

Communiqué n° 11

19/06/2005 09h00

7h – 9h

- When the sun rises at Le Mans, bathing the circuit in early-morning light, the race often enters a fairly static period. After all, there are still over eight hours to go – a full third of the race. But this year, the close fight for the overall victory prevented the top teams from taking it easy – and it was the same in LM GT1.
- Following repairs after Allan McNish's trip into the barriers at Indianapolis earlier, the No. 2 Champion Audi got back out on track at 07:07 hrs, after 17 minutes of repairs to front suspension and undertray. The delay was enough to drop the car from second to third.
- Just at the hour, the No. 91 T2M Motorsport Porsche 911 GT3 RS had a massive accident at Indianapolis, Xavier Pompidou sliding backwards off the circuit through an access gap in the barriers; the resulting abrupt stop left the car looking a complete wreck. The medical car was sent out to attend the incident.
- With the sun now up and cool temperatures, Jean-Christophe Boullion celebrated his elevation to second in the No. 16 Pescarolo Judd by scorching around the 13.650km circuit in 3:34.968. Two laps later he brought the car into the pits for a routine fuel-only stop.
- The see-saw battle in LM GT1 continues to favour Aston Martin, although by the thinnest of margins. After 3,000km of racing, Pedro Lamy, in seventh overall, had the class lead in the No. 58 Aston Martin DBR9 – but was a mere 2m 24.386s in front. Second was Jan Magnussen in the No. 64 Corvette C6-R, who in turn was a couple of minutes ahead of the sister No. 63 Corvette C6-R, with Ron Fellows at the wheel.
- With all the problems that have hit the LMP2 field, the class-leading No. 36 Belmondo Courage Ford was down in 21st overall, a full 35 laps behind the overall leader, which remained Tom Kristensen in the No. 3 Champion Audi. That meant that no fewer than five LM GT2 entries were ahead of the LMP2 leader, with the class lead being held by the No. 71 Alex Job Porsche 911 GT3 RSR with Marc Lieb driving.
- The LMP2 entries continued to have a torrid time, with the No. 35 G-Force Racing Courage Judd spending an extended time in the pits as the crew struggled to resolve a problem getting the engine to restart. At 07:22 hrs one of the Courage Judd entries suffered the indignity of being given a little 'hurry-up' nudge by Johannes van Overbeek in the No. 80 Flying Lizard Porsche 911 GT3 RSR LM GT2 entry at the entry to the Tertre Rouge Esses.
- The No. 91 T2M Motorsport Porsche 911 GT3 RS was officially retired at 07:15

hrs – an inevitable consequence of the huge accident suffered by Marc Lieb at Indianapolis a few minutes earlier.

- The battle for LM GT1 honours threatened to become a four-way scrap as the No. 59 Aston Martin DBR9 continued to recover from earlier stop-and-go penalties and a long pit-stop. David Brabham got the hammer down in the car and closed to within a minute of the third position in the class, but then had to pit for fuel. The other Aston, the No. 58 Aston Martin DBR9 entry, continued to maintain the class lead from the No. 64 Corvette C6-R, while Max Papis took over at the wheel of the No. 63 Corvette C6-R, in third. At 07:38 Max showed his pace, putting in the car's fastest lap at 3:55.383.
- At the top of the timesheets Jean-Christophe Boullion kept up the pace in the No. 16 Pescarolo Judd – second overall, he was chasing down Tom Kristensen in the No. 3 Champion Audi, closing down the 3-lap gap at up to seven seconds a lap. The pace remained high in the top half of the timesheets, with Jean Marc Gounon putting in a lap of 3:41.683 at 07:34 hrs, the fastest time for the No. 4 Audi Playstation Team Oreca Audi lying in fourth. A lap later he went even quicker, although only by four-hundredths.
- The battle of attrition that characterises the 24 Hours of Le Mans hit the No. 76 Raymond Narac Porsche 911 GT3 RSR at 07:40 hrs, with Raymond Narac bringing the car very slowly back to the pits. The crew set to work on the left rear wheel hub. The stop was enough to cost them third place in the LM GT2 class, promoting Lonnie Pechnik in the No. 80 Flying Lizard Porsche 911 GT3 RSR, who had taken over the car from Johannes van Overbeek.
- Max Papis continued to hustle his big Corvette around the track, setting yet another fast lap of 3:55.355 in the No. 63 Corvette C6-R. However, Jan Magnussen also had the hammer down in the sister No. 64 Corvette C6-R almost matched him, lapping just 0.653s slower. But LM GT1 class leader Pedro Lamy responded with a 3:52.843 in the No. 58 Aston Martin DBR9 just a minute later, their fastest lap.
- Jean-Christophe Boullion brought the No. 16 Pescarolo Judd in for a routine stop; second overall, he remained about three laps behind Tom Kristensen in the leading No. 2 Champion Audi, and three laps ahead of Frank Biela in the No. 3 Champion Audi.
- With two thirds of the race over, and eight hours remaining, the leading cars in each class are as follows:
 - LMP1
 - No. 3 Champion Audi 245 laps
 - No. 16 Pescarolo Judd + 3 laps
 - No. 4 Audi Playstation Team Oreca Audi + 6 laps
 - LMP2
 - No. 36 Belmondo Courage Ford 209 laps

- No. 25 RML Lola MG + 2 laps
- No. 37 Belmondo Courage Ford + 5 laps
- LM GT1
 - No. 58 Aston Martin DBR9 232 laps
 - No. 64 Corvette C6-R + 1 lap
 - No. 63 Corvette C6-R + 1 lap
- LM GT2
 - No. 71 Alex Job Porsche 911 GT3 RSR 220 laps
 - No. 90 White Lightning Racing Porsche 911 GT3 RSR + 1 lap
 - No. 80 Flying Lizard Porsche 911 GT3 RSR + 7 laps
- Good luck seemed to have totally deserted the No. 8 Rollcentre Dallara Nissan . They were already running well down the field when they picked up two punctures within minutes of each other - Primat was driving.
- Barely a minute into the hour, Kristensen, in the leading No. 3 Champion Audi, went off the circuit; it seemed that he went into the corner too fast. An unusual mistake, it might have been due to the fact the team had left the tyres on the car for four sessions. They brought the car into the pits immediately and Kristensen handed the car over to Lehto.
- Tom Kristensen told Radio Le Mans , "I took a gear too early - that was my mistake. That put me just inches wide, but the car then bounced across the lorry grooves. That bounced my feet off the pedals and off-line, there's so much gravel."
- The LM GT1 battle between the Aston Martins and Corvettes continued. Lamy in the No. 58 Aston Martin DBR9 had put in another quick lap just before pitting at 08:09 hrs. It was a 3:52.078, the fastest for the car so far. The Corvette team acknowledged that the No. 58 Aston Martin DBR9 was quicker than the Corvettes in a straight line. However they did feel that they could hang onto the No. 59 Aston Martin DBR9.
- In LM GT2 the Porsche domination continued with the No. 71 Alex Job Porsche 911 GT3 RSR driven by Rockenfeller leading the class followed by six other Porsches; the first other make was the No. 92 Cirtek Motorsport Ferrari 360 Modena GTC which was in 7th in Class.
- At 08:24, the No. 59 Aston Martin DBR9 came into the pits for a routine stop and driver change, Darren Turner in for David Brabham. Typical of Aston Martin this weekend, it was a fast, totally efficient stop.
- In LMP2 Thomas Erdos took the No. 25 RML Lola MG into the lead of the class ahead of No. 36 Belmondo Courage Ford at 08:25 hrs. The Belmondo team had lost their impressive overnight four lap lead with the car stuck in the pits, unable to start.
- the great performance of the No. 80 Flying Lizard Porsche 911 GT3 RSR continued. Seth Neiman, one of the drivers, said, "We had a few early

problems, like an air jack failure, but now things seem to be OK”.

- A bit of a scare for the Audi camp. Lehto, in the No. 3 Champion Audi, experienced a major brake lock up going into Mulsanne Corner and was forced to pit several laps earlier than expected. He did not lose the lead during that stop, but it helped the cause of Erik Comas in the second-placed No. 16 Pescarolo Judd, then lapping under the 3:40 mark.
- The LM GT1 battle split the LMP1 cars. There were six ahead of them and four behind. The No. 58 Aston Martin DBR9 remained the class leader, about a lap clear of the No. 64 Corvette C6-R.
- Jan Lammers, No. 10 Racing for Holland Dome Judd, was given a ‘stop-go’ penalty for hitting one of the track bollards at Mulsanne, the bollard then rolled across the track into the path of the oncoming traffic.
- Daniel Poissenot, Race Director of the 24 Hours, has clarified the stance of the ACO on the 3:55 sec minimum lap time for GT1: If a car runs consistently under that time, it will be penalised by carrying extra weight in 2006. That's why the weight limit for the Ferrari 550 this year is 35kg heavier than the general LM GT1 limit of 1,100kg.
- At the end of the 17th hour, the standings were:
 - LMP1
 - No. 3 Champion Audi, Lehto
 - No. 16 Pescarolo Judd, Comas
 - No. 2 Champion Audi, Biela
 - LMP2
 - No. 25 RML Lola MG, Erdos
 - No. 37 Belmondo Courage Ford, Andre
 - No. 36 Belmondo Courage Ford, Ojje
 - GT1
 - No. 58 Aston Martin DBR9, Kox
 - No. 64 Corvette C6-R, Beretta???
 - No. 63 Corvette C6-R, O'Connell
 - GT2
 - No. 71 Alex Job Porsche 911 GT3 RSR, Rockenfeller
 - No. 90 White Lightning Racing Porsche 911 GT3 RSR, Long
 - No. 80 Flying Lizard Porsche 911 GT3 RSR, Pechnik
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