

# 24 HEURES DU MANS

15-16 JUIN 2002



Press release #9

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18:24

## First retirements behind the dominating Audis

The #1 and #2 works Audis continue to put their competitors to shame. Though their rhythm has slowed a bit (3:40), their gap over the other cars continues to increase. Just behind is the #5 Team Goh Audi in 3rd place, trailing 2 minutes behind.

The Oreca Dallara Judd did not have an excellent start to their race. Behind the wheel of the #14, Stéphane Sarrazin has been given a drive-through penalty for having exceeded the pit lane speed limit during his first pit stop. He has now fallen temporarily to 15th place.

A big scare at the Indianapolis turn for Werner Lupberger at the wheel of the #21 Ascari only 1 hour and 8 minutes into the race. He lost control of his car after the suspension collapsed, coming to an abrupt stop against the tire wall. The driver is unhurt, but the car is very badly damaged. The #21 Ascari has been loaded up on a truck, and its retirement became official at 6:03pm. This marks the second retirement following the #24 Autoexe car of Yojiro Terada, whose gearbox failed him after only 5 laps.

Another incident, but much less serious: the #30 MG spun out in the Forest Esses. Several cars were required to make unscheduled pit stops: the #11 Panoz (oil leak), #8 Bentley (compressor problem), #70 Ferrari (damaged radiator after Sam Hancock's off), #7 Cadillac (starter), #72 Porsche (flat tire), #53 Viper (after going off track), and the #30 MG (gas pressure problem).

During the 23rd lap, the #2 lead Audi made its second pit stop. Johnny Herbert stayed in the car. The strategy was different for the #1 which stopped shortly afterwards. Tom Kristensen took over for Frank Biela. The Dane exited the pits just in front of Herbert. But the Englishman took advantage of a misunderstanding between Kristensen and a lapped driver (in the #19 Panoz) to take over the lead of the race.

The Audi's superiority was confirmed when the two lead cars lapped the two Oreca's during the 24th lap. Yannick Dalmas took over for Hiroki Kato in the #5 Audi in 4th place.

The first setback for the Audi team came from the race directors. The #1 car was penalized with a stop and go penalty following a pass under yellow by Frank Biela. Tom Kristensen, who has taken over the car for Biela, will undoubtedly have to stop in the next few laps and let the #2 Audi, still in the hands of Johnny Herbert, take over the lead of the race once again.

At 6:00pm, the #3 Audi is in 3rd place, just in front of the #5 Team Goh car. The #26 MG is in 5th place, and is comfortably in the lead of the LMP 675 class.

The #58 Ferrari continues to dominate the LM GTS class in 18th overall. The #80 Freisinger Motorsport Porsche leads LM GT while retaining the 28th position.

**La course en direct sur le 0892 3500 24 \***