

DAYTONA 24 MINUTES – JANUARY 24TH, 2009



Daytona 24 Minutes – January 24th, 2009

It's that time of the year again, Daytona 24 Hours, which means it's also the Daytona 24 Minutes on the morning of the start of the 24 Hours, which was won in such spectacular style by the Brumos Porsche #58, David Donohue manfully fending off Juan-Pablo Montoya for the last nail biting hour.

Back to the 24 minutes. This, an exhibition event, always organized by the late Joe Pendergast, was taken over by son Tim who did a truly excellent job getting together thirty great cars in an appropriately named: "Tribute to Joe". (See photo with Tim giving the drivers' briefing from the steps of the Brumos trailer.)





Amongst these cars, some of the most notable, to this scribe's eyes, were no less than two of the incredible 1968 Howmet gas turbine sports-prototypes, two beautiful 1969 Lola T70 Mark IIIB coupes (one of which I recently brokered from Australia to a new owner here in St. Petersburg), two Porsche 935s, both with superb racing histories, one being the ex-Peter Gregg Brumos 1978 IMSA Championship winner, the other the ex-Dick Barbour Racing 1979 car that he and the late Paul Newman drove to second place at Le Mans in 1979 (and would have won, but for a jammed wheelnut near the finish!). Also there were two Jaguar E type coupes, a Spice GTP car, a Chevrolet Intrepid, an Argo JM19C, the 1976 Daytona winning RSR, the 1976 Porsche 911S/T IMSA winner (both of these last having been driven by Hurley Haywood), a GT40, and many other really wonderful vintage/historic racecars. George Tuma asked me to drive the "Jagermeister" RSR and I was happy to do so.

Saturday morning saw a driver's briefing ably conducted by Tim Pendergast and it seemed no time at all until we were pushing the cars to the pit lane. There the cars sat as the public came to look and take photos and I spent a happy hour talking to friends old and new.



Time to go: The format is one lap behind the pace car, he pulls off after one lap and then everyone can chose their own pace. I sat behind Larry Ligas of Predator Performance, who was driving Rob Summerour's BMW CSL and I'm happy to report that Larry didn't hang around! I followed dutifully for a few laps but then lost touch with Larry as the Jagermeister RSR was still set up for Sebring, and, at speed on the banking, it started to wander in a somewhat disconcerting manner and so I forewent the last 10 mph, enabling a big block Mustang to come by but then, all too soon, out came the checkered flag and it was over.

Drive back to the exhibition area, swap tall stories with other drivers, get changed get into road car and hoof it back home to see wife and new dog and to watch the start of the 24 Hours on the telly! Great weekend.





















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