today's results will mean very little on race day, it's great to know that we are on the right path."

No. 77 Mazda RT24-P

Olivier Pla

"We were anticipating that we would be a little bit quicker this year than last year, and the direction from the team was very clear - drive as hard as you can. The team has spent quite a bit of time developing the car for the endurance races, and we were working on our race setup all weekend, but we were always pushing as much as possible. It is a great thing to have set the unofficial record and to be fastest today, it's great for Mazda, for our new sponsor Idemitsu and everybody on the team, but our focus is on the 24 Hours at the end of the month."

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Mazda Motorsports boasts the most comprehensive auto racing development

ladder system of any auto manufacturer in the world. The Mazda Road to 24 (#MRT24) program offers a number of scholarships to advance drivers up the sports car racing ladder, beginning with the Global MX-5 Cup series and culminating with Mazda Team Joest. In grassroots road racing, more Mazdas race on any given weekend in North America than any other manufacturer. Follow all of the latest news at MazdaMotorsports.com, @MazdaRacing on Twitter, and Mazda Motorsports on Instagram and Facebook.

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