

## Ryan Dalziel Q&A

Orlando, Florida (May 21, 2008) &ndash; Scotland&rsquo;s Ryan Dalziel added his name to a prestigious list of Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series winners last Saturday, 17th May, having steered the #2 SAMAX Motorsport BMW-Riley Daytona Prototype to victory alongside team-mate Henri Zogaib in the &lsquo;Rum Bum.com 250&rsquo; in California.

After returning to his base in Orlando, Florida, the 26-year-old from Lanarkshire took time out to reflect on his maiden sports car triumph and first trip to the top step of the podium since he fought for the 2004 Toyota Atlantic Championship &ndash; coincidentally enough losing out on that title at the Laguna Seca track where he claimed Saturday&rsquo;s Round 5 Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series win.

Q: How important was your podium success and overall performance in Virginia last month, where you were beaten to the flag by just half a second, in setting up your Laguna Seca victory?

Ryan Dalziel (RD): &ldquo;It was huge for us to get the second place finish at VIR. It was the perfect time in the season to turn things around and going into the Laguna event I was really motivated to repeat our success. The car has been quick all year and I knew that once we got over our bad luck hurdle we&rsquo;d be up running at the front!&rdquo;

Q: After Friday&rsquo;s qualifying woes, did you realistically expect a strong finish at a track as demanding as Laguna Seca starting from 17th in class?

RD: &ldquo;Yes and no! I always look at the positives and I knew we had a great car on our side with an equally great Dinan motor and the best pit-stop crew in Grand-Am. I knew if I got in the car with no damage we&rsquo;d get it back up front. I don&rsquo;t give up until the checkered flag waves.&rdquo;

Q: Did you discuss a particular strategy with Henri and the team prior to the race and if so, did all go to plan ahead of you taking over driving duties on lap 14?

RD: &ldquo;We all understood the battle that we faced going into the race. Henri prepared prior to the event as much as he could through race simulators and onboard footage from previous years but Laguna is a very different animal when you see it in person. It&rsquo;s a very intimidating place and track time is crucial.

&ldquo;We had some problems during practice and going into qualifying he&rsquo;d only driven about 12 laps so he was humble enough to know that it wasn&rsquo;t going to be a great race for him. Our strategy was simple &ndash; to get me in early and go and win the race! That was Henri&rsquo;s wish and I&rsquo;m just happy I was able to deliver for him!&rdquo;

Q: Describe the race from your perspective! At what point did you know you'd have a crack at the lead?

RD: "I go into every race hoping I can win but with the package SAMAX's has this year I go into every race knowing I can win. Laguna was no different as far as my approach was concerned. I guess the point where I knew I could win was when I was trying to get back onto the lead lap and I was running fourth in line behind the race leaders and setting faster lap times. I knew if I got back behind the field we could win it!"

Q: Having taken the lead in that dramatic three-wide pass, were you confident you could hold off Goosens and Pruett through to the checkered?

RD: "I was actually! I could see I was faster than both those guys but it was difficult to make a move on Goosens in second place since he was trying to make a move on Scott (Pruett). I had to be patient and wait for my opportunity to take them by surprise. I had David Empringham on my radio during the race and he helped me pick the right time to pounce. I decided it was my best opportunity to pass them both at the same time as they weren't expecting it!"

Q: You've come close to tasting Grand-Am victory on several occasions, notably in last season's Rolex 24 at Daytona, was it every bit as good as it looked spraying the champagne from the top step of the podium in California?

RD: "I can honestly say it was the sweetest champagne I've ever tasted! It's been a few seasons since my last victory and to win it at Laguna Seca was particularly emotional as I lost the Toyota Atlantic Championship there in 2004 to Jon Fogarty. Because of that it's always been a bit of sad place for me but that's obviously changed now. I found out just before the race that it was our team owner, Peter Baron's birthday so naturally it was amazing to get him his first win on the same day!"

Q: With two straight podium finishes, does SAMAX Motorsport have the potential to become a consistent race winner in Grand-Am and join the likes of the Chip Ganassi Racing and GAINSCO team's in fighting for victory week-in, week-out?

RD: "Absolutely! I've worked with SAMAX since March 2005 and I've always said they're the underdogs in the field. I've never doubted that anytime I've gone to compete for them that it could well be the weekend we get that first win. When Henri Zogaib came into the stable this year he made his intentions clear that he wanted SAMAX to be at the front of the pack, week-in, week-out! So far I'm very grateful and proud of the work we have done as a team to get here."

Q: Do you think people underestimate just how competitive the racing is in Daytona Prototype's and in Grand-Am competition in general?

RD: "I don't think so. I've raced in many different series around the world and I've said from the first time I competed in Grand-Am that the racing is just crazy competitive! In my opinion it's hands down the toughest racing in the world. Where else are there this many cars running only tenths of a second apart for close to three hours?"

Q: Winning major sports car races can't do your profile any harm &ndash; what does Saturday's win mean to you and where do you hope your successes in Grand-Am will take you?

RD: "It's huge and a massive load off of my shoulders. At this point in my career I'm looking to make my name as a great sports car driver. I've had some great races in my three seasons in sports cars but I was getting frustrated with second place finishes. Now I can say that I'm a sports car winner and that my name will always be known as a race winner. I want to be an Allan McNish or a Scott Pruett in my career. This win has done wonders for my reputation and I'm looking forward to the next one!"

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Round 6 of the 2008 Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series, the "Sahlen's Six Hours of The Glen", takes place at the Watkins Glen Circuit, New York, Friday 6th &ndash; Saturday 7th June &ndash; [www.grand-am.com](http://www.grand-am.com).