

Communiqué n° 6

18/06/2005 20h10

19h – 20h

- Two hours into the race, the pace has settled in as the evening begins and the shadows lengthened across the Mulsanne straight.
- Just after the hour, the No. 8 Rollcentre Dallara Nissan pitted in a cloud of steam as the engine cover was removed. The crew leapt to work to track the source of the problem.
- Moments later, the No. 16 Pescarolo Judd pin the lead pitted while leading for fuel, tyres and a driver switch – Comas replacing Boullion – and never lost the lead.
- The No. 59 Aston Martin DBR9 rolled in for a requisite stop while running in 16th position. The car was pushed into the garage to allow the crew to examine the problem, determined to be a broken front splitter.
- The leaders in the two LMP classes remained the No. 16 Pescarolo Judd (LMP1), No. 37 Belmondo Courage Ford
- Joe Barazi came into the Arnage Corner a little too quickly in the No. 33 Intersport Courage AER and locked up the rears and ran off the edge of the track after a little help from handy course workers, the car was pushed back onto the course, leaving Barazi's face as red as his car. He pitted immediately after to replace flat-spotted tyres.
- Emanuele Pirro, piloting the No. 3 Champion Audi, pitted as scheduled and stayed in the car. This means that Pirro had run three full stints and was staying for a fourth.
- Pitting in the heat of competition, the No. 7 Creation Autosportif DBA Judd suffered a water leak due to a broken seal, forcing the team to change the Judd's water pump.
- The No. 33 Intersport Courage AER limped slowly into the pits with severe damage to the front left bodywork and a flat front tyre.
- The No. 59 Aston Martin DBR9 was successful in replacing the front splitter and rolled back into combat.
- The No. 59 Aston's partner car, the No. 58 Aston Martin DBR9, continued to lead the GT1 class with Indy Racing League regular Tomas Enge at the wheel.
- Tom Coronel in the No. 85 Spyker C8 Spyder spun in the Porsche Curves as the No. 64 Corvette C6-R limped back into the pits with yet

another puncture to the left rear Michelin. A change of tyres and a splash of fuel and the Corvette returned to the race.

- Two and a half hours into the 24 hours and the leading No. 16 Pescarolo Judd had consistently lapped in the high 3:30's when, suddenly the car came into the pits for an unscheduled stop and was backed into the garage for full service.
- Shortly after, the No. 17 sister Pescarolo came into the pits for a quick refuelling and tyre-change.
- This Pescarolo pitstop duet caused a shake-up at the top. It became No. 2 and No. 3 Champion Audi and No. 17 and No. 18 Pescarolo.
- After being checked for gearshift problems, No. 16 went back on to the course, but the Playstation-sponsored Pescarolo unexpectedly encountered transmission issues at the Playstation Chicane. It appeared that the Comas-driven car still had gearshift issues.
- Eric Comas was able to nurse the No. 16 back to the pits, where the car was dollied up and rolled back into the garage for further examination.
- Trouble in Arnage as the No. 39 Chamberlain-Synergy Motorsport Lola AER got a little too aggressive going into the Arnage Corner and spun.
- At 18:45, forty-two laps in and capitalizing on Pescarolo troubles, reliability appeared to be overcoming speed; it was all Audi at the top. The Champion Audis – No. 2 and 3 – were running 1-2 and the No. 4 Playstation Team Oreca Audi was running in third – Pirro, Werner and Ortelli respectively handling the driving chores.
- A lengthy oil slick lined the track from the Mulsanne Corner to the Arnage corner due to a massive oil leak from the No. 39 Lola 1305/AER
- Intersport Courage AER. The Safety Car rolled out of the pits and picked up the leaders, bunching up the field as course workers spread concrete dust on the slippery stuff.
- Claude Maxwell, driving the No. 77 Panoz, says the popular Panoz is a terrible drive right now. They had a problem with the car, but didn't know what it was. Maxwell also noted that the heat was really hurting the closed cars.
- The No. 61 Cirtek Ferrari 550 Maranello, currently driven by Christophe Bouchut, was having fluid problems of another kind. Bouchut said he could not drink water because the hose for his helmet had been stuck in the door at the pitstop.
- No. 7 Creation Autosportif DBA Judd co-driver Jamie Campbell-Walter

was putting in some of the fastest laps of any of the prototypes, allowing the DBA to pull back two of the eleven laps the car lost while in the pits. The cause of the problems originated with a water leak, compounded by gearbox problems.

- **Race order at 19:00 hrs**
- LMP1
 - No. 2 Champion Audi
 - No. 3 Champion Audi
 - No. 4 Audi Playstation Team Oreca Audi
- LMP2
 - No. 30 Kruse Motorsport Courage Judd - Mitchell
 - No. 37 Belmondo Courage Ford
 - No. 32 Intersport Lola AER
- GT1
 - No. 58 Aston Martin DBR9
 - No. 63 Corvette C6-R - O'Connell
 - No. 64 Corvette C6-R
- GT2
 - No. 90 White Lightning Racing Porsche 911 GT3 RSR
 - No. 71 Alex Job Porsche 911 GT3 RSR
 - No. 93 Scuderia Ecosse Ferrari 360 Modena
- The No. 16 Pescarolo Judd finally exited the pits and rejoined the field, which was still trailing behind the Safety Car as the oil slick through the Indianapolis Curves was drying up.
- Things were getting warm in the No. 90 White Lightning Porsche, driven by Patrick Long. The engine was running in the "warm" range, but it was not overheating. Long came in early because he thought he had a puncture, but it turned out to be the side window that was loose and was flapping.
- Still under yellow, but with pitting cars allowed to race back to the Safety Car, the No. 2 Champion Audi entered Arnage behind the No. 5 Dome-Mugen and locked the brakes, sending the Pirro-driven Audi off-track. Pirro kept the car running and was able to drive back to the pits, sparks flying from the left front. It pulled into its pit, but was backed away in front of the No. 4 Audi's pit. Unfortunately for the No. 4 Audi, it was in the pits at the time and found its way blocked by the No. 2 Audi, forcing the No. 4 crew to pull the car

- back in order to exit its pit box.
- Alan McNish replaced Emanuele Pirro in the cockpit of the No. 2 as the crew replaced the nose bodywork.
 - Back to green flag and the leader was the No. 3 Audi.
 - Things were looking worse for the Pescarolo team as the No. 17 suffered a puncture on the Mulsanne and had to limp back to the pits.
 - And not much better for the Team Creation DBA. As if their earlier protracted pit-stop problems weren't enough, Jamie Campbell-Walker encountered bodywork damage at the rear of the car, forcing him to slow his impressive drive and once again head back to the pits.
 - At 19:23, the No. 17 Pescarolo finally made it back to the pits, losing a lap in the process. The crew replaced the set of Michelins, but wasn't satisfied with the condition of the car, so it was pushed back into the garage for further evaluation.
 - McNish, in the No. 2 Audi, wasted no time in trying to recover from the Pirro incident at Arnage. The car was running fourth behind the leader, Marco Werner in Audi No. 3, Martin Short in the No. 18 Dallara Judd and Stephane Ortelli in the No. 4 Oreca Audi.
 - "The tyres got cold and the brakes got cold," Emanuele Pirro said of his No. 2 Audi accident, referring to the slower driving conditions under the Safety Car yellow. When the Audi began to move quickly ahead to catch up with the Safety Car, Pirro's over-eager desire to close the gap made him lose control of the car. "I should have avoided it," said Pirro.
 - Another French team encountered repair issues. The No. 33 Intersport Courage AER suffered a snapped crossmember/stiffener rod in the engine bay, which damaged the bodywork in the process. Courage could not deliver a spare, forcing the car to retire.
 - Nearing the end of Hour Four, the top of the field was Audi (No. 3), Dallara (No. 18), Audi (No. 4), Audi (No. 2).
 - No. 30 Kruse Motorsport Courage Judd, American Tim Mullen at the wheel, lead the LMP2 Class, 14th overall, and in GT1, it was Pedro Lamy in the class-leading No. 58 Aston. The GT2 class leader was the two-time Le Mans-winning No. 90 White Lightning Racing Porsche team, with Timo Bernhard driving.
 - Aston drivers were complaining of the heat under the closed-cockpit GT1 cars. "We are breathing really hot air," said Tomas Enge after handing off No. 58 to Lamy.

- The No. 2 Champion Audi continued to fly in the capable hands of 1998 Le Mans-winning co-driver Alan McNish, but as quick as the young Scot was driving, the Pescarolos continued to fly. At 18:50, Eric Comas set the fastest lap of the race in the No. 16 3:37:748.
- Meanwhile, the Corvettes were still targeting the British Racing Green tails of the Aston Martins. Jan Magnussen set the Corvette best lap mark just before the hour with a lap of 3:55.247.
- Not that all things are going straight - Tom Coronel in the No. 85 Spyker reported that his steering column had come loose and was askew by over 30 degrees. More trouble for the Dutch privateers.
- **At the end of four hours, the standings were as follows:**
- LMP1
 - No. 3 Champion Audi, Werner
 - No. 4 Audi Playstation Team Oreca Audi, Ortelli
 - No. 18 Rollcentre Dallara Judd, Short
- LMP2
 - No. 30 Kruse Motorsport Courage Judd, Mullen
 - No. 32 Intersport Lola AER, Hancock
 - No. 36 Belmondo Courage Ford, Gosselin
- GT1
 - No. 58 Aston Martin DBR9, Lamy
 - No. 63 Corvette C6-R, Papis
 - No. 64 Corvette C6-R, Magnussen
- GT2
 - No. 90 White Lightning Racing Porsche 911 GT3 RSR, Bernhard
 - No. 71 Alex Job Porsche 911 GT3 RSR, Rockenfeller