



PRESS RELEASE

## ROLEX 24 AT DAYTONA CELEBRATES 60TH ANNIVERSARY

**Geneva, 20 January 2022** – The 2022 Rolex 24 At DAYTONA marks the diamond jubilee of one of motor sport’s most fabled races. From Saturday 29 to Sunday 30 January, an impressive field of 61 cars will compete in this annual race against the clock. In a year of milestones, North America’s endurance epic celebrates 60 years of exhilarating action at the Daytona International Speedway®, while Rolex observes its 30th anniversary as Title Sponsor. This relationship between Rolex and Daytona dates back even further to when Sir Malcolm Campbell, the so-called King of Speed, set five World Land Speed Records at Daytona Beach, the fastest in 1935 behind the wheel of *Bluebird* with a Rolex Oyster on his wrist.

From the mid-1930s to the 1950s, the oval Daytona Beach-Road Course captured the hearts and minds of spectators and competitors. Then, in 1959, the ambitious plan of William France Sr. to build a new 4 kilometre (2.5 mile) permanent racetrack became a reality and racing moved to Daytona International Speedway®. The inaugural edition of the historic endurance race took place in 1962 and what was initially a three-hour contest soon became the 24-hour race of today. Rolex has supported the event since the early 1960s and went on to name one of its most iconic watches after this temple of motor sport. As part of the forthcoming 60th anniversary celebrations, the speedway will honour previous champions, including Mario Andretti, Hurley Haywood and Scott Pruett, as well as the machines which carried them to victory.

**Scott Pruett**, five-time overall winner of the Rolex 24 At DAYTONA, says: “The testament of time is present in various aspects of the Rolex 24. For me personally, having raced there on 24 occasions, and having won it many times, the excitement never grows old. Now celebrating the 60th anniversary, reliving the legacies that looped this track, I keep coming back to the Champion’s Creed: ‘It’s all about the watch’. Rolex and the 24 hours at Daytona are synonymous, as they continuously stand the test of time, showcase perseverance and hold fast to tradition.”

The 2022 Rolex 24 At DAYTONA will act as the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship’s curtain-raiser, and will be preceded by the now well-established Roar Before The Rolex 24 which returns this week. From Friday 21 to Sunday 23 January, drivers will have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the challenging 5.73 kilometre (3.56 mile) circuit, whose tri-oval banking was originally



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designed to maximize speed and offer spectators superior viewing. This three-day preview event will culminate in a 100-minute qualifying race to determine the starting grid for next week's Rolex 24 At DAYTONA.

An exciting combination of rookies and decorated champions from across motor sport will contest this year's race. At the front of the five-class field, the Daytona Prototype international (DPI) class will increase to seven entries for its final season, before it makes way for the Le Mans Daytona h (LMDh) category. Seven-time NASCAR champion Jimmie Johnson returns to the all-star #48 Ally Cadillac Dpi-V.R., alongside reigning FIA World Endurance Champion Kamui Kobayashi and 24 Hours of Le Mans winners Jose Maria Lopez and Mike Rockenfeller. Meanwhile, Chip Ganassi Racing recently confirmed their pair of Cadillacs, with the #01 car featuring multiple race winners Renger van der Zande, Sébastien Bourdais and Scott Dixon, with current IndyCar champion Alex Palou completing the line-up. The Le Mans Prototype 2 (LMP2) class will see IndyCar's young frontrunners Pato O'Ward and Colton Herta join last year's podium drivers Devlin DeFrancesco and Eric Lux aboard the #81 DragonSpeed ORECA 07-Gibson. Both GT classes will run identical specifications, with the new Fédération de l'Automobile (FIA) GT3-based GT Daytona PRO (GTD PRO) class replacing the GT Le Mans (GTLM) category for this year's championship. TR3 Racing and Lamborghini are teaming up with entries in the GTD PRO class and the GT Daytona (GTD) class, with both cars featuring previous Rolex 24 winners.

This exacting test of skill and endurance pushes drivers and their cars to the limit, requiring teams to pull together through a possible 800 laps, or more, during the twice-around-the-clock marathon. It is not so much a race against the ticking hours, but rather a movement through which driver and machine seek to embrace the flow of seconds, to push ever further, and capture that elusive moment when they are perfectly in tune.

Along with the prestige of winning the race, the drivers who complete the greatest number of laps in 24 hours will receive an engraved Oyster Perpetual Cosmograph Daytona. Speaking about how it feels to triumph over 24 hours, Rolex Testimonee, endurance racing legend and nine-time 24 Hours of Le Mans winner, **Tom Kristensen**, says: "In design and presence, the watch is more than just a name; it's an identity that reflects a successful race and a successful time in a driver's life.



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When you get to the top step of a podium, you see your teammates for the first time in the 24 hours and, together, you are full of the happiness, joy and relief. It's a really important moment and the watch means a lot to the winners of these races."

### **ROLEX AND MOTOR SPORT**

Rolex's close ties with motor sport date back to Sir Malcolm Campbell's World Land Speed Record successes in the 1930s, when he became the first driver to break the 300 mph barrier (483 km/h) at the wheel of his car, *Bluebird*. Since then, Rolex's presence in motor racing has grown steadily, its support extending to revered endurance events such as the Rolex 24 At DAYTONA, the 24 Hours of Le Mans and the FIA World Endurance Championship. In 2013, Rolex became associated with Formula 1®, the pinnacle of motor sport, having supported Rolex Testimonee Sir Jackie Stewart since 1968. The three-time FIA Formula 1® Drivers' World Champion has been joined by fellow high achievers from the world of motor sport: Tom Kristensen, the record nine-time 24 Hours of Le Mans winner, and Mark Webber, the multiple Formula 1® race winner and 2015 FIA World Endurance Champion. The brand also has a global appreciation for classic automotive events steeped in elegance, beauty and tradition, including the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance®, *The Quail, A Motorsports Gathering*, the Rolex Monterey Motorsports Reunion and the Goodwood Revival.

### **ABOUT ROLEX**

#### **AN UNRIVALLED REPUTATION FOR QUALITY AND EXPERTISE**

Rolex is an integrated and independent Swiss watch *manufacture*. Headquartered in Geneva, the brand is recognized the world over for its expertise and the quality of its products – symbols of excellence, elegance and prestige. The movements of its Oyster Perpetual and Cellini watches are certified by COSC, then tested in-house for their precision, performance and reliability. The Superlative Chronometer certification, symbolized by the green seal, confirms that each watch has successfully undergone tests conducted by Rolex in its own laboratories according to its own criteria. These are periodically validated by an independent external organization.

The word "Perpetual" is inscribed on every Rolex Oyster watch. But more than just a word on a dial, it is a philosophy that embodies the company's vision and values. Hans Wilsdorf, the founder of the company, instilled a notion of perpetual excellence that would drive the company forward. This led Rolex to pioneer the



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development of the wristwatch and numerous major watchmaking innovations, such as the Oyster, the first waterproof wristwatch, launched in 1926, and the Perpetual rotor self-winding mechanism, invented in 1931. In the course of its history, Rolex has registered over 500 patents. At its four sites in Switzerland, the brand designs, develops and produces the majority of its watch components, from the casting of the gold alloys to the machining, crafting, assembly and finishing of the movement, case, dial and bracelet. Furthermore, the brand is actively involved in supporting the arts and culture, sport and exploration, as well as those who are devising solutions to preserve the planet.

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