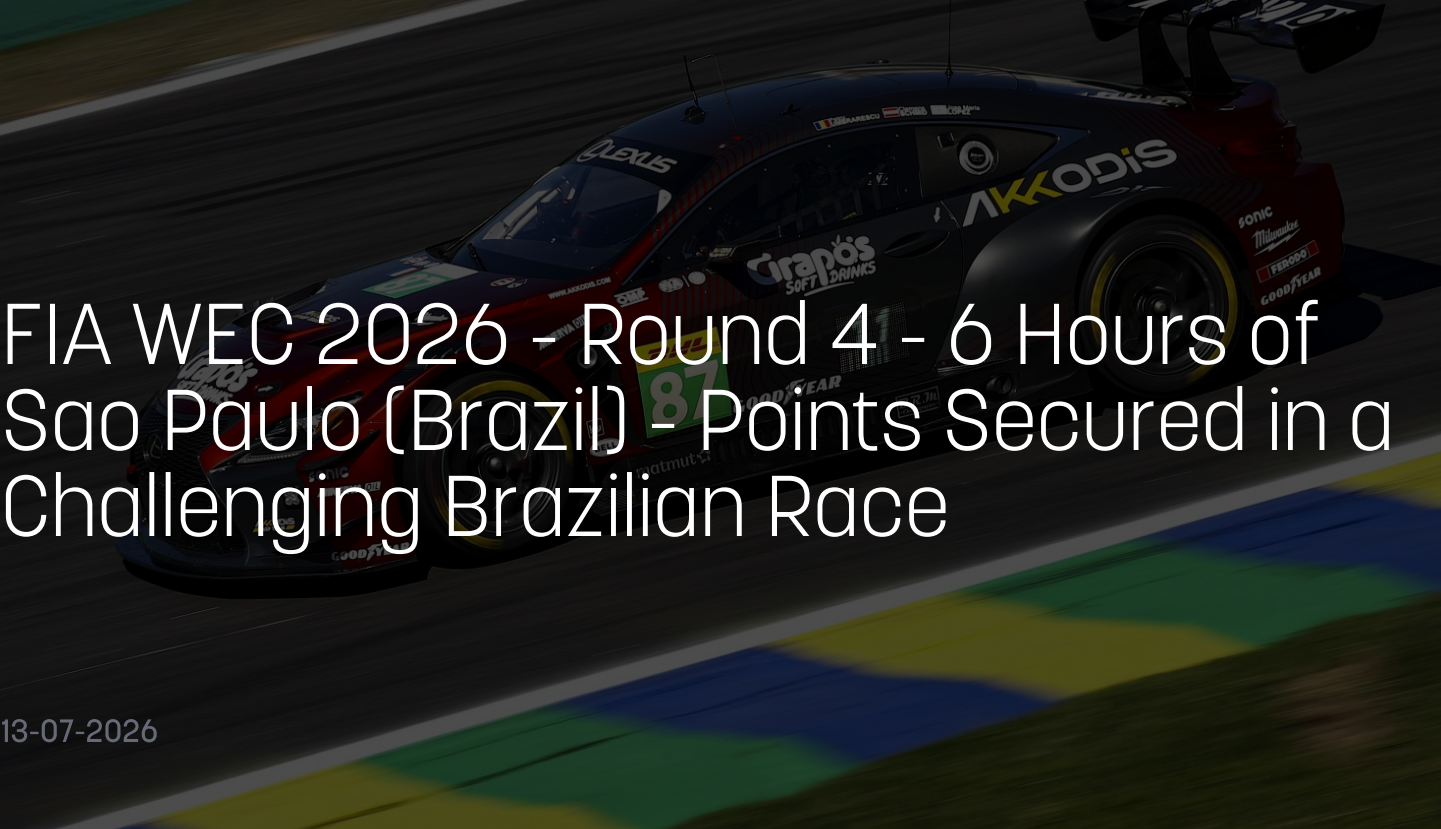




FIA WEC 2026 - Round 4 - 6 Hours of Sao Paulo (Brazil) - Points Secured in a Challenging Brazilian Race

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#News

In the typically vibrant atmosphere of Interlagos, in front of passionate Brazilian fans, the two Akkodis ASP Team Lexus RC F LMGT3s performed strongly throughout the weekend. Starting from the second row after taking third place in Hyperpole, the #87 Lexus driven by Petru Umbrărescu, Clemens Schmid and José María López fought at the front for much of the race before finishing seventh, while the #78 of Tom Van Rompuy, Hadrien David and Esteban Masson crossed the line in 14th after a spectacular comeback was cut short by a collision and damaged steering. In the championship, the Lexus cars occupy sixth and seventh position in the Teams' standings, whilst their drivers are in eighth and ninth. The next round is on 6 September in Austin, for the Lone Star Le Mans.



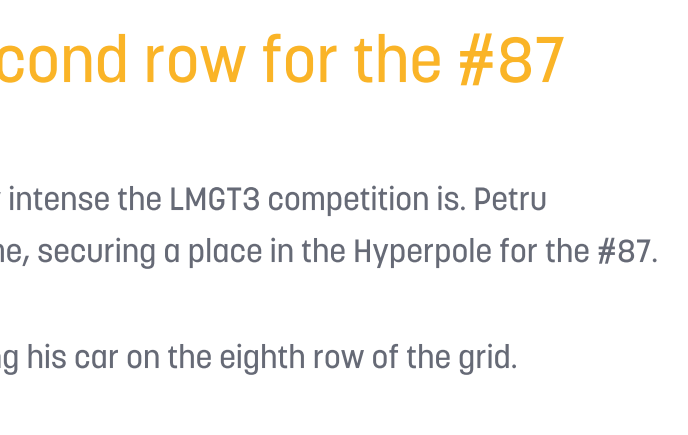
Free practice - A strong start

At 4.309 kilometres and with 15 corners, Interlagos is the shortest circuit of the WEC season, but nevertheless one of the most demanding. Between the elevation change at the famous Senna 'S', the twisty second sector, and the long climb through the start-finish straight, the drivers must contend with a track that is both technical and physically demanding.

Akkodis ASP Team's two Lexus RC F LMGT3s spent Friday's first free practice carefully assessing the track and fine-tuning their initial set-ups. The #78, driven by Tom Van Rompuy, Hadrien David and Esteban Masson, finished the first session in ninth, just ahead of the #87 car driven by Petru Umbrărescu, Clemens Schmid and José María López, in 11th. The hierarchy changed significantly during the second session.

After an excellent first run, Clemens Schmid put the #87 Lexus at the top of the timesheets with a lap time of 1'34"498. The Austrian, who won at Interlagos in 2025 alongside José María López and Petru Umbrărescu, immediately confirmed the defending crew's intentions. Hadrien David rounded off the team's dominance by placing the #78 in second, just 0.037 seconds behind.

The third and final session confirmed the close competition in the LMGT3 field, with 14 cars finishing within a second. Clemens Schmid matched Rui Andrade's fastest lap to the nearest thousandth, with a time of 1'34"283. The #61 Mercedes was classified first, having set its time before the #87 Lexus. The #78 finished the session in 11th.

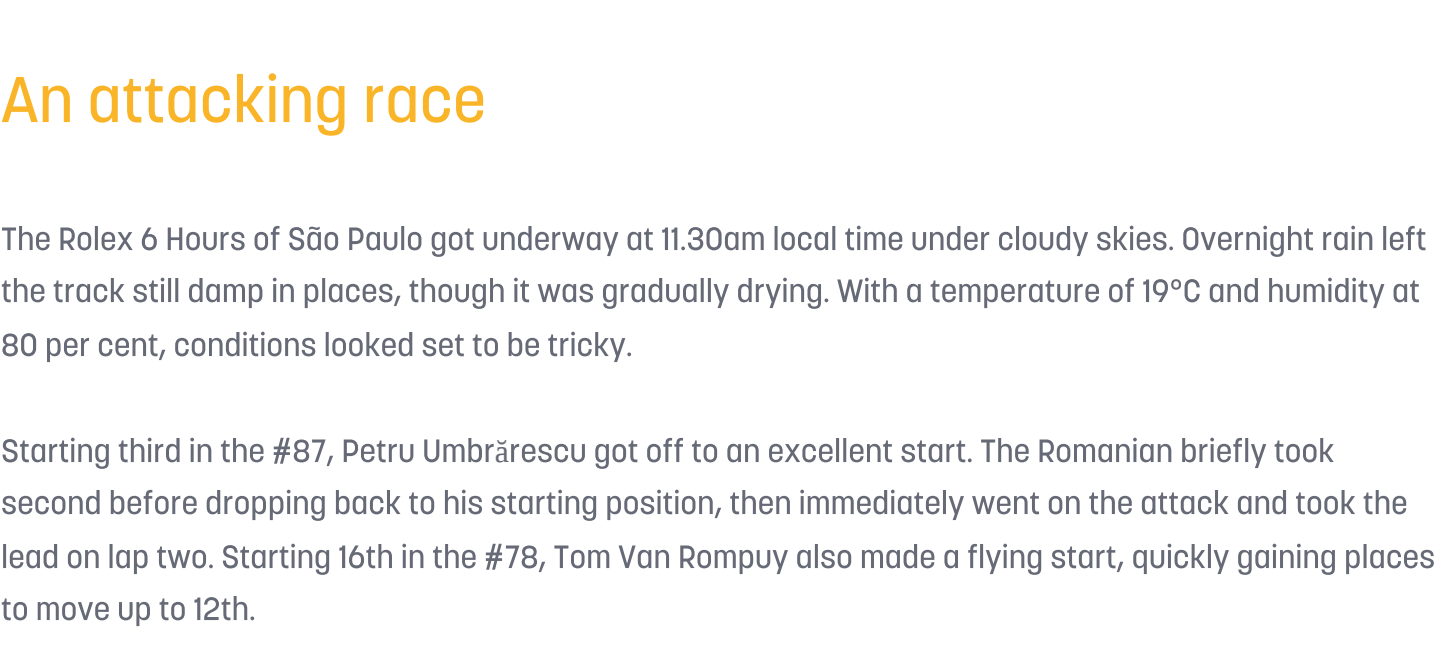


Qualifying & Hyperpole - Second row for the #87

Held in temperatures of 27°C, qualifying confirmed how intense the LMGT3 competition is. Petru Umbrărescu took the wheel and set the fifth-fastest time, securing a place in the Hyperpole for the #87.

In the #78 Lexus, Tom Van Rompuy finished 16th, placing his car on the eighth row of the grid.

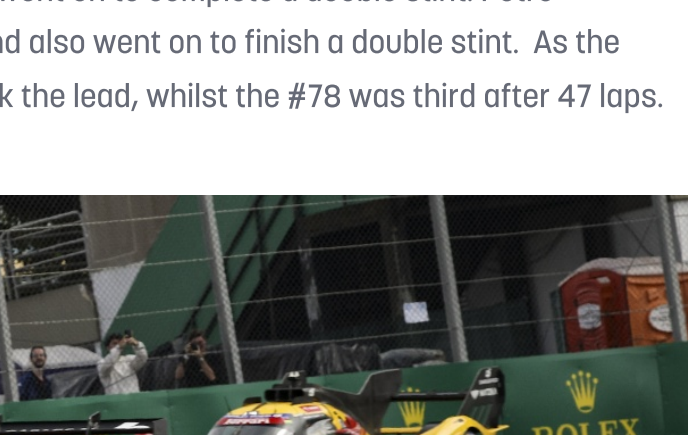
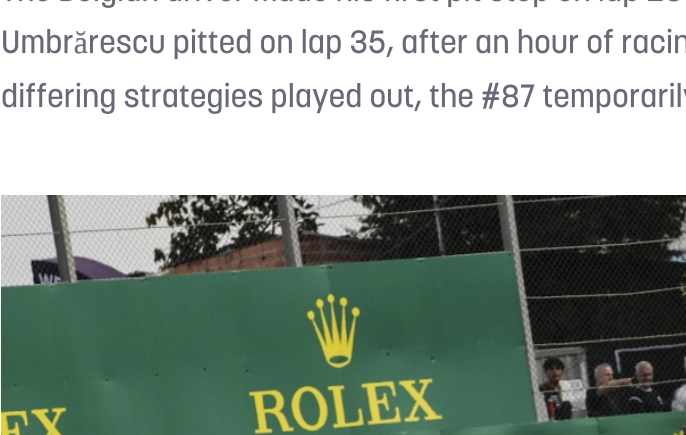
Clemens Schmid took over the #87 for Hyperpole and with a lap of 1'33"764, the Austrian secured a fine third place, 0.414secs behind the pole-sitting #23 Aston Martin. The Lexus finished 0.002secs ahead of the #69 BMW on its way to the second row of the LMGT3 grid.



An attacking race

The Rolex 6 Hours of São Paulo got underway at 11.30am local time under cloudy skies. Overnight rain left the track still damp in places, though it was gradually drying. With a temperature of 19°C and humidity at 80 per cent, conditions looked set to be tricky.

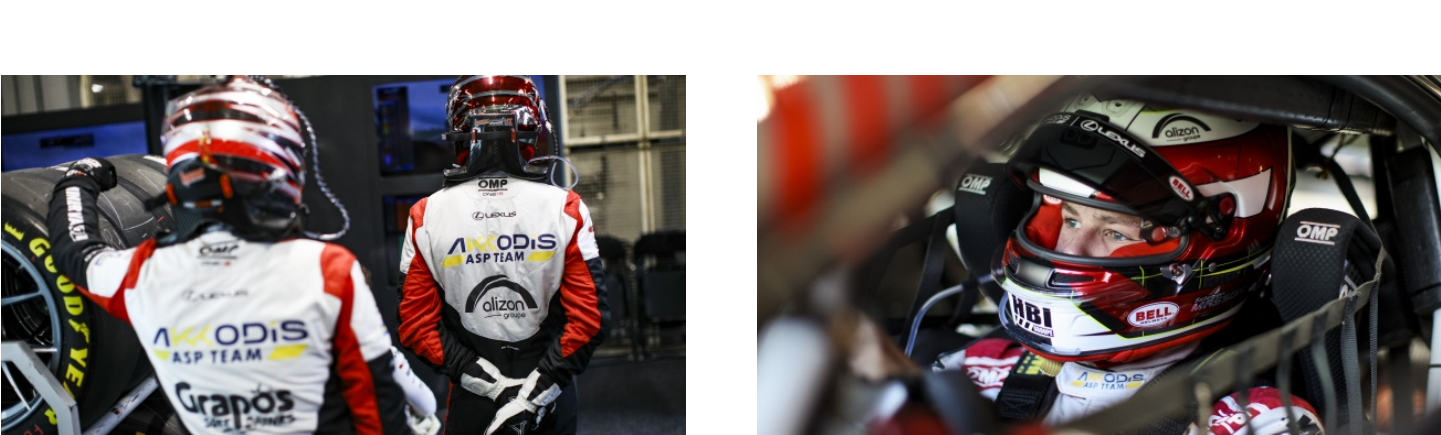
Starting third in the #87, Petru Umbrărescu got off to an excellent start. The Romanian briefly took second before dropping back to his starting position, then immediately went on the attack and took the lead on lap two. Starting 16th in the #78, Tom Van Rompuy also made a flying start, quickly gaining places to move up to 12th.



Petru Umbrărescu set a fast pace at the front, with the #87 Lexus and the #88 Ford pulling away as their drivers traded fastest laps. After 11 laps, the Akkodis ASP Team driver held a solid lead ahead of the two Fords, whilst Tom Van Rompuy methodically continued his progress through the field.

Heavy traffic, compounded by Hypercars lapping the field, made it difficult for the #87 to defend its lead. On lap 20, the #88 Ford found an opening, and the #77 also got past the Lexus two corners later. Petru Umbrărescu therefore dropped to third and then fourth. Meanwhile, Tom Van Rompuy moved into the top 10, up to ninth after 28 laps.

The Belgian driver made his first pit stop on lap 28 and went on to complete a double stint. Petru Umbrărescu pitted on lap 35, after an hour of racing, and also went on to finish a double stint. As the differing strategies played out, the #87 temporarily took the lead, whilst the #78 was third after 47 laps.



At the end of their exceptional double stints, the two Bronze drivers handed their cars to their team-mates. Hadrien David took over the #78 on lap 64, whilst Clemens Schmid got in the #87 a lap later. With four hours to go, both Lexus cars were still in the leading group, in fourth and sixth.

Shortly before halfway, the #78 was hit by the #32 BMW and dropped to sixth. The #32 was handed a 10-second penalty as a result.

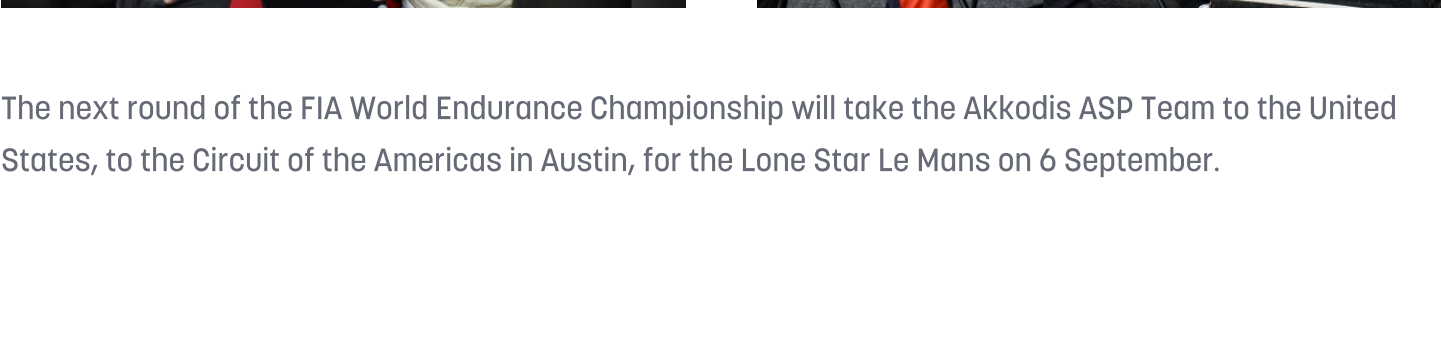
At half-distance, both Lexus cars were still locked in a battle at the front. The #87 was fourth, around 20 seconds behind the leader, whilst the #78 was fifth after fighting its way up from the back of the grid.



However, things took a turn for the worse for the #78. After the collision with the BMW #32, it was then hit by the Mercedes-AMG #61. This time, the Lexus' steering was damaged, affecting its handling and pace for the remainder of the race.

Hadrien David nevertheless continued his double stint before handing over to Esteban Masson on lap 137. A few minutes later, José María López replaced Clemens Schmid in the #87. With an hour and a half remaining, the two cars were in eighth and 13th respectively.

Conditions continued to change with the arrival of a light drizzle, though this had no impact on grip. Following the final refuelling stops, José María López found himself temporarily in third before his final pit stop on lap 185.



The Argentine driver stepped up the pace during the final 45 minutes and moved the #87 up to seventh. Despite his car's handling becoming more difficult, Esteban Masson managed to establish the #78 in 14th.

In almost surreal weather conditions, the circuit was gradually enveloped in fog and the temperature fell to 15°C. The order remained unchanged until the chequered flag. The #87 of Petru Umbrărescu, Clemens Schmid and José María López crossed the line in seventh, ahead of the 14th-placed #78 of Tom Van Rompuy, Hadrien David and Esteban Masson.

The #87 now occupies sixth place in the Teams' standings with 38 points, just ahead of the #78, in seventh with 37 points. In the drivers' championship, Clemens Schmid, José María López and Petru Umbrărescu are eighth, whilst Hadrien David and Tom Van Rompuy are ninth.

The next round of the FIA World Endurance Championship will take the Akkodis ASP Team to the United States, to the Circuit of the Americas in Austin, for the Lone Star Le Mans on 6 September.