

24 HEURES DU MANS

15-16 JUIN 2002



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The last MG calls it quits

After a long battle up front, the MG was forced to pit for a long time to make a number of repairs. Since that time, the MG had been moving through the pack at a furious pace (matching the front-running Audis). But when a large cloud of white smoke came bellowing from the Mulsanne straight, the teams' hopes were sadly dashed.

The Cadillacs' trouble-free run since the problems at the beginning of the race came to an end when both cars had identical blowouts at the same time. Christophe Tinseau, hot on the heels of the Bentley for 4th place, was immediately slowed when the right rear tire blew out at approximately 300 km/h, just before the Indianapolis turn. The driver of the #6 car literally tore apart the side of his car, which forced the American team to replace the entire rear-end. While the #6 car was entering the pits, it was blocked by the #7 car which was also entering the pits with a flat right rear tire !

The Oreca team is also hard at work on replacing the rear-end of their #15 Dallara/Judd, driven by Pedro Lamy.

Although some teams are suffering from problems in the early morning hours, the Audis continue to parade themselves around the track. Rinaldo Capello even posted the fastest race lap, an astonishing 3:33.886 aboard the #2 Audi. The #3 car retaliated by completing a lap in only 3:34.836 just minutes later.

The only dark cloud for the team came when the #5 Audi was reported to be slowly making its way back to the pits around 7:20am. Expecting the worst, the Japanese team was pleasantly surprised when the problem was fixed by simply replacing the steering wheel.

While the podium seems to be already set among the prototypes, the battle for 2nd place in LM-GTS between the #64 Corvette and the #52 FFSA Chrysler Viper continues to be fierce. The American has taken the upper hand, but the French team could benefit given any small problem.

The #80 Freisinger Porsche continues to lead the GT class, while the #25 WR takes over the lead in the LMP-675 class following the retirement of the #27 MG.

La course en direct sur le 0892 3500 24 *