

THILENIUS GROUP

Hey! Virginia International Raceway hosted the tenth round of the IMSA Continental Tire SportsCar Challenge on August 21-23. Working through the intense heat and humidity of Southern Virginia in August, the Irish Mike's Racing Hyundai Genesis Coupes continued to show progress. The team recovered as best we could from a penalty for pitting on a closed pit lane to record our season best finish of 13th.

VIR was our first weekend with the latest IMSA balance of performance, a larger 245 series Continental race tire and a 25 pound reduction in minimum weight. I also picked up a new co-driver for this weekend,



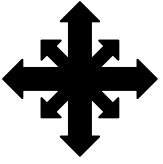
Cameron Lawrence. Cameron ran with Irish Mike's in the #95 Genesis Coupe at Road America and led for much of his stint, so I was pretty optimistic about our chances going into the weekend.

In the first session of the test day, I immediately showed the potential of the Irish Mike's Genesis Coupe on the 245 series tire by recording the 6th fastest time. The new tire really transformed the handling. For the first time this season, I did not feel like I had to save my life in every corner! Cameron and I were both impressed with the tire's improved drivability and durability and spent the rest of the test day working through a test program of spring, anti-roll bar and damper

changes. In the first official practice, I ran the #94's quickest lap of the weekend, a 2:07.702. Unfortunately, as the heat and humidity built up throughout the day, the Irish Mike's Genesis Coupes lost power and we struggled to match our early pace.

Based on Cameron's performance at Road America and my experience, we decided I should qualify and start the race. Our race strategy was to stretch our fuel mileage so we could make our last pit stop for fuel, tires and driver change with an hour to go in the race. A brief shower rained out qualifying, so the grid was determined by starting driver's championship points. The #94 Irish Mike's Genesis Coupe started 22nd out of 27 Street Tuner class cars. I was disappointed I did not get a chance to qualify. On our new larger Continental tires, I am sure I could have moved us much farther up the grid.

At the drop of the green, I picked up a couple positions entering Turn 1. Over the next few laps, I worked my way forward and onto the rear bumper of the #64 BMW. The #94 Genesis Coupe was flying up through the high speed Esses, but the heat started to take its toll on our engine power. I managed to make an outside pass on the #64 in Oak Tree only to watch him drive right by me on the long back straight. My race strategist, Peter Keane, suggested I forget about drafting and concentrate on getting cool air to the radiator and intercooler. Within a couple laps I brought the coolant temperatures down by about 20 degrees, the engine power recovered and I put the #64 behind me for good. About 30 minutes into the race, the yellow flag came out for a full course caution. The Irish Mike's team called me in for a fuel stop only to be informed by IMSA the pits were closed. The IMSA rulebook clearly states the pits should have been open for ST class cars, but when the race went back to green IMSA handed us a stop plus 60 seconds penalty. Despite the penalty, I kept the #94 on the lead lap and matched the pace of the leaders while hoping for another full course caution to close up the field. The full course caution never came. When I pitted with about an hour left in the race to turn the car over to Cameron, our second pit stop dropped the #94 off the lead lap. Cameron did a fantastic job and put in lots of quick laps to move us up to 13th at the finish.



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I am disappointed with the final result because I know we had a top ten car and probably could have been in the top five without the penalty. But, on the other hand, it was a great weekend for the #94 Irish Mike's Genesis Coupe. We had good pace in every session, good pit stops and really have a handle on the chassis for the first time. Our performance was hampered by the high ambient temperatures and its effect on our engine power. Fuel mileage continues to be a challenge. At race pace, the fuel window for the Genesis Coupe is about 60 minutes which forces us to make two stops in a 2.5 hour race unless there are many laps run under full course caution. Going forward, Irish Mike's Racing will focus on improving the cooling and fuel economy.

The race from Virginia International Raceway will be televised on Fox Sports 1 at 10:00 AM Eastern on August 31st. If you miss the television broadcast, the race will be available without commercial interruptions on the IMSA website after the initial broadcast.

The next race for the Irish Mike's Racing Hyundai Genesis Coupes will be at Circuit of the Americas in Austin, Texas on September 18-19. You can follow the action from Texas live on <http://www.imsa.com> at 1:20 PM Eastern on September 19th, catch the television broadcast on Fox Sports 1 on September 28th at 12:00 PM Eastern or come out and see the race live in Austin.

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