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The Long Beach Street Circuit

The Level 5 Motorsports team is certainly not relentless. Relentless within their determination, relentless in their speed, and relentless in their ability to win. Only such a team could finish the way the Scott Tucker-owned, Microsoft Office-sponsored did at the Long Beach, Calif., street circuit. The No. 55 Le Mans Prototype Challenge entry set a record on the Long Beach track, a notoriously challenging circuit for drivers. The Level 5 team went on to finish second in the race, a podium finish that secured Tucker and co-driver Christophe Bouchut's top rankings in overall point standings.

The team was happy with its performance at Long Beach, one of the toughest tracks on the Level 5 schedule. The momentum they built less than a month earlier winning the 12 Hours of Sebring in LMP2 was amped considerably with the historic finish in California. The Long Beach track has a history of causing race difficulties because it is slick and doesn't provide much opportunity to pass. Additionally, any track becomes challenging as races wear on and conditions become dirtier, but Long Beach's narrow lanes exacerbate the challenge considerably.

Emphasizing driving smart and preserving the car isn't easy at triple-digit speeds with a running clock, but the Level 5 drivers know what they're doing. Bouchut, who delivered the record-breaking qualifying run, is a veteran racer and one of the extremely successful endurance drivers on earth. He won three FIA GT titles and an FFSA GT championship-making him the only triple FIA GT champion in history. Tucker, though an ALMS rookie in 2010, has never relented in his near-perfect performances, balanced precision and complete command of the track. Case in point: He won Champion Driver in 2010.

Bouchut took the wheel and fought Gunnar Jeannette both in qualifying and finals. Jeannette ultimately pulled ahead of Bouchut just at the finish line, but Bouchut maintains his record for fastest lap in the LMPC class, during lap 56. Tucker had delivered negative splits during his laps on the track. He managed brilliant maneuvers even through traffic, which set up the Level 5 team well enough to be a formidable challenger for the No. 1 spot and ultimately clinch the No. 2 spot in the race-Level 5's second consecutive podium finish in the season, a monumental start for the team's 2011 year.

Without remaining ALMS contests until mid-year, the showing at Long Beach was a significant benchmark for the Level 5 Motorsports team. The outstanding success despite the difficulty of the track was a telling indicator of the strength and winning ability of the drivers and the team. The approaching weeks brings another California competition, this time around in Sonoma in the Ferrari Challenge series.

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