

# Hella Inc.

## Racing News

### Third Podium in a Row for Flying Lizard at Long Beach

**April 20, 2008 -- Long Beach, California --** The Lizards continued their podium streak with 2nd, 3rd, and 7th place finishes for the three-Porsche, GT2 squad at yesterday's *Tequila Patrón American Le Mans Series at Long Beach*. In a hotly-contested race, with the GT2 lead pack running nose to tail across the finish line, the No. 45 Lizard Porsche of Joerg Bergmeister and Wolf Henzler finished second, and the No. 46 Lizard Porsche of Johannes van Overbeek and Patrick Pilet finished third. The No. 45 finished just 0.10 (one-tenth) of a second behind the winner, the No. 71 Tafel Racing Ferrari, and the No. 46 finished just 0.33 seconds behind the No. 45. It was the second-closest finish in the history of the ALMS and closest ever in GT2. The No. 44 Lizard Porsche of Seth Neiman and Lonnie Pechnik finished seventh in the 14-car GT2 field.

In the No. 46, Johannes van Overbeek started on the pole (with a new GT2 track record of 1:19.705 set by teammate Patrick Pilet in qualifying), the No. 45 was in second with Joerg Bergmeister behind the wheel. Seth Neiman in the No. 44 started in eighth. It was a clean start to the race, with most of the field settling quickly into place. The No. 62 Risi Competizione Ferrari was in third, and the No. 71 Tafel Racing Ferrari in fourth. At the outset, it looked like the short 1 hour and 40 minute race would indeed shape up to be a classic Porsche/Ferrari battle. For the first ten minutes of the race, the top several GT2 cars ran in a close pack, with the No. 45, the No. 62 Ferrari and the No. 71 Ferrari all looking for an opportunity to make a breakout pass and take the lead, but all were held at bay by the No. 46. Over the next 15 minutes, a steady flow of prototype traffic threading through the GT2 field began to break up the pack, giving Johannes in the No. 46 and Joerg in the No. 45 a bit of breathing room from the Ferraris. Meanwhile, the No. 44 Porsche was staying out of trouble until a spin sent Neiman into the tire wall 30 minutes into the race. He was able to continue through the rest of his stint with minimal damage, turning the car over to Lonnie Pechnik.

Back at the front of the GT2 field, Joerg was running a slightly faster pace in the No. 45 than Johannes, and the team strategists worked on a plan to let Joerg pass Johannes safely -- a difficult challenge on a narrow track with so much traffic. 40 minutes into the race, Joerg was able to execute the pass, moving into the lead. So far, it had been a relatively clean race with only one yellow to remove a stopped car from the track. Things began to change at the one-hour mark, with the second yellow flag of the race to remove a piece of bodywork debris from the track.

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This triggered pit stops for nearly all teams who had not already been in (because of the short race length, a one-stop race for driver change and fuel was possible). The No. 45 and No. 46 Porsches readied for their pit stops. Unfortunately, the yellow flag worked against the Lizards -- allowing the No. 62 and No. 71 Ferraris and the No. 48 Corsa Ferrari to close the gap to the No. 45 and No. 46, who were still in P1 and P2. Once again, the top GT2 field was bunched up nose to tail: trailing behind the pace car and waiting to dive into the pits for their pit stops. With just over 30 minutes left in the race and up against the 1 hour and 10 minute driver time limit, the No. 45 and No. 46 pitted nearly simultaneously under yellow, for driver changes, fuel, and new tires. Wolf Henzler took over in the No. 45 and Patrick Pilet in the No. 46. The No. 71 Tafel Racing Ferrari, which had been in P4, pitted at the same time for a driver change and fuel, but elected not to change tires. Combined with the time regained under the yellow, this allowed the No. 71 to get out of the pits just in front of the No. 45 to take the lead, with the No. 46 in third. A lengthy pit stop for the No. 62 Risi Ferrari pushed them back to P5, and allowed the No. 48 Corsa Ferrari to move into fourth. The No. 44 had moved up the field to 11th.

The top five GT2 field now consisted of two Porsches and three Ferraris. With the No. 71 Tafel Racing Ferrari in the lead, Wolf Henzler focused on trying to close the 5 second lead that the No. 71 had built on restart after the yellow. With less than 20 minutes left in the race, a third race yellow to remove the No. 21 Panoz Esperante, which had stopped on course, gave Wolf and Patrick a chance to close the gap. On the green flag restart, it was now a race against time: Wolf had less than 10 minutes to make his move. The No. 71, No. 45, and No. 46 were nose to tail -- with the No. 87 Farnbacher Loles Porsche (which was not on the same lap) all running so close that they appeared to be nearly touching. On the hairpin turn, with just minutes left to go, the No. 87 Porsche bumped Patrick in the No. 46, pushing Patrick into Wolf, which nearly sent Wolf spinning. He was able to maintain control, and the No. 71, No. 45, and No. 46 shot out of the exit of the turn still in a tight line. Wolf had only two laps left to pass, looking for any opportunity or for the No. 71 to make a mistake. Just behind him, Patrick Pilet was holding back to give Wolf enough room to maneuver, but also not lose any time himself. (During his stint, Patrick clocked the fastest GT2 race lap of 1:20.605.) It came down to the final lap and Wolf made a move to try and pass coming out of Turn 11 but had to settle for second, so close behind the No. 71 that they appeared to be one car crossing the finish line.



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Wolf commented on the nailbiter finish "It was a tough finish: I had a great battle with Dirk Mueller in the Tafel Racing Ferrari at the end. I had two or three opportunities to get next to him and tried to overtake. But I had to step back, he was fighting hard for his position for sure and we made the decision not to take the risk. It was tough to find a solid passing opportunity. I had to be very careful not to lose too much time trying to pass because Patrick was right behind me in the No. 46 car. I didn't want to either lose a position or put Patrick at risk."

Wolf continued, "Ferrari today was very good. Tafel ran a different strategy than we did. They did not change tires at their pit stop, and got out ahead of us out of the pits. They had some good luck today with the yellows, and it worked well for their strategy. Congratulations to them on their second win this year. Once again, the Lizard the team did a great job, the pit stop was fast and seamless. I wish we had been able to pull out a win here, but finishing second was still great and once again we had two of our cars on the podium."

Team principal and driver of the No. 44 Porsche Seth Neiman added, "We're seeing an interesting intrasquad battle shaping up between the No. 45 and the No. 46 Porsches, which will add to the complexity for the Lizards, but also help push us to a new level of performance. And there are other new factors at play this year. In addition to Risi Competizione (who won the ALMS championship in 2007), we have two new Ferrari competitors in Tafel Racing and Corsa. And, when bad luck causes a championship team like Risi Competizione to get behind at the beginning of the season, they often take risks, a dynamic which could play a very important role in the championship."

He added, "In a season where we anticipated another difficult battle between the Porsches and the Ferraris, the performance of the Porsches so far has demonstrated that it will indeed be a competitive year. The nature of Sebring and the two street courses so far hasn't really given us a chance to gauge the underlying pace of any of the cars, so in some ways we just don't know yet. So far, it has been really exciting racing, and we are looking forward to Salt Lake City where we can all let loose, so to speak. The Ferraris outpaced us there last year, so this will be the first time we'll be able to see how close the Porsches and the Ferraris actually are this year."



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### **About Flying Lizard Motorsports**

2008 is the fifth consecutive ALMS season for the Sonoma, California-based GT2 team. Since its first year of competition in 2004, the team has finished in the top three in the ALMS GT2 team and drivers' championships, but has not yet won the GT2 title. In 2007, the team was second in the ALMS GT2 team championship and drivers Johannes van Overbeek and Joerg Bergmeister finished second in the ALMS GT2 drivers' championship.

Flying Lizard is sponsored by ShoreTel, a leading provider of enterprise IP telephony solutions, and eSilicon, a semiconductor company, both based in Sunnyvale, California. Team partners include Porsche and Michelin.

Visit the Flying Lizard website and online store at [www.lizardms.com](http://www.lizardms.com).

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