

24 HEURES DU MANS

15-16 JUIN 2002



Press release #1

Wednesday, June 12th, 2002

Audi takes back its edge

The night session (10:00 pm – 12:00 am) started off fast. After only seven minutes, the official Audis (#1 and 2), cruising one behind the other ; clocked untouchable times right up to the end of the session. The best performance was run by Rinaldo Capello, behind the wheel of the #2 Audi in 3'30"347. This is slightly below his performance during the preliminary practices (3'30"296). The Italian, already winning the pole position in 2001, seems like he may do better during the 2nd session. Tom Kristensen with the #1 Audi signed off the 2nd best time (3'30"701).

The Audi offensive pushed back the Dome from Racing For Holland to 3rd place (3'31"057). Jan Lammers was unable to fight back during this session, following a mechanical problem. The Dutch driver has, all the same, the satisfaction of placing ahead of the #3 official Audi. (3'32"531).

Mark Blundell made an excellent showing with the #27 MG (3'33"254). Best time in the LMP 675 category, but especially the 5th best performance in the overall standing. The little English car experienced a few problems, just as #26 which had to undergo an engine change.

The Oreca's placed 6th and 7th in order #14 driven by Sarrazin-Montagny-Minassian (3'34"053) ahead of #15 (Beretta-Lamy-Comas) in 3'34"244. A minor setback; since the French cars were faster during the preliminary trials. But Hugues De Chaunac is optimistic for the second day of practice : " We will make a better showing. Getting placed on the front line was a crazy hope, but the 2nd row is a reasonable hope "

The Cadillacs fared well. Max Angelleli placed his in 8th place (3'35"042), while the #7, stuck in the pit during the first session, moved up to the 12th place.

The official Courage-Judd is 9th (3'36"942) far ahead of Pescarolo Sport's Courage-Peugeot. The green cars are only 19th and 22nd at 17 seconds behind the best time of the day. Set back by several problems, the cars were unable to express their potential fully. Sebastien Bourdais' return for the 2nd day (busy today running F3000 practices) will perhaps be synonymous with a move up in the standing.

The Bentley is only placed 10th (3'38"036), just ahead of the private Audi from Team Goh. A car that ended its session at the end of the last hour of the practice, following Yannick Dalmas' accident in the Playstation chicane.

Luc Bessons' two movie cars, Vaillante and Leader rode with cameras fitted on them. They are ranked 18th and 21st.

The best time in the LM GTS category (3'56"730) was clocked in by the Ferrari Maranello (Prodrive) in Rydell and Menu's hands, while waiting for Tomas Enge to arrive; he too running in F3000 practices.

In the LM GT, the #81 Porsche (Racers Group) was the fastest (4'11"486).

La course en direct sur le 0892 3500 24 *