



Media Information

IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship

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An interview with Edwards and Krohn: “Winning a title is a great way to end the season”.

- **BMW Team RLL drivers John Edwards and Jesse Krohn speak about their title win in the Michelin Endurance Cup and their 2020 season in the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship.**
- **Perfect team effort key to success in endurance racing.**
- **Personal memories of the victory at the 24 Hours of Daytona at the start of the season.**

Munich. Together with BMW and BMW Team RLL, John Edwards (USA) and Jesse Krohn (FIN) crowned their 2020 season in the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship (IMSA) with a title win. They claimed the GTLM titles in the Michelin Endurance Cup, a competition representing the four endurance races held in the IMSA. In an interview, Edwards and Krohn speak about the special challenges of endurance races, the perfect team effort as key to success and their personal season highlights including winning the 24 Hours of Daytona (USA).

The Daytona win was the start of a streak of success for Edwards and Krohn in the #24 MOTUL BMW M8 GTE. They also finished the other three endurance races of the season on the podium. These have been, after Daytona, the six-hour race and the ten-hour ‘Petit Le Mans’ at Road Atlanta (USA) and the season finale 12 Hours of Sebring (USA). For the Michelin Endurance Cup, points are awarded in specific intervals throughout the race. In a 24-hour race, for example, these ‘check points’ come after six, 12, 18 and 24 hours; in a six-hour race, it’s after three and six hours. Those cars who are leading the race at these ‘check points’ collect points for the drivers’, teams’ and manufacturers’ standings in the Michelin Endurance Cup. In the 2020 season, not only the driver’s title went to Krohn and Edwards, but BMW Team RLL won the team classification and BMW was the best manufacturer.



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John, Jesse, congratulations on winning the title in the Michelin Endurance Cup. What does this title mean to you?

John Edwards: "I think it's a great way to end the season, closing out with a championship. For us, the Michelin Endurance Cup was a big focus, especially after winning the first race of the year, the 24 Hours of Daytona. From then on it was an additional part of our strategy in endurance races to target to be leading at the check points in order to collect the points for the Endurance Cup. I think it's a testament to the job the team can do when you have 24 hours, 12 hours, ten hours of racing. It's a testament to how the team is functioning as a whole and so I'm really proud to be a part of it."

Jesse Krohn: "I am also super proud that we were able to win this endurance title because in races, the longer they go, the more difficult it gets. When you have to survive for ten, 12, 24 hours that is, like John said, really a testament to the team's ability in endurance races and doing a great job over a long distance. It's really a great achievement for the whole team that we were able to win it."

You have been on the podium in all four endurance races of the season. What are the keys to success in endurance racing compared to shorter 2 hour 40 races?

Krohn: "It's a different mentality approaching the longer races because you know you got to be there at the end and there is a lot of strategy involved getting in that position that gives you the chance to win or to finish on the podium. So it's a completely different approach to the sprint races where you got to qualify well and it's even more taking risks throughout the race. You don't have to think about the long game so much as in endurance races. It's different and this year we really did it well."

Edwards: "I think it's really challenging. Especially in IMSA with the different classes and then how close we are especially to the GTD cars because, as Jesse said, you have to be there in the end but as soon as you back off in an IMSA race you are going to lose a lot of time due to passing traffic and so on. At places like Sebring and Road Atlanta actually, which have finishing the race at night, it's quite challenging to determine how much risk you'll take because you need to be there at the end but when you pull back too much then GTD cars won't let you by and prototypes will take advantage of you. You have to find that balance of quite a bit of aggression and still



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managing to keep the car together. I think it's also important to highlight how many pit stops the team takes part of over an endurance race, and the strategy as well is constantly changing over that time. I think at Daytona, we had a fast car which came to us at the end of the race when the track heated up but more importantly we also called the strategy perfectly. It put us in a great position and for me it's a huge emphasis on the team, even more than in the sprint races."

The team effort – what makes BMW Team RLL so strong in this regard?

Krohn: "It's a special team, for sure. The team spirit and the way everybody works together is really great and everybody has a really good relationship with each other. There's a very open atmosphere and it is very clear that everybody has their own job, everybody do their specific work super well and you know that you can always rely on the guy next to you. And I think that really puts the team on a different level and allows us to have this success that we've had."

Edwards: "I agree with Jesse and I think it's important to also highlight that in addition to winning this championship and being on the podium with the #24 car in every endurance race, the #25 also won the six-hour race at Road Atlanta and we have also won Daytona two years in a row as a team. It all came together for us in the #24 this year but this was just a highlight of how the team has been in the last couple of years. And when you look at who is next to you, particularly all of the BMW drivers that they bring to races, in a way it doesn't matter who they send because they have such strong drivers. We've had Philipp Eng in our car, of course this year we had Augusto Farfus and Chaz Mostert who both did an amazing job. And I'm very proud to be a part of that programme."

Your personal highlight of the season for sure was winning the 24 Hours of Daytona in January? Now, with some time passing by, what are still your strongest memories of that success?

Edwards: "True! I actually remember a moment in the middle of the race, probably around midnight or one o'clock in the morning. I got in from my triple stint in the night and was sitting in the pits with Philipp Eng who was driving the #25 sister car. I think it was you, Jesse, in the car, making moves and moving up the field and we had good pace. Philipp looked at me, kind of hit me on the knee and said: 'You will win this race, man.' And I looked back and meant to myself: 'It's still way too long to go for a talk like



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this.' I still remember that moment because he had all the confidence that we would win it and I just wanted to focus on the things we could control at that moment. But of course the best memory was watching Jesse cross the finish line because in the last couple of hours we had a lot of stuff up in the air. The strategies were still playing out and obviously we had called it well but in the background I wasn't sure how this will play out until we saw it. Also on one of the final pit stops, a prototype stalled his car and blocked Jesse's entry in the pit lane and I thought that was the end of the race for us. I thought that would put us back to third and cost us the race win so it was very emotional in the race and I remember the feeling of watching Jesse cross and knowing we have finally done it. Chaz Mostert, Augusto Farfus and I hugged and jumped up and down on the pit wall. It was so much joy but mostly also relief as it was so stressful leading up to that moment. So for me the biggest moment in my mind is that big hug with my team-mates on the pit wall as we watched Jesse cross the line."

So Jesse, your biggest moment then certainly was crossing the line in the #24 MOTUL BMW M8 GTE?

Krohn: "Yes, 100 per cent. I just spoke about this at the weekend at Sebring, how long ago in a way our Daytona win was but how clear it still is in my memory. It was like we had just won it yesterday, because it was such a special race, a special moment for myself and for the team. When I think of crossing the finish line: I would much rather be in the car in the final hour, because I can get the job done and I don't have to stress on the pit wall and have things out of my control. It was also something special for me that the team showed trust in me and put me in the car to bring the race home. When I crossed the finish line, I was just trying to soak in the feeling. I knew how special it is and when I drove slowly around the track in the inlap, I just felt the moment and it was very special. I knew I had a very happy team waiting for me once I got to the pits."

After Daytona, you and the team wanted to take the momentum to the next rounds, but the Covid-19 pandemic caused all racing activities to stop for a few months. How challenging was that for you as drivers and BMW Team RLL?

Edwards: "I think it has been a difficult year for everyone, whether you are in motorsport or not. For us in motorsport, we stayed at home and we drove on our sims a lot. And I think for us in the #24 car it was actually probably easier than for most people



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because we had a great result, we got to enjoy and celebrate our success for a little bit longer than we planned with quite a long time between races. But I think it would have been much worse to have a bad race at Daytona and then have to go into lockdown because when you have these bad races all you want to do is get back and make up for it. We have been able to come home and proudly wear our Rolex's around the house while we waited for the next race (laughs)."

Krohn: "John said it well, we were very lucky that we had the race win and went into lockdown with a good result. But obviously it was not ideal for anyone and we would have liked to kept going and I still hope that things will get back to normal rather sooner than later."

After the season resumed, what were your other highlights?

Edwards: "Obviously the fact that we were on the podium in every endurance race was really special. And in addition to that, we led at a lot of the check points in the middle of the races which count towards the Endurance Cup. Although we had some podiums also outside the endurance races, for me the whole endurance season is really what I look back on. In the six-hour race at Road Atlanta, we had a good pace and ultimately came home 'only' in third but it was a very tight and intense race. And then the Petit Le Mans, it was a bit of a bittersweet race as we won the Endurance Cup but came home third but we were leading with some time to go before Augusto got pushed off by a prototype. So for me, this Petit Le Mans race was a bit of a highlight although we did not have the luck to finish with it a win but for me that was a really strong race by all three of us driving the car and a strong race by the team and the performance of the car. Unfortunately it was just bad luck that put us to third instead of winning the race. But that was for me a great example of a race that we executed pretty much perfectly."

Krohn: "Yes, I agree with John, the endurance championship definitely was a highlight but the whole season itself was a bit of a highlight because we knew that we had a package that every week can fight for the win so it was really exciting to go to all the races, knowing that if we executed well we would be able to fight for wins and podiums. So in general, this year we've been consistently more competitive, we've really made a step from last year to this year to really challenge for race wins. We were in the mix all the time, overall doing a good job."



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