

## Communiqué n° 12

19/06/2005 12h30

9h – 12h

- **0900**
- 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 17<sup>th</sup> 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, Ojeh
- 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
- Ojeh in the No. 36 Belmondo Courage Ford spun at Dunlop. There didn't seem to be any damage and on he went.
- The No. 17 Pescarolo Judd (Loeb) went straight on had to take the escape road at the Indianapolis. He reversed back to the track and continued.
- Campbell Walter finally got a chance to take to the road with the No. 7 Creation Autosportif DBA Judd after a long, long stop caused by a "off-track excursion". They

- replaced the nosecone and other “esthetics”.
- JJ Lehto took the leading No. 3 Champion Audi into the pits near the half hour. Shortly thereafter, Biela pitted with the third place No. 2 Champion Audi .
- Vanina Ickx was in, just when Franchitti drove the No. 7 Creation Autosportif DBA Judd into the gravel and tire wall at Indianapolis. It was reported that the No. 25 RML Lola MG, leading the LMP2 category, suffered a gear box oil leak and the No. 83 Seikel Porsche 911 GT3 RSR was pushed backwards into the garage.
- The No. 30 Kruse Motorsport Courage Judd had Tim Mullen sitting in the car while they worked on the engine.
- **09:20**
- In a continuation of the on and off-track battle between the Aston Martin and Corvette, Kox in the No. 58 Aston Martin DBR9 and the second-place No. 64 Corvette C6-R pitted together. The Chevy took on fuel and tires, but was a bit slow getting away, a minor problem with the left rear wheel. .
- Franchitti finally got a chance to take the No. 78 Panoz Elan back out onto the track after a lengthy stay in the pits. About the same time, Comas in the No. 16 Pescarolo Judd took a lap back from the leading Audi.
- At 09:07 Turner in the No. 59 Aston Martin DBR9 turned in a fast lap of 3:51.539, bringing the order to Aston-Martin, Corvette, Aston-Martin, Corvette. Immediately O’Connell answered with 3:55.324, but the order remained the same. Turner snapped back with a 3:51.441, the fastest yet.
- Theoretically, at this point in the race, if the No. 16 Pescarolo Judd and the No. 3 Champion Audi continued with current lap times, it was calculated that the Pescarolo would catch the Audi at approximately mid-day.
- Helary brought the No. 17 Pescarolo Judd in for a routine pit stop and driver change; handing over to WRC star Sebastien Loeb.
- **10:00**
- Corvette driver Olivier Beretta, before he climbed into the No. 64 C6-R, told [www.lemans.org](http://www.lemans.org), “The first time my grandfather went to America, he was mad the Corvette. Now, 50 years later, I’m driving a Corvette!”
- Vanina Ickx’s No. 18 Rollcentre Dallara Judd was still in the pits at 09:49. They were working on the right steering arm.
- O’Connell brought the No. 64 Corvette C6-R in for a routine pit-stop, Gavin out, Beretta got in. A minute later, the pit crew of the No. 58 Aston Martin DBR9 started getting ready to service their car.
- Jan Lammers explained that the No. 10 Racing for Holland Dome Judd is hanging in there. “The car’s doing fine, we just have to look after our brakes.”
- Verdon Roe, the No. 8 Rollcentre Dallara Nissan driver, was concerned about an abundance of gravel on the track. “If you go a little too far out, its like driving on ice and, unfortunately, I got a few inches too far out and from then on there is really nothing you can do and we hit the tyre wall. Hopefully the guys can fix it.” Asked if he was in good spirits, “No, not really.”
- Sebastien Loeb brought the No. 17 Pescarolo Judd 3 in for a long stop, working on the radiator and adding fluids before being sent out.
- At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> hour, the standings were:

- LMP1
- No. 3 Champion Audi, Lehto
- No. 16 Pescarolo Judd, Comas
- No. 2 Champion Audi, Pirro
- LMP2
- No. 37 Belmondo Courage Ford, Andre
- No. 36 Belmondo Courage Ford, Ojeh
- No. 25 RML Lola MG, Newton
- GT1
- No. 58 Aston Martin DBR9, Enge
- No. 64 Corvette C6-R, Beretta
- No. 59 Aston Martin DBR9, Turner
- GT2
- No. 71 Alex Job Porsche 911 GT3 RSR, Rockenfeller
- No. 90 White Lightning Racing Porsche 911 GT3 RSR, Bernhard
- No. 80 Flying Lizard Porsche 911 GT3 RSR, Neiman
- **10:20**
- The No. 37 Belmondo Courage Ford rolled into the pits, then the garage and the front bodywork came off, but Didier André was soon out again.
- Frei brought the No. 12 Courage Judd in for Schwager to take right out again, but the No. 25 RML Lola MG languished in the pits for quite some time with gear box problems.
- Trouble for Hignett and the No. 9 Team Jota-Zytek Engineering. After a seemingly normal pit stop, the car left, but stopped at the exit of the pit lane.
- The third-place GT1 car, No. 59 Aston Martin DBR9, came in for a driver change, Turner out and Sarrazin in. Meanwhile, Tomas Enge in the sister car, No. 58 Aston Martin DBR9, turned in a 3:52.008 lap.
- Lying first, third and fourth, the Audi team also pitted. First in was the leader, No. 3 Champion Audi with JJ Lehto. No driver change. Just after, Montagny came in with the No. 4 Audi Playstation Team Oreca Audi for his service stop, also staying in for another stint. Audi's third car, the No. 2 Champion Audi followed suit, Pirro staying in.
- Lehto and the No. 3 Champion Audi headed back for the pits with a headlight problem.
- The No. 25 RML Lola MG had gearbox problems, but was making its way back onto the track.
- **10:40**
- With Collard in the No. 16 Pescarolo Judd still closing, now little more than a lap behind, Lehto's leading No. 3 Champion Audi was in for headlight repairs. Fast work as the crew got him out without losing the lead.
- The No. 92 Cirtek Motorsport Ferrari 360 Modena GTC was not so lucky. Repairs continued on the left rear suspension.
- Second-place No. 90 White Lightning Racing Porsche 911 GT3 RSR car was brought in by Timo Bernard and Bergmeister took off to continue the battle with Lieb in the leading No. 71 Alex Job Porsche 911 GT3 RSR. White Lightning saved a second or two on windscreen cleaning because they have tear-offs. When it comes to pit-stops, every little bit helps.

- After a troubled race, the No. 8 Rollcentre Dallara Nissan officially retired around the 10:25 mark.
- Enge brought the No. 58 Aston Martin DBR9 in for repairs to a damaged and flapping front splitter, bringing hope to the Corvette fans. They were rewarded at 10:30 hrs, when the No. 64 Corvette C6-R swept by into the GT1 lead.
- Asked if we would see more action later, Corvette Racing Program Manager Doug Fehan replied, "Oh, sure, they (the Astons) have shown us great speed. There's a lot of racing left," then adding, re the apparent speed difference, "We're running as hard as we can, but we took the 3:55 rule into account when designing and building the new Corvette C6-R."
- Soon after Enge and the No. 58 Aston Martin DBR9 rejoined the battle, Sarrazin in the No. 59 Aston Martin DBR9 set a hot lap of 3:51.422.
- Hope springs eternal: the No. 7 Creation Autosportif DBA Judd was being put back together. But a bad sign in the No. 18 Rollcentre Dallara Judd pits. They're still working on it, but driver Ickx was out of the car.
- **11:00**
- After an off, Sebastien Loeb had to bring the No. 17 Pescarolo Judd into the pits so the front cover could be pulled off to clear gravel and debris out of the radiator intakes.
- As of 10:40, there was a shake-up in the GT1 standings, the Corvettes moving into 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. Tomas Enge in the No. 58 Aston Martin DBR9 dropped into 4<sup>th</sup>. Ron Fellows took over the third-place No. 63 Corvette C6-R shortly after.
- The No. 7 Creation Autosportif DBA Judd remained in the pits while they worked on the body panels.
- The No. 36 Belmondo Courage Ford pitted and turned into the garage with electrical problems.
- A blown left rear sent Sarrizin's second-place No. 59 Aston Martin DBR9 into the pits. Whether it was a failure or a puncture was not clear, as the tire was quickly covered.
- Johnny O'Connell, just after getting out of the No. 63 Corvette C6-R, said "We tried to do a double stint. We've been fighting understeer from the word go. We keep pushing on."
- Bad luck for the No. 92 Cirtek Motorsport Ferrari 360 Modena GTC, seen being pushed to safety just before Tertre Rouge. The left rear wheel was missing from the car – it had detached itself and was leaning against the crash barriers some distance away.
- Positions at 11:00 hrs:
- LMP1  
No. 3 Champion Audi, Lehto  
No. 16 Pescarolo Judd, Collard  
No. 2 Champion Audi, Pirro
- LMP2  
No. 37 Belmondo Courage Ford, Belmondo  
No. 36 Belmondo Courage Ford, Ojje  
No. 25 RML Lola MG, Newton
- GT1  
No. 64 Corvette C6-R, Beretta  
No. 59 Aston Martin DBR9, Sarrazin

- No. 58 Aston Martin DBR9, Enge
- GT2  
No. 71 Alex Job Porsche 911 GT3 RSR, Lieb  
No. 90 White Lightning Racing Porsche 911 GT3 RSR, Bergmeister  
No. 80 Flying Lizard Porsche 911 GT3 RSR, Van Overbeek
- **11:20 hrs**
- The 73<sup>rd</sup> running of the 24 Hours of Le Mans has proved a true endurance test, with extremely hot conditions testing both cars and drivers. Over a third of the cars which took the start failed to make it to the nineteenth hour.
- The LMP2 category had proved to be particularly fragile. Thirteen cars began the race, but eight didn't make it to 11:00 hrs. The class lead passed from car to car; Paul Belmondo finished the eighteenth hour at the head of the field in the No. 37 Belmondo Courage Ford, run by his own team. Just about every LMP2 car hit problems over the course of the race, resulting in a massive 50-lap deficit to the race leaders.
- Audi maintained the lead they had enjoyed for the previous few hours, JJ Lehto heading the LMP1 field, and the race, in the No. 3 Champion Audi. Emmanuel Collard continued to lap significantly faster in the No. 16 Pescarolo Judd in second; however, unscheduled stops have conspired to keep the gap at around two laps.
- Lehto brought the Audi down pit-lane for a scheduled stop just after 11:00 hrs. As with the previous stop, the marshal at the end of the pit-lane gesticulated wildly at the car as only one headlight was working, but Lehto headed out onto the circuit regardless.
- The puncture suffered by Stephane Sarrazin in the No. 59 Aston Martin DBR9 dropped the car back to third in the LM GT1 category. In this closest-fought category, Beretta was in charge in the No. 64 Corvette C6-R ahead of Thomas Enge in the No. 58 Aston Martin DBR9. Sarrazin was anxious to make up for time lost when he had to drive slowly back after the puncture and managed to find a way past teammate Enge to go to second in class, eighth overall.
- Porsche continued to completely dominate the GT2 category; leader Marc Lieb, in the No. 71 Alex Job Porsche, rose to fourteenth overall, aided by the trials and tribulations of other, notionally faster cars. As with GT1, the category remained extremely close, Jorg Bergmeister in the No. 90 White Lightning Racing Porsche getting within 3 minutes of Lieb.
- **11:40**
- At 4:22, the No. 17 Pescarolo Judd driven by Soheil Ayari reported overheating.
- According to Ayari's co-driver, WRC driver Sebastien Loeb, the No. 17 is feeling the effects of over 19 hours of battle.
- Team owner Yves Courage reported problems within his team, starting with "Rubber in the radiator and sticking to the tires. The car has suffered. The steering wheel is a bit off-centre and that makes driving a little bit uncomfy. Our drivers are very, very tired," Courage confessed.
- At 11:25, the trouble-plagued No. 17, running in fifth, encountered another significant problem at the Playstation Chicane. The angle of the steering wheel problem reported by Loeb still haunted the car, Ayari clipped the apex of the chicane, ran into the gravel and clouted the tire barrier.
- The Pescarolo was extricated from the gravel trap, but with significant damage to front

and rear body panels. The rear wing, too, had flown. Six minutes later, the Pescarolo limped into the pits where the triage began as No. 17 was backed into its garage.

- After a more thorough examination, Henri Pescarolo decided to take the No. 17 off life support, leaving the powerful No. 16 to fight on alone.
- **12:00 hrs**
- As the race approached midday, the battles in the different categories did the impossible – they intensified. JJ Lehto continued to lead the race in the No. 3 Champion Audi, with a lead which was varying between a little over one lap, and a little less than two laps. The variations came because of the differing pit-stop schedules between the Audi and the pursuing No. 16 Pescarolo Judd, with Emmanuel Collard doing his best to make use of his car's better on-track speed. Fifteen minutes into the hour, Lehto, having spent the last three and a half hours in the car, finally handed it over to Marco Werner.
- . Reigning World Rally Champion Sebastien Loeb was in positive mood after his race came to such an abrupt end: "It was great fun. I would like to come back next year, if the World Rally schedule makes it possible."
- The GT1 class remained too close to call, with the gaps between the top three measured in seconds and minutes rather than laps. The No. 64 Corvette C6-R remained in the lead, Jan Magnussen only 80 seconds ahead of the No. 59 Aston Martin DBR9, where David Brabham was on board. In turn Pedro Lamy, in the No. 58 Aston Martin DBR9, was only a further 30 seconds behind.
- The fight for LM GT2 honours was also extremely tight. Patrick Long in the No. 90 White Lightning Racing Porsche 911 GT3 RSR trying to close down the 2:54 gap to the class leader, Mike Rockenfeller in the No. 71 Alex Job Porsche 911 GT3 RSR.
- Only in LMP2 was there a significant gap, where Didier Andre in the No. 37 Belmondo Courage Ford had stretched the class lead to six laps over Warren Hughes in the No. 25 RML Lola MG.
- With four hours of the race left to run, the leading positions were as follows:
- LMP1  
No. 3 Champion Audi, Werner  
No. 16 Pescarolo Judd, Collard  
No. 2 Champion Audi, McNish
- LMP2  
No. 37 Belmondo Courage Ford, Belmondo  
No. 25 RML Lola MG, ???  
No. 36 Belmondo Courage Ford, Sharpe
- GT1  
No. 64 Corvette C6-R, Magnussen  
No. 59 Aston Martin DBR9, Brabham  
No. 58 Aston Martin DBR9, Lamy
- 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, Van Overbeek

