



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Flying Lizard Motorsports Kicks Off 2018 at St. Petersburg Grand Prix; Welcomes Opti-Coat as Sponsor

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla., (March 8, 2018) - This year, Flying Lizard Motorsports celebrates its 15th anniversary in sports car racing, returning for a second season in the Pirelli World Challenge. The 2018 season kicks off this weekend at the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, a festival of racing on the streets of St. Petersburg, Florida. Flying Lizard Motorsports will be returning with a pair of brand new Audi R8 LMS GT4 cars, driven by Mike Hedlund and Adam Merzon.

"We're so excited to celebrate our 15th anniversary with new drivers and new cars," said Program Manager and Team Principal Darren Law. "Mike and Adam are excellent additions to our team, and we're ready to have an exciting race season. With limited track time and unforgiving concrete walls, St. Petersburg can be a challenging event, so it's important for us to perform well and keep the cars clean."

As with any temporary street course, such as St. Petersburg, the track can dramatically change from year to year, based on the wear and tear of the roads as well as any changes the track officials deem necessary. The 14-turn, 1.8 mile course has little runoff area, making car set up and driver precision absolutely vital to the competitor's success during the weekend. Both Audi R8 LMS GT4s will have to be quick in transition through the chicane like turns, the high speed kink, and the decreasing radius left hander. This weekend, Flying Lizard Motorsports engineer Jim Bell will keep his sights set on keeping the rear tidy, and the front of the car quick.

Upon taking delivery of the second car last month, the team tested for two days at VIRginia International Raceway, running in both dry and wet conditions. The test allowed for the drivers and team to get acquainted with the new machines in preparation for the double header season opener.

"I can't wait to kick off our Pirelli World Challenge season in St. Petersburg," said Mike Hedlund. "We've had productive testing with the new Audi R8 GT4 and now it's time to see what we can do versus the competition. After a podium last year here in St. Petersburg, my personal expectations are high and we'll be aiming to be back on the podium by the end of the weekend. With a huge and competitive grid, it should be lots of fun for us drivers and entertaining to everyone watching!"

"Having finally driven the Audi R8 LMS GT4 in preseason testing, I'm even more excited for St. Petersburg," said Adam Merzon. "The Flying Lizard crew is top tier and it's easy to see why they have the reputation that they do. I'm hopeful we can keep our awesome Case-it Audi clean and to collect as many points as possible."

This year, Flying Lizard will be entering into its fifth year under the ownership of Darren Law, Thomas Blam, and Tommy Sadler, continuing its expansion as a customer racing program. In a sport where sponsorship is vital, Flying Lizard Motorsports is proud to welcome Opti-Coat, a specialist in unique coating technologies, to the 2018 program. Both Audi R8 LMS GT4 cars will sport dynamic liveries, which will be covered in the Opti-Coat Pro+ packaging, enhancing the designs with the product's high gloss and smooth finish.

"We are excited to partner with Flying Lizard Motorsports to take on the Pirelli World Challenge as part of our International Opti-Coat Racing program for 2018," said David Ghodoussi, Opti-Coat Chief Executive Officer. "The Audi GT4 and the whole team at Flying Lizard have proven their ability to win races and championships. We are looking forward to the first race at St. Petersburg and the whole season."

"We are really excited to welcome OptiCoat on board for this season," said Darren Law. "A good friend of mine introduced me to their product several years ago, I was so impressed with it and have always wanted to incorporate their product into our racing program. They produce a number of protective coating for many different applications that will not only be beneficial to our race cars but are also great product for consumers and manufacturers. We are looking forward to working with them and helping them grow the brand through our sport and our fan base."

Rounds 1 and 2 of the Pirelli World Challenge will take place on Saturday, March 10, and Sunday March 11, with both races streaming live on world-challenge.com. For schedule information, visit world-challenge.com.

About Opti-Coat

Optimum Polymer Technologies, the manufacturer of Opti-Coat, was founded in Memphis, Tennessee, on July 01, 2001 by Dr. David Ghodoussi. Prior to this, Dr. Ghodoussi worked for over 12 years as an Organic Chemist overseeing research and development focused in polymers and automotive paint formulations.

For more than a decade, Opti-Coat has been setting the industry standard with their unique coating technologies developing and manufacturing proprietary resins utilizing Silicon Carbide (SiC) chemistry. Opti-Coat's purpose is to provide clients with a product that is the most durable, innovative and protective coating available.

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About Flying Lizard Motorsports

Since its inception in 2004, Flying Lizard Motorsports has become an iconic team in the world of sports car racing. The California based team has celebrated seven driver and team championships, as well as competed internationally at the 24 Hours of Le Mans eight times. The Lizards burst on the American Le Mans Series scene in 2004, competing in the GT class until 2012. In 2013, the team moved to the GTC class, still competing in legendary events such as the 12 Hours of Sebring and 24 Hours of Daytona. In 2014, the team expanded its program to include running two Audi R8 LMS in the TUDOR Championship, and in 2015, again expanded the program to include two Porsches in Porsche Club racing. Flying Lizard closed out the season with a dominating win at the 25 Hours of Thunderhill with Toyo Tires, a win they repeated with a 1-2 finish in 2016. For more information, visit lizardms.com. For additional photos and all behind-the-scenes updates, check us out on Facebook, twitter and Instagram.

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Flying Lizard Motorsports Audi R8 LMS GT4



Mike Hedlund



Case-It Racing by Flying Lizard Motorsports Audi R8 LMS GT4



Adam Merzon



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