

Acura Motorsports, HPD Sports-Car Racing

Racing Around the Clock and Across North America

Acura's sports-car racing program dates to 1986, the same year the brand debuted as the luxury and performance division of American Honda Motor Co., Inc.

Victories and championships quickly followed, starting in the International Motor Sports Association (IMSA) International Sedan Championship -- where Acura won the Manufacturers' Championship in 1987 -- and leading to the premier Camel GT Championship. The effort culminated in 26 class victories and three consecutive Camel Lights Manufacturers' and Drivers' Championships from 1991-93 for the Comptech Racing Acura-Spice prototype and driver Parker Johnstone.

With the founding of Honda Performance Development in 1993, American Honda's emphasis shifted to Indy car competition. But in 2007, when HPD undertook its first premier-level racing program outside of Indy car, it was with the Acura ARX-01a sports prototype, powered by the HPD-developed Acura LM-AR6 engine.

It was a spectacular start. Andretti Autosport and drivers Dario Franchitti, Bryan Herta and Tony Kanaan won the LMP2 category and finished second overall at the prestigious 12 Hours of Sebring. Success in sports car racing has continued ever since, in a variety of endurance series around the globe.

Acura claimed the American Le Mans Series LMP2 Manufacturers' Championship in 2009. The company moved up to LMP1 that same year with the pioneering wide-front-tire ARX-02a chassis, winning the LMP1 manufacturers' title as well. It marked the first time a manufacturer claimed both LMP championships in the same American Le Mans Series season.

More history was made in 2010, now racing under the HPD banner, as Strakka Racing won the LMP2 class at the 24 Hours of Le Mans, in the company's first attempt at the endurance racing classic. HPD partner team RML Motorsport went on to win the 2010 European LeMans Series championship utilizing the HPD engine in a Lola chassis.

In 2012, HPD unveiled its largest sports-car racing program to date. Five teams campaigned a total of six LMP1 and LMP2 prototypes in both the new World Endurance Championship and the American Le Mans Series, including the 12 Hours of Sebring and 24 Hours of Le Mans.

Starworks Motorsport led the HPD effort in the new FIA World Endurance Championship with its ARX-03b, winning LMP2 honors at the 24 Hours of Le Mans -- HPD's second class win in three attempts at the twice-round-the-clock racing classic -- as well as the 12 Hours of Sebring and the Six Hours of Sao Paulo en route to the title.

It was the first world championship for HPD, and the first FIA world championship for an American-based organization since 1968, when Ford won the FIA International Championship for Manufacturers.

HPD joined a new era of North American sports-car racing in 2014, with the debut of the TUDOR United SportsCar Championship, the result of the merger of the ALMS with the Grand-Am Series, now known as the WeatherTech SportsCar Championship.

Four race wins last season – including overall triumphs at the 24 Hours of Daytona, 12 Hours of Sebring, and season-ending Petit Le Mans at Road Atlanta – secured another manufacturers' title for HPD, the 2016 North American Endurance Championship. Two of those victories, at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca and at Petit Le Mans, were scored by Ohio-based Michael Shank Racing's Honda-powered Ligier prototype, while Tequila Patron ESM Racing won at Daytona and Sebring in their similar car.

For 2017, the Acura brand returns to long-distance sports car racing in the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, with Michael Shank Racing fielding a pair of new Acura NSX GT3 entries in the GTD category. Featuring car numbers that reflect the company's racing heritage - #86 for the year Acura debuted and #93 for the year HPD was founded – Acura will face off against competition from Audi, Lamborghini, Lexus, Mercedes-Benz, Porsche and defending champion Ferrari at the most famous sports-car racing venues across North America.