

FIA WEC 2025 - Round 8 - 8 Hours of Bahrain - Pole and Victory!

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#News

The 8 Hours of Bahrain in the heat of the Sakhir desert brought the curtain down on the 2025 FIA World Endurance Championship. After earning LMGT3 pole position on Friday with Finn Gehrsitz in the #78 Lexus RC F LMGT3, Akkodis ASP Team ended the season on a high with victory for the #87 driven by José María López, Clemens Schmid and Petru Umbrărescu. It was an outstanding overall performance for the French team, which took its second win of the season after Interlagos in July, and a double podium in the LMGT3 World Championship, with third in both the Teams' and Drivers' standings. The eighth round capped a season which has seen Lexus move to the front of the LMGT3 category thanks to its competitive performances. The next challenge is already in sight: on 28 March 2026, at the Losail International Circuit in Qatar, a new FIA World Endurance Championship season will begin.



Promising free practice in demanding conditions

From the first free practice sessions, the two Lexus looked strong on the 5.412 km Sakhir circuit, renowned for its heavy braking and straights swept by hot desert winds which leave a coating of sand on the track surface.

In the first session, the #87 Lexus of José María López, Clemens Schmid and Petru Umbrărescu set the second fastest time, just 0.056 seconds off the benchmark. The #78 driven by Ben Barnicoat, Finn Gehrsitz and Arnold Robin completed the top three in third, confirming the performance potential of the Lexus-Akkodis ASP Team package.

The scenario was reversed in second practice. Finn Gehrsitz took the #78 to the top of the standings with a lap of 2:02.613s, the fastest of the day. The #87 was briefly delayed by a minor issue, but nevertheless finished in the top 10, demonstrating its speed.

Third practice confirmed the team's position at the front of the pack. Both Lexus Akkodis ASP Team cars were in the top three, just three tenths of a second off the fastest time, with the #78 second and the #87 in third.



Qualifying: both Lexus in contention!

At the end of a hard-fought qualifying session, Arnold Robin put the #78 in second in LMGT3 with a time of 2:03.021s, just 0.030s behind the pace-setting Mercedes-AMG Iron Lynx. Petru Umbrărescu set the fifth fastest time in the #87 to ensure Akkodis ASP Team had two cars in the top five and into Hyperpole.



Hyperpole: Finn Gehrsitz takes the final pole of the season for Lexus

In the early evening, as the dusk light mingled with the glimmer of the golden sand, Finn Gehrsitz pulled out all the stops. On his first attempt, the German driver recorded a superb lap of 2:01.661s, leaving the #60 Iron Lynx Mercedes over three tenths behind.

This perfect lap gave the #78 Lexus RC F LMGT3 pole position for the 8 Hours of Bahrain, its second pole of the season to add to the one achieved at Spa-Francorchamps.

The #87, with Clemens Schmid at the wheel, rounded off an impressive team performance with a solid fourth.



A flawless race for #87: pace and composure

At 2pm local time, under clear skies and with track temperatures exceeding 35°C, the lights went green for the final race of the 2025 season.

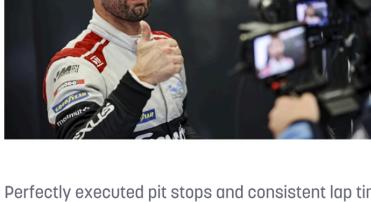
Arnold Robin's pole-sitting #78 Lexus got off to an ideal start and immediately established a quick pace at the front.

After a controlled start from fourth, Petru Umbrărescu put in a solid first stint, quickly establishing the #87 in the top three.

During a double stint, Arnold Robin set the benchmark at the front of the field. However, before the end of the second hour, the telemetry system failed, preventing real-time data from being transmitted to the FIA. As a result, the Lexus was no longer allowed to rejoin the race.



The #87, with Clemens Schmid now at the wheel, closed in on the leaders. Lap after lap, he reduced the gap to the #61 Mercedes, before taking the lead shortly before the two-hour mark. Firmly holding on to the advantage, the #87 car never relinquished this lead.



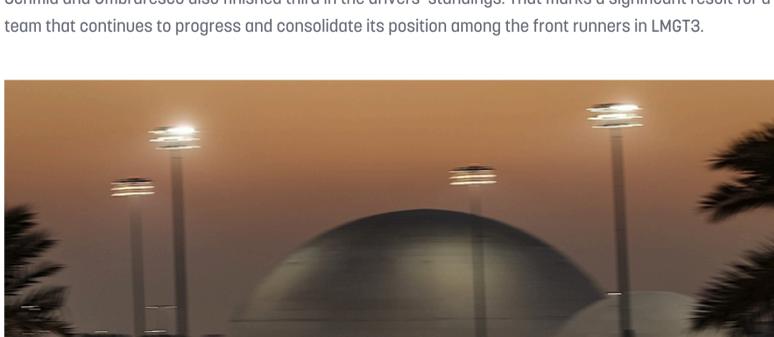
Perfectly executed pit stops and consistent lap times allowed the trio of López, Schmid and Umbrărescu to maintain a solid advantage despite constant pressure from the chasing pack, even managing to build a 30-second lead over the #61 car at one point. However, any advantage was wiped out whenever the safety car was deployed, forcing them to start again. The crew rose to the challenge and stayed out front.

José María López took the wheel for the last stint and completed a masterful drive. The Argentinian kept his composure when a final safety car, 30 minutes before the chequered flag, brought the #27 Aston Martin right on to his tail. The last few kilometres were extremely tense for the team watching from the pits but ended in relief and celebration when he crossed the line ahead of the #61 Mercedes, which was just 0.786 seconds behind after 216 laps and eight hours of battle.



This victory, the second of the season after Interlagos, capped an exceptional weekend for the French team and the Japanese manufacturer.

Victory secured third place for Akkodis ASP Team in the LMGT3 Teams' Championship, while López, Schmid and Umbrărescu also finished third in the drivers' standings. That marks a significant result for a team that continues to progress and consolidate its position among the front runners in LMGT3.



Jérôme Policand (Team Principal): 'Finishing the season with a pole position and a victory is hugely satisfying. For the second time, we have been able to capitalise on the momentum we have built up throughout the year. Finishing on the championship podium is a reward for all the hard work and commitment, as well as the passion of the entire team and the drivers for their discipline.'

See you on 28 March at the Losail International Circuit in Qatar for the start of the 2026 season!

