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## TEAM FALKEN TIRE ANNOUNCES THEY ARE LEAVING THE TUDOR UNITED SPORTS CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

📅 5/13/2015 ⌚ 5:54 EST 📁 FILED TO: USCC 👤 BY: SEAN CRIDLAND 💬 3 COMMENTS

In a surprise and disappointing move, the only Porsche customer team in the IMSA Tudor United Sports Car Championship running the 911 RSR chassis – Team Falken Tire Racing – announced it will withdraw from the series at the end of the 2015 season.

*President and CEO of Falken Tire Richard Smallwood said, "While we're concluding what's been a very valuable and rewarding relationship with IMSA and TUSCC after this season, we look forward to following – and cheering on – the continued growth of American sports car racing under the expert guidance of IMSA President Scott Atherton and his entire accomplished team."*

Rick Brennan, Falken's Executive Director for Marketing thanked veteran team principle Derrick Walker and his crew at Walker Racing for their years of service to the brand and especially for their five wins.



Bryan Sellers, who joined the team in 2009 and Porsche factory driver Wolf Henzler (who joined in 2010) - were part of four America Le Mans Series (ALMS) GT class wins: Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course (2011), Baltimore (2011), Baltimore (2012) and Petit Le Mans (2013). In 2014, with the inception of the TUDOR United Sports Car Championship, Team Falken Tire captured the Petit Le Mans GT Le Mans (GTLM) title for a second consecutive season.

*Bryan Sellers tweeted "I want to take a moment and say thanks for all the notes. Thanks to everybody who has supported us over the years. It was a good run!" and in another Tweet, confirmed his commitment to see out the season with "I also want everyone to know we are not done yet! I can promise @Wolf\_Henzler and I will give our most till the end."*

For several decades independent Porsche teams have been dominant in American professional GT series racing with entrants as diverse as Brumos, Racers Group, Interscope and many others. What Team Falken Tire's withdrawal will mean for Sellers, Henzler and Porsche's 2016 North American motorsport program remains to be answered?

**UPDATE:** We reached out to Porsche for comments on Falken's announcement and here's what they had to say:

*"While we are all disappointed that our friends at Team Falken Tire will not return for an eighth-season of TUDOR United Sports Car Championship GT racing in 2016, all of us at Porsche remain appreciative of the organization's partnership over the years. Whether in the America Le Mans Series or now in the TUDOR United Sports Car Championship, Falken has proven what a well-run program, excellent drivers and a strong platform can accomplish as a privateer even in a class dedicated to factory efforts. Perhaps even more impressive is that they did so while simultaneously running a successful tire development program. On behalf of everyone at Porsche, we wish to thank them for their professional approach and dedication. They have represented Porsche well on the track and off and wish them well with their future endeavors." Jens Walther, President and CEO, Porsche Motorsport North America.*

In addition, for now, it appears as if Wolf's position is secure. We were told that Henzler will be assigned to another team in 2016 (similar to how he's been assigned to Falken for the last six year).

TAGGED WITH: 2015, BRYAN SELLERS, TEAM FALKEN TIRE, TUDOR UNITED SPORTS CAR CHAMPIONSHIP, USCC, WOLF HENZLER

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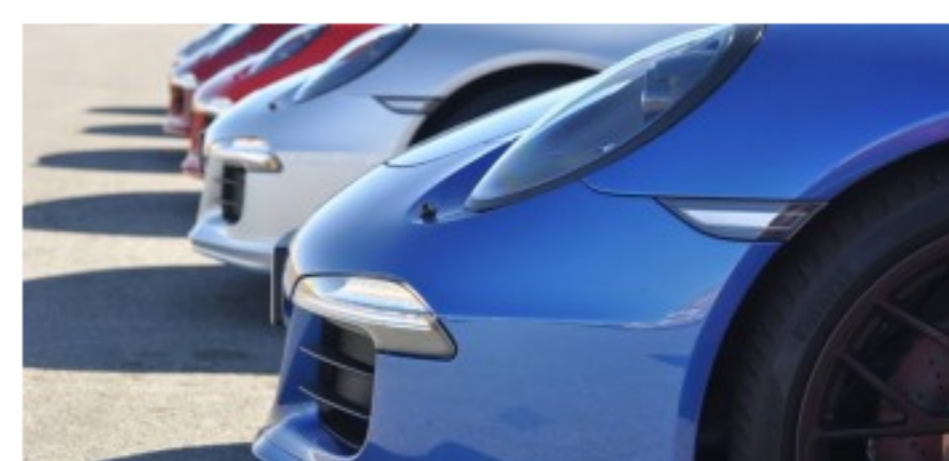
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### 3 COMMENTS



**John Patterson** says

May 20, 2015 at 8:37 am

So, why is team Falken leaving TUDOR? That's what everyone wants to know.

relinuca

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**993C4S** says

May 20, 2015 at 11:04 am

I think we can all speculate as much as we want. Unfortunately, the only thing we have to go on is their statement that they want "to focus on more grassroots motorsports". In fact, there was no real distribution of the press release other than this

<http://www.moderntiredealer.com/news/story/2015/05/falken-tire-announces-retirement-from-the-tudor-united-sports-car-championship.aspx>

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**Stephen Smith** says

May 21, 2015 at 3:50 am

First, let me say that I am loyal and fanatical Porsche fan and it would take a lot to get me to turn loose of my 997S Coupe. However, it seems to me that too many top echelon racing teams have decided that Porsche has just about run to the end of its ability to build a 911-based race car that can compete with more modern machinery from manufacturers like Ferrari, Audi, Lamborghini, or even GM. If you watch professional sports car road racing world wide, you see fewer and fewer competitive teams driving Porsche production-based entries. Those that are competing are regulated to the slower classes which are not expected to stand on the top step of the podium with a first place overall finish. It seems to me that Porsche is going to have to bite the bullet and offer a more modern design sportscar, with something besides a flat-six engine mounted to the rear of the rear axle. When that happens, you will find Porsche again competing for overall wins and big-name teams again clamoring to race the Porsche brand. Remember, as wonderful a road machine as Porsche has been and continues to be, racing success is what built the Porsche brand. To reestablish this fading reputation Porsche needs to field BOTH successful Prototype AND Production-Based racing machinery. A continued high level of success on the race tracks around the world is necessary to keep Porsche owners willing to spend the "big bucks" for these special machines.

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