



## *Spirit of Daytona Racing: Rolex 24 Race Report*

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**Daytona Beach, FL:** Spirit of Daytona Racing headed to their home track for the season-opener Rolex 24 ready to capitalize on the progress they made during the past year developing their Porsche V8 Coyote. The entire team was excited about the prospect of taking the Spirit of Daytona #90 to a new level in Grand-Am competition. The driver lineup for the Rolex 24 included 2010 full-time team drivers Buddy Rice and Antonio Garcia, the defending Rolex 24 champions. They were joined by NASCAR's Paul Menard and IndyCar notable Darren Manning for the twice-around-the-clock endurance classic.

The start of the race was marred by heavy rainfall that created hazardous conditions on the track, resulting in a six-lap caution period before the race went green. The #90 Spirit of Daytona was qualified in 10<sup>th</sup> by Buddy Rice, who also started the race. Rice worked through opening difficulties and a loss of radio communications, but kept the car on pace before handing it over to Antonio Garcia, who delivered a trouble-free stint. Darren Manning, next in the driver rotation, encountered a problem that sent him off course, but was able to get the car back on track under its own power. Paul Menard was behind the wheel in the next stint when contact with another car resulted in loss of the front nose and splitter, bringing out a full course caution to clear the debris. Repairs were quickly made under yellow and the car went back on track with minimal loss of position. The team's luck ran out during the night when 346 laps into the race, Darren Manning reported that the engine had failed, ending the Spirit of Daytona's Rolex 24 run. When the checkered flag dropped on Sunday, the #90 had finished in 13<sup>th</sup> place in the DP class.

Despite the disappointment, Paul Menard enjoyed his time on track. "It is always a fun race to be a part of. It's one that you look forward to, but unfortunately we didn't make it to the end. I got in the car only one time, and was due in again right before we lost the motor. I've been in this race three times, but this was my first time in a DP car. They are fun, but tough to drive. It's hard to get the braking zone perfect, and the guys who run these cars all season are so good at it that it's hard to get up to speed as quickly as they do. Despite that, the Spirit of Daytona car held our own with them. Troy and his guys built a good car – what broke was out of their control. And Ben Lozano built a good engine – as you saw, one of his engines won this race."

The win by Action Express Racing with a Porsche V-8 built by Lozano Brothers Porting gave the Spirit of Daytona team reason for optimism, as team owner Troy Flis noted. "While we are obviously disappointed that we didn't have a better finish for the Rolex 24, we are really happy for Ben Lozano and the Action Express team. They are the only other car in the series running the Porsche V8 we have been developing. It is a great win for the Lozano Brothers and proves that this engine is a viable competitor. We will be working hard in the

weeks ahead to determine what went wrong at Daytona and address the problems so we will be prepared for Homestead and the remainder of the season. Our guys deserve a lot of credit, not only for their hard work at Daytona, but for all they did to get this motor developed to the point that it could win the Rolex 24. They should all take pride in the behind-the-scenes part they played in that success.”

Round two of the Grand-Am Rolex Series will take place at Homestead-Miami Speedway with race action set for Saturday, March 6<sup>th</sup>. The green flag will drop at 5 PM ET and the race is scheduled to be broadcast live on SPEED TV.

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