

24 HEURES DU MANS

15-16 JUIN 2002



Press release #3

Thursday, June 13th, 2002

22:33

Audi: Higher, stronger, and quicker

As expected, the first part of the qualifying session ended at a stunning pace. Rinaldo Capello, holder of the quickest time yesterday with a 3:30.347 lap, further improved his time by breaking into the 3:29's with a 3:29.905. The Italian, who proved to be the quickest in last year's race, has now broken the lap record held by Martin Brundle aboard his Toyota GT One in 1999 with a time of 3:29.939. With an average speed of 234.105 km/h, the winner of the 12 Hours of Sebring is proving to be quite ambitious. After finishing 4th in the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1999, 3rd in 2000 and 2nd in 2001, he hopes to continue the pattern by finishing 1st, alongside his team mates Johnny Herbert and Christian Pescatori.

While Tom Kristensen also tried to improve his time from yesterday, he had to content himself with a 3:30.490 lap, thereby conserving his 2nd place. A position which doesn't seem to bother him much as he explains: " Frank Biela has done an excellent job setting up the car, so it was very easy to drive. In my quick lap, I was hindered by a slower car so I had to change my line at the last moment, forcing me to stay in 5th gear. I probably lost the time I needed right there. But winning the pole isn't what's important for me, it's holding the trophy Sunday afternoon that counts. Besides, we've started 2nd for the last three years and it's brought us quite a bit of luck so far ".

After the disqualification of Jan Lammers' time aboard the #16 Dome/Judd because of a fuel irregularity, the #14 Oreca Dallara/Judd finds itself in 3rd place. After having to abort their first flying lap because of traffic, Stéphane Sarrazin posted a time of 3:31.863, placing him just ahead of the #3 Audi R8.

The pleasant surprise of the session came from the #7 Cadillac with Emmanuel Collard behind the wheel, crossing the line in only 3:33.569. The French driver could have gone even quicker had he not been slowed by the #16 Racing for Holland Dome. The American manufacturer now finds its two cars in the top 10 as Max Angelelli managed a time of 3:35.042.

While the Americans seem to have greatly improved since the preliminary tests, it's quite the contrary for Bentley and Pescarolo Sport. The Englishmen, despite finishing 3rd last year and qualifying 6th with a time of 3:34.556, have only been able to lap in 3:38.036, with Eric Van de Poele aboard the car during the 1st qualifying session.

In the French team, much was expected with the arrival of Sébastien Bourdais, who was absent from qualifying yesterday due to F3000 testing, but the miracle did not happen, as the #17 car is only in 18th place, 3:43.988.

No change in the LMP 675 class as the #27 MG keeps its lead with yesterday's time of 3:33.254. It's important to note though that the car was unable to continue fighting at the end of the session as the car came to a stop in the first chicane on the Mulsanne straight.

In the GTS class, the Ferrari Prodrive Maranello retains its lead with a time of 3:56.730. Thomas Enge has yet to complete a lap however, due to clutch problems. The #50 Team Larbre Compétition Chrysler Viper is in 2nd place, ahead of the two Corvettes.

Finally, in the GT class, the Racers Group retains its lead over the #80 Team Freisinger Porsche. The American team has had a number of problems however, with a broken water belt which stranded Kevin Bunkler on the track.

The session was red flagged for 10 minutes to clean up the track after a large amount of coolant was spilled on the track.

La course en direct sur le 0892 3500 24 *

* 0,34 €/minute



A.S.A. A.C.O. des "24 Heures du Mans"
CIRCUIT DES 24 HEURES DU MANS
SOCIÉTÉ SPORTIVE AUTOMOBILE DE L'A.C.O.
SOCIÉTÉ ANONYME SPORTIVE PROFESSIONNELLE



SYNDICAT MIXTE
DU CIRCUIT DES
24 HEURES DU MANS



COMMUNIQUE PRESSE - PRESS RELEASE