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12 HOURS OF SEBRING ANNIVERSARY

# FAB FIVE

Our countdown of the greatest Sebring battles concludes ahead of this year's 60th anniversary race

BY GARY WATKINS

The 2012 Mobil 1 12 Hours of Sebring is upon us, and though we've reflected at length on the race's history and provenance, five years stand out from the rest.

**No. 2:** Anyone could have won the 1990 race. Nissan, Porsche and Jaguar – the big guns of the IMSA GTP series in the late 1930s and early '90s – were all in the mix, and no fewer than six cars representing the three marques led the race at some point. Two drivers even managed to top the leader board in two separate cars. The 1990 12 Hours of Sebring had it all.

A trio of Porsche 962s, two driven by Bob Wollek, all led the race, but the German manufacturer's challenge disappeared in the closing stages, leaving a three-way fight into the final hour among the two factory Nissan GTP-ZXTs and a solo TWR Jaguar XJR12.

The leading Nissan, in the hands of Derek Daly, struggled with overheating and a gearbox that would jump out of fifth gear. The Jag, with Jan Lammers at the wheel, was lapping eight seconds quicker and would not need to stop for fuel. Chip Robinson in the third-place Nissan was lapping quicker than both of them.

The chasing cars both unlapped themselves in a frenetic final hour and were closing hand over fist on the leader. Robinson had to pit, handing over to Geoff Brabham, who then proceeded to lap at near-



qualifying pace as he chased down the Jaguar in second place.

The Australian succeeded in that task but not in overhauling Daly for the lead, finishing second, 87 seconds behind. It was also the first time that three cars finished on the winning lap at the 12 Hours.

Daly was the hero, becoming the only driver to finish first and second overall at Sebring in the same year, having started the car driven by Brabham and Robinson before switching to his own machine. Not that he remembers much about those final laps: His partner in the winning car, Bob Earl, was exhausted and able to drive no more, so Daly had to complete the race.

"I remember driving more than seven hours in total," Daly recalls. "I was so worn out that I had gone onto autopilot at the end."

