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SunTrust Reigns in the Rain at Montreal 200

*Angellelli, Frisselle Score Second Rolex Series Victory of the Year
As Rain Tire Strategy Pays Off; Team Back in Title Hunt with Two Races Left*

Date: Aug. 29, 2009
Event: Montreal 200 (Round 10 of 12)
Series: Daytona Prototype division of the Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series
Location: Circuit Gilles Villeneuve, Montreal (2.708-mile, 15-turn road course)
Start/Finish: 5th / 1st (Running, completed 67 of 67 laps)
Winners: **Max Angelelli and Brian Frisselle of the No. 10 SunTrust Racing Ford Dallara**

The four-race “Solid Is Lightning Fast” summer tour of the Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series ended just the way it started – with a stellar victory by Max Angelelli and Brian Frisselle in the No. 10 SunTrust Ford Dallara of Wayne Taylor Racing during Saturday’s third annual Montreal 200.

This time, however, it wasn’t anything like the blazing hot Fourth of July afternoon at Daytona (Fla.) International Speedway, where Angelelli outdueled Alex Gurney in a thrilling charge to the finish line, but a damp and dreary day on the legendary Circuit Gilles Villeneuve Formula 1 circuit, where the SunTrust team outguessed the rest of the competition to score its second victory of the season and thrust itself right back into the Rolex Series title hunt with two races remaining.

The defining moment came with less than 20 minutes remaining in today’s 2-hour event around the 2.708-mile home of the Canadian Grand Prix, which started with teams on grooved rain tires in a slight rain, change to slicks under drying conditions for the lion’s share of the event, and then have to play guesswork as rain came and went and then came back to say over the final 30-plus minutes.

Angelelli took over the reins of the silver No. 10 SunTrust Racing machine – with the words “Solid Is Lightning Fast” emblazoned on the sidepods to promote SunTrust’s line of mobile and online banking products – at the one-hour mark, 35 laps into the race. Frisselle, who started the race, ran in the top-five for the duration of his stint and worked his way up to second by the time he handed the car over to Angelelli, who resumed in seventh place. It was dry at the time, as it had been since teams cycled through a round of green-flag pit stops to change from rain tires to slicks on lap six. Angelelli worked his way up to third by lap 44, with 41 minutes remaining, as he chased the race-leading No. 12 Penske Racing Porsche Riley and the No. 99 Gainsco/Bob Stallings Racing Pontiac Riley.

He stayed in the top-three as rain began to fall with 33 minutes left to go and teams began to pit for rain tires on lap 48. The top-three, including Angelelli, came in on lap 50 for rain tires and quickly took their position at the front of the pack. Just three laps later, with the rain having ceased and the track already beginning to dry, teams once again elected to pit one-by-one for slicks, starting with the No. 99 team on lap 54. That left Angelelli in second place behind the No. 12 of Romain Dumas, who then turned the lead over to Angelelli when the Penske team called the No. 12 into the pits for slicks on lap 55.

Angelelli began to ask over the radio for his chance to pit for slicks shortly thereafter, but team owner Wayne Taylor, technical director Travis Jacobson and team manager Simon Hodgson encouraged Angelelli to stay on track as his lap times on rain tires were still significantly faster than those cars on slicks. Finally, just as Angelelli got the call to pit for slicks with 18 minutes remaining, on lap 56, rain began to fall once again – this time for the remainder of the event, as it turned out – and he simply stayed on track and was able to cruise to a 62-second margin of victory while those on slick tires had to once again pit for rain tires.

“It was incredible the way it worked out, just incredible,” said an elated Angelelli after winning his 14th career Rolex Series race and his second in the last three events held here. “I was telling the team on the radio that the track was ready for slick tires, but they kept telling me to stay out, stay out. Then, when I saw that it was raining again, I couldn’t help but laugh because I knew all the other guys were out there on slicks. I just want to thank the team for giving me a simply great car and an absolutely great pit strategy. This is just great. We are back in the championship, where we always feel that we should be and we will fight until the last race.”

With the victory, the SunTrust team, which started the day 14 points behind the No. 01 Chip Ganassi Racing with Felix Sabates Lexus Riley of Scott Pruett and Memo Rojas, is now tied for second in the championship, five points behind the No. 99 Pontiac of Alex Gurney and Jon Fogarty. Just two races remain on the schedule – at Miller Motorsports Park outside Salt Lake City, and Homestead Miami Speedway.

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Meanwhile, for the 25-year-old Frisselle, it was the second consecutive Rolex Series victory at Circuit Gilles Villeneuve and the fourth of his career. He won here last year, co-driving with Mark Wilkins in the No. 61 AIM Autosport Ford Riley, and backed that up with his solid piece of driving in wet and dry conditions over the first 35 laps today.

“I don’t know what’s more exciting, the way we won last year (as the race-leading Brumos Porsche ran out of fuel while approaching the finish line to take the checkered flag, handing the victory over to the No. 61 team), or the way we did it today,” Frisselle said. “I know Grand-Am racing is known for close racing and tight finishes, but I still think today was about as thrilling as it gets for a while there, even though we won by over a minute. When the conditions kept changing and teams had to try and gamble on what to do, that’s excitement. I’ve got to hand it to our guys for making all the right calls. It’s just great to win at Montreal for the second time. I can’t wait to get to Utah and continue this championship chase. There’s still a lot of racing left.”

“I’m absolutely ecstatic – absolutely over the moon,” Taylor added. “It’s one thing to win races, but to win it the way we did was just fantastic. The team was so incredible. The pit strategy was perfect. Brian did a good job in the beginning under really difficult conditions. And, of course, Max did his usual. He was absolutely perfect. The rain worked out very well. I’m very happy for SunTrust and I’m happy to say that we’re right back in the championship fight.”

Competitors will have the next two weekends off before the 2009 Rolex Series schedule resumes on Saturday, Sept. 19, with the season’s penultimate event at Miller Motorsports Park. The 2-hour, 45-minute race will be broadcast live by SPEED-TV beginning at 5:30 p.m. EDT.

- SunTrust: The Official Bank of Motorsports –

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