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Friday 16th june 2006

## FINAL QUALIFYING SESSION



**24** HEURES DU MANS®  
17-18 JUIN 2006

Partenaires "Privilège" des 24 HEURES DU MANS 2006





# GOLD Access

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Jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 10h25

## FINAL QUALIFYING SESSION ENDS: AUDI R10S LOCK OUT FRONT ROW

**Thursday's qualifying session saw Audi and Pescarolo fighting over the pole position for the weekend's race, with Audi winning out; however, Pescarolo suggests that a second row start will mean a front row finish.**

vendredi 16 juin 2006 - 00h26

Thursday midnight; qualifying for the 24 Heures du Mans 2006 is complete. The passion of qualifying for the world's greatest endurance race and cooling ambient air brings out the best in teams and drivers. Fans, and posterity, are the beneficiaries. In the second half of the evening's session the Audi Sport Team Joest cars, No.7 and No.8 took fastest times almost as soon as the track opened. Picking up where they left off, Marco Werner in the No.8 went out and set a fast 3:30.584 to claim provisional pole, but Dindo Capello, in the No.7 Audi R10 almost immediately bettered this time by 0.118 of a second. Capello's provisional pole time proved enough to keep them at the top of the timesheets right through to the end of the session. The No.16 and No.17 Pescarolo Judd cars came close, but couldn't get within 2s of pole. The drivers were disappointed, blaming traffic on their fastest laps; team boss Henri Pescarolo was not. Pescarolo exuded humor and confidence with about half an hour to go, saying "I am happy with the second row. Last year we started on the front row and finished second; this year, if we start on the second row, maybe we will finish first." The success of the two Audi R10 cars means that Saturday will see the first-ever front-row start for diesel-powered cars in the history of the Le Mans race; a remarkable achievement, given that this is the first visit for the R10 to la Sarthe. There was a great deal of other action on the track. Night qualifying at Le Mans is a thing to behold. With a final chance for a good starting position, drivers reach deep for a little more speed, and adhesion is tested. So it proved this evening as numerous cars had excursions into the gravel and sometimes into the walls. Ron Fellows was amongst the first to suffer as the No.63 Corvette C6.R had its left rear tire go flat and then delaminate on his out-lap; Fellows kept the car on track and returned to the pits. The No.5 Swiss Spirit Courage Judd went through the gravel at Indianapolis, eventually limping back to the pits after help from the marshals. The No.39 Chamberlain-Synergy Lola AER lost its rear wing on track, while the leading GT2 car, the No.76 IMSA Performance Matmut Porsche 911 GT3 RSR, met the wall on the inside of Karting, causing severe damage. The No.6 Lister Storm spun at the Tertre Rouge esses, and the No.24 Binnie Motorsports Lola Zytek managed to spin off in the pit-lane entry road. The No.61 Russian Age Ferrari 550 Maranello near Mulsanne corner. As the chequered flag flew, Oliver Gavin's No.64 Corvette came to rest unexpectedly in the pits. Lack of fuel was speculated by some. The tension which characterised the early running of the second half of today's session eventually dissipated; after full darkness had fallen, numerous teams settled for lower starting positions than they might have accomplished in favor of working on a strong race set up; discretion is the better part of valor in a long, hard 24 Hour race. At the end of the session, the Audis and Pescarolos remained atop LMP1, at the head of the field. The No. 7 and No.8 Audi R10s will lead the No. 16 and No.17 Pescarolo Judds and the rest of the field to the green flag at five o'clock on Saturday afternoon. In LMP2, the No.25 RML Lola AER retained its strong hold on pole with a 3:41.555, behind it the No.33 Intersport Lola AER and No.22 Rollcentre Radical Judd were within three seconds of that time; they lie 12th, 13th, 14th overall. A little further back, in LM GT1, Aston Martin DBR9s dominated. No.007 was fastest on 3:52.015 with No.009 on 3:52.561; the No.64 Corvette pulled out a 3:53.100 in the dying moments of the session to prevent an Aston Martin lock-out of the top three positions. In LM GT2 a little variety was also evident as the No.76 IMSA Porsche 911 held pole on 4:03.438, edging the No.87 Scuderia Ecosse Ferrari F430 GTC's 4:04.596 and the No.83 Seikel Porsche 911 GT3 RSR's 4:04.897. The stage is set for another cracking 24 Heures du Mans. Be sure to 'tune in' for the start on Saturday 17 June at 5:00PM CET.

**24 HEURES DU MANS®**  
17-18 JUIN 2006

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jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 19h00

### > THE HEAT RETURNS

**The heat has returned for the start of the first part of the second qualifying session.**

The two prototypes of the Pescarolo-Judd Sport team took to the track as soon as the session began to find some clear air with the aim of putting the finishing touches to the setup of the two French cars. The current heat which beats down onto the Le Mans track, more than 31°, is certainly going to be a key factor for the rest of the session.

jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 19h05

### > CORVETTE NO. 72 LUC ALPHAND IN TROUBLE

The Green Flag signaled the start of the first half of the second qualifying session in dry, clear conditions with a temperature of 31° Centigrade.

Yellow flag at the second Mulsanne chicane, the 'Michelin Chicane'; No. 72 Luc Alphand Aventures Corvette C5R driven by Luc Alphand limped back to the pitlane. The No.2 Zytek Engineering 06S driven by John Nielsen reported trouble and managed to make it as far as the Mulsanne corner before coming to a halt.

Frank Biela in the No.8 Audi Sport Team Joest R10 was fastest after the first fifteen minutes of the session with a time of 3'36"259



jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 19h17

### > GOSSELIN'S NO. 36 COURAGE AND SHORT'S NO. 22 RADICAL SLOW ON TRACK Early speed begins to have effects.



The no.36 Paul Belmondo Racing Courage in the hands of Gosselin, was reported to be slowing down after the second Mulsanne chicane but was able to make it back to the pits. A punctured front tyre was the cause. Shortly after, the No.22 Rollcentre Racing Radical Judd, driven by Martin Short was also reported to be slowing down on the track.

Frank Biela's time of 3:36.259 set in the Audi R10 remains fastest in the session so far.

jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 19h26

### > QUOTE FROM LUC ALPHAND AFTER BRINGING BACK THE NO.72 CORVETTE C5-R

"When I arrived at the second Mulsanne Chicane, I hit the brake pedal three times, and the car immediately went into a spin. It did two full spins. Luckily, I only hit the barriers during the second spin, as the car was going very fast during the first one.

The back end of the car stepped out for no obvious reason. That's very strange, as it was fine through the first chicane.

I'm not going back out in that car"



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jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 19h30

### > CORVETTE NO.64 AND ASTON MARTIN NO.009 BATTLE FOR GT1 POLE



#### GT1 Action

Olivier Gavin in No.64 Corvette Racing put in a faster lap than the No. 007 and No. 009 Aston Martin DBR9s, which had been comfortably leading the GT1 time sheets from the beginning of the session. Gavin turned in a lap of 3:56:488, which was answered immediately by No.009's Pedro Lamy with a 3:54.533, putting Aston Martin back on top in LM GT1.

jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 19h41

### > NO.8 AUDI IN THE PIT GARAGE

#### LMP1

After a very fast lap with excellent times in sectors 1 and 2, Frank Bie-la returned to the pits in his No.8 Audi R10 without passing the timing beam, and so failed to set another fastest time. The under floor of the car was being checked in the pits.



The No.8 Audi was still fastest at this time with a best lap of 3:36:259, followed by the No. 17 Pescarolo Judd of Montagny with a time of 3:37.659 and the No.16 Pescarolo Judd of Minassian with a best lap so far of 3:37:867.



jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 19h51

### > FERRARI AND SPYKER GO OFF TRACK

#### Ferrari runs through gravel trap while Spyker spins

In good weather almost an hour into Thursday's session, the No. 50 Larbre Competition Ferrari 550 with Bornhauser driving ran into the gravel trap at the Dunlop chicane, while at the same time the No.86 Spyker C8 spun in the link corner.

jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 19h54

### > QUOTE FROM MIGUEL ANGEL DE CASTRO NO. 39 CHAMBERLAIN – SYNERGY MOTORSPORT LOLA AER

#### No.39 Chamberlain–Synergy Lola driver Miguel Angel de Castro looks for a relaxed Thursday session with no mishaps.

"We finished the repairs on the car just before the end of the second session last night, and managed to put in 3 laps before midnight in order to do a full check up of the car. Today, we decided to replace the engine, and put in the race engine for Saturday. It was a close finish as we were ready only five minutes before the first session. Tonight, we want to run in a more relaxed mode, put the elbow out the window, as if we were going on holidays!"

"We've had two accidents, that's enough...We won't be taking any risks tonight, and we'll be putting in our night laps today.

We will be checking the race engine and setup, and crossing fingers for an



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jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 19h59



## > QUOTE FROM YANN CLAIRAY NO. 37 PAUL BELMONDO RACING COURAGE FORD

### Comments on Courage difficulties

"I was having problems with the tyres. I could feel vibrations in the front axle. We decided it was safer to bring the car back into the pits. The tyres were out of shape, so we will increase the pressure and things should come back to normal."

jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 20h00

## > PIRRO FASTEST IN NO.8 AUDI; NO.2 ZYTEK WILL CHANGE ITS ENGINE

The No.2 Zytec 06S suffered an engine failure. After the incident, it was reported that it would be hauled back to the pits, and a new engine would be fitted. The car was expected to return to the track.

Paul Belmondo Racing confirmed that both No.36 and No.37 Courages suffered punctured tyres earlier in the session.

Around ten minutes into the second hour of the session, Emanuele Pirro set a new fastest time in the the No.8 Audi R10, a rapid 3:35:638. Franck Montagny remained just behind Pirro in LMP1, having lapped the circuit in 3:36.598 with the No.17 Pescarolo Judd.



jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 20h16

## > FURIOUS BATTLE BETWEEN AUDIS AND PESCAROLOS.

### No.13 Courage reported slow after Arnage corner; Fellows fastest in GT1



Dindo Capello put in a fast 3:34.505 in his No.8 Audi R10 to take provisional pole shortly after 8:20PM. About ten minutes later Franck Montagny challenged this time in the No.17 Pescarolo Judd, but fell short by 0.132 seconds. Just behind them the No.8 Audi R10 driven by Werner and the No.16 Pescarolo with Collard at the wheel were also on flying laps. The top four were separated by just under 1.6 seconds. Meanwhile, the No.63 Corvette Racing C6R set fastest time in GT1 in the hands of Canadian driver Ron Fellows.

No.13 Courage Competition driven by Gounon was reported slowing after the Arnage corner. The car was 5th fastest at the time, 2.428 seconds slower than the No.8 Audi R10.

jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 20h17

## > QUOTE FROM YVES LAMBERT NO. 73 ICE POL RACING TEAM PORSCHE 911

### Lengthy time in pits explained

The No. 73 Ice Pol Racing Porsche 911 GT3 RSR was still sitting in its pits after more than one hour's practice.

"At lunchtime, we were told by the Porsche engineers that it would be preferable to change the engine and gearbox before tonight's practice. Since then, we have been working on changing the engine, gearbox and clutch.

We usually work quicker than this back at the workshop (laughs) things are a bit cramped here. It should all be over in about 10 minutes. Once we hit the track, we will put in a few laps just to check everything is running smoothly, then we can move to fine tuning our race setup. We are not after a fast lap."



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jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 20h32

## > NO.17 PESCAROLO FIGHTS BACK...AND SO DOES NO.7 AUDI R10



### Battle Royal for LMP1 Provisional Pole

Just over 90 minutes into the first session, the no.17 Pescarolo driven by Franck Montagny, fought back and set fastest time with a lap of 3:33:378, eclipsing the 2005 pole-sitter's time. An exciting qualifying battle was taking place between both Pescarolos and Audis at the head of LMP1. Montagny clearly felt at ease in the car and pitted for new qualifying tires.

At 8:41PM, multiple Le Mans champion Tom Kristensen took the battle to the Pescarolos with a lap of 3:32.998 in the No.7 Audi R10. Kristensen had just taken over the Audi. The contest continued as the sun began to set and the track cooled. Even faster times were expected in the gloaming.

jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 20h38

## > QUOTE FROM MARCEL FASSLER IN NO. 5 SWISS SPIRIT COURAGE JUDD

### Spa setup works at Le Mans

With the No. 5 Courage Judd in 9th Position overall, Marcel Fassler aims higher !

"We are aiming for a fast time tonight, we want to run after pole position, but it is going to be very, very hard.

We would be happy with 5th position on the grid.

We are really happy, as everything is running perfectly. No problems yesterday, and none so far today.

I don't know yet who will go out on qualifying tyres.

We have kept the same setup as for the Spa 1000kms, and that was obviously a good choice, as things are running rather well."



jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 20h41

## > COMMENTS FROM MARCO APICELLA, LAMBORGHINI MURCIELAGO N°53

If in the LM GT1 category, Luc Alphand is struggling to control his Corvette C5-R, it's not the case for Marco Apicella driving the n°53 Lamborghini Murcielago! Being the only one of the three drivers who knows the track, he is in charge on setting up the car for the race, and he is rather happy: "the behaviour of the car is good, even excellent in the corners. On the other hand, our top speed is not so good. I am going to dedicate the rest of the session looking for a compromise, whilst my team-mates familiarise themselves a little with the track.

jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 20h41

## > AUDI AND PESCAROLO FIGHT

Tom Kristensen in the No.7 Audi set a new fastest time of 3:32:998, and pushed Montagny in the Pescarolo No.17 back to second place again, though only 0.380 seconds behind. Montagny should be able to fight back soon, as the Pescarolos have just been fitted with qualifying tires.



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jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 20h41

### > EXHAUST PROBLEMS FOR THE N°62 ASTON MARTIN

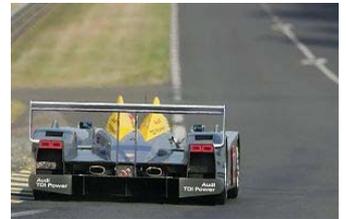


The n°62 Aston Martin (Russian Age Racing) was noticeable for its absence during the first two hours. The beautiful Italian GT in the colours of the Modena team didn't leave its box for more than an hour after a problem with its exhaust. The mechanics changed it before Antonio Garcia took to the wheel, at the same moment that the n°63 Corvette C6.R took control of the category...

jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 20h55

### > TWO AUDIS LEAD THE TIMESHEETS

Audi No.8 with Marco Werner driving grabbed second place with a lap time of 3:33:262, and Capello in the No.7 Audi also improved with a new fastest time of 3:32:621. At the same time Christian Fittipaldi turned a scorching lap 3:54:476, second quickest in LM GT1



jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 21h01

### > QUOTE FROM GREGOR FISKEN NO. 12 COURAGE COMPETITION COURAGE MUGEN



The No. 12 Courage Mugen was damaged last night following a spin in the Tertre Rouge Esses.

"We had to repair the front end of the car, and decided to put in the race engine. Our first aim tonight, was to do an overall check, especially the front suspension and the engine. That's why we only ran for four laps. Later tonight, we will try and improve our time."

Sam Hancock was at the wheel for the first four laps, and reported no problem whatsoever with the engine or gearbox. (winks at Fiskén)

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jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 21h22

## > PESCAROLOS AND AUDIS DOMINATE FIRST HALF OF THURSDAY QUALIFYING Trading times lap after lap, the leaders of LM P1 put on a great show. In LMP2, GT1 and GT2 equally exciting competition provided rivetting action.



It was excitement throughout the first half of Thursday's session as Audis and Pescarolos traded fastest laps. It was dry, clear and sunny with the temperature over 31° Centigrade. Within the first fifteen minutes, installation laps had been completed by many cars and the times began to fall. Frank Biela in the No.8 Audi Sport Team Joest R10 had a very quick second sector and managed a fast lap of 3:36.257. The top eleven times reached by cars in LMP1, LMP2 and GT1, were all under four minutes. It was not long before the Pescarolo Judds began to challenge for provisional pole, and the stage was set for a very exciting session.

LM P1 tends to be the focus of Le Mans qualifying, which is not surprising as these are the fastest machines on the track. This year, with the diesel-powered Audi R10 and the Pescarolo Judd a genuine Battle Royal shaped up nicely throughout the first half of Thursday's session. Franck Montagny, Dindo Capello, Tom Kristensen, Emmanuel Collard have all set fastest times lap after lap as the sun began to set and the air cooled. When the track closed for the dinner break, Emmanuel Collard pipped his Audi competitors by 0.037 in the dying econds, Capello's No.7 Audi Sport Team Joest R10 having stood atop the time sheets with a 3:32.998. Both teams eclipsed the 2005 pole time.

In LMP2 the No.25 RML MG-Lola AER of former Le Mans winner Andy Wallace, Thomas Erdos and Mike Newton were class leaders and in a commendable 10th position overall. The No.25 car had a best time of 3:42.806. Behind them was the No. 33 Intersport Racing Lola-AER. LM P2 will provide some real excitement in the second half of today's qualifying session, and in the race itself.

In GT1, the No.009 Aston Martin DBR9 of Sarrazin, Lamy and Ortelli was fastest on 3:53.402 just beating Ron Fellows' quickest time of 3:53.993 in the No. 63 Corvette Racing C-6R. Behind them was the No.66 Acemco Saleen of Mowlem, Borcheller and Christian Fittipaldi whose impressive 3:54.476 was set in near perfect conditions.

GT2 was led by the No. 76 IMSA Performance Matmut Porsche 911 GT3 RSR, whose best time was 4:04.957. Close behind, came another Porsche 911 GT3 RSR, the No.80 Flying Lizard car in 4:05.266. Rounding out the class' top three was the No.87 Scuderia Ecosse Ferrari F430 GTC in 4:05.726.

A number of minor incidents further enlivened the session. The No.50 Ferrari F550 and the No.63 Corvette C6R took trips through the gravel. The No.2 Zytek suffered an engine failure. The No.73 Porsche 911 spent much of the session's first half in the pits undergoing investigation and adjustment. There were no serious incidents reported. Spectators were treated to a fine first session on Thursday, a pleasant change from Wednesday's heavy rain. As always at Le Mans, the track and the conditions provide fantastic variety, and qualifying heightens anticipation of another great race.

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jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 22h08

## > AUDIS RAISE THE PACE AS NIGHT FALLS; MANY MINOR INCIDENTS

**With night falling as the second half of this evening's qualifying session got under way, the cooler evening air results in lap times coming down.**



Only a couple of minutes into the second half of the Thursday qualifying session, the two Audi Sport Team Joest R10 entries continued almost where they left off before the mid-session interval. Improving on the fastest times from the first half of the session, both cars set one fastest lap after another.

Rinaldo Capello in the No.7 car lapped in 3:30:466, while the sister No.8 car, driven by Marco Werner, went round only 0.118s slower.

Ron Fellows in the No.63 Corvette suffered a rear right puncture at the far end of the circuit, followed by what looked like delamination as he limped back to the pits. A Pescarolo swept impossibly close to the injured Corvette as Fellows kept it on the track through the Porsche Curves.

The No.5 Swiss Spirit Courage Judd was in the gravel trap at Indianapolis, apparently damaged, but managed to limp back to the pits after the track marshalls quickly and safely pushed it back on the track.

The No.39 Chamberlain-Synergy Lola AER lost its wing on track, and the rear left side appeared damaged. No further information was immediately available.

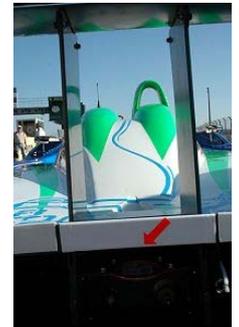
Almost half an hour into the final qualifying stint, the class-leading GT2 entry, the No.76 IMSA Performance Matmut Porsche 911 GT3 RSR, No.76 IMSA Performance Matmut, driven by Luca Riccitelli, slammed into the wall on the inside of the Karting bends, severely damaging the car's left side. The car, reduced to three wheels, was rapidly hauled behind the barriers.

jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 22h29

## > COMMENTS FROM SÉBASTIEN LOEB

### **No.17 Pescarolo Judd driver speaks about qualifying**

Five minutes from the end of the first part of Thursday's qualifying session, Franck Montagny, driving the No.17 Pescarolo-Judd, set out onto the track with qualifying tyres. Whilst looking set to clock a good time, he was impeded by a slower GT2 car through the final chicane. Sébastien Loeb, Montagny's team-mate, commented: "He was clearly on a quick lap. Nevertheless, were are not going to fight over two tenths of a second in qualifying when there will be 24 hours to deal with!"



jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 22h44

## > LISTER NO.6 AND LOLA NO.24 SPIN

### **Boundless enthusiasm on track**



As full darkness descended over the Sarthe circuit, the No.6 Lister Storm spun at the Tertre Rouge esses with Jens Moller at the wheel. The Lister lay 18th in qualifying at the time; Moller managed to return to the track.

Shortly after, at Indianapolis, the No.24 Binnie Motorsports Lola Zytec rode the curbs a bit too hard and spun on the track with Yojiro Terada driving. It was therefore impossible to improve on the car's best time of 3:56.123. The car was already some way off the pace of the LM P2 class leader, the 3:41:555 set by the No.25 RML MG-Lola AER under Andy Wallace.

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jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 22h45

## > FREAK ACCIDENT PUTS VAN OVERBEEK OUT OF SECOND QUALIFYING SESSION



The No.80 Flying Lizard Porsche 911 GT3 RSR team has announced that one of their drivers, Johannes Van Overbeek, will not take part in the second qualifying session. Victim of a cycling accident near to the circuit, the American driver is suffering with minor cuts and abrasions. The A.C.O medical staff, with safety as their prime concern, has recommended that the Flying Lizard team driver doesn't drive today in order to recover for the rest of the weekend. Van Overbeek will be back tomorrow for the drivers' parade in the centre of Le Mans. In the

meantime the other two drivers, Patrick Long and Seth Neiman, are continuing their preparation work in the car.

jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 22h48

## > QUOTE FROM RINALDO CAPELLO, PROVISIONAL POLE POSITION HOLDER

Early in the final two hours of qualifying for the 2006 edition of the 24 Hours of Le Mans, Rinaldo Capello took provisional pole in the No.7 Audi Sport Team Joest R10; after getting out of the car, he gave us the following comments on his stint.



"I wasn't really trying to improve our time, but the car had been running well." "I got a perfectly clean flying lap, so I was lucky. Marco Werner, in the sister No.8 Audi, wasn't so lucky, so he lost a couple of tenths of a second. He could very well have taken pole from us. We are not using qualifying tyres, as they don't even last us a full lap because of the tremendous torque on this car. We are using the softest possible race tyres we have."

jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 22h54

## > MORE INCIDENTS AS THE FINAL HOUR OF QUALIFYING BEGINS

The No.61 Russian Age Ferrari 550 Maranello was reported stopped after Mulsanne corner; this car has had an eventful final session, having to be brought back to the pits on a truck after the first two hours of Thursday's running with a right rear puncture.



In the pits the No. 89 Sebah Automotive Porsche 911 GT3 RSR was being worked on, as the rear right wheel was apparently rubbing against the bodywork.

The No.32 Courage AER was reported slowing down on the Mulsanne straight, just after Tertre Rouge; that would leave them with a very long, slow trip back to the pits.

Partenaires "Privilège" des **24 HEURES DU MANS** 2006





jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 23h06

### > ENGINE FAILURE FOR THE LM P1 ZYTEK

#### Concern about pace and lack of required night laps.



The No.2 Zytek suffered an engine failure whilst John Nielsen was at the wheel. The engine was old, and was due to be replaced for the race; however, it was far from ideal when a conrod was punched through the side of the block right at the start of the final two hours of qualifying! At the time, it was predicted that at least an hour's work would be needed before the LMP1 could get back into action.

The failure has caused a great deal of anxiety for the team, not just because of the work involved in replacing the unit. The team had yet to set a competitive time comparable to others in its class, so their participation in the race was in jeopardy. After lightning work by the pit crew the car was back on track with just under half an hour left, Elgaard putting in a lap of 3:44.361, good enough for eleventh in LMP1; next time round he went even quicker, his 3:41.500 vaulting them above the three leading LMP2 cars to go eleventh overall.

jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 23h16

### > MORE SPINS, AND ASTON MARTIN HOLD TOP THREE PLACES IN GT1

The No. 90 White Lightning Racing Porsche 911 GT3 RSR spun into the gravel trap at Tertre Rouge with Tracy Krohn driving, while the No.73 Ice Pol Racing Porsche 911 was reported to be in the gravel at Indianapolis. The No.90 Porsche managed to make it back to the track and continued the session.



At the Playstation chicane, the No.87 Scuderia Ecosse Ferrari F430 GTC spun without suffering any apparent damage.

With thirty minutes left in qualifying, three Aston Martin DBR9s held the top three positions in GT1. In order, they were the two 'works' Aston Martin entries, the No.007 of Turner/Enge/Piccini ahead of Sarrazin/Lamy/Ortelli in the No.009 car, with third held by the No.69 BMS Scuderia Italia car of Gollin/Pescatori/Babini.

jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 23h25

### > QUOTES FROM DISAPPOINTED PESCAROLO DRIVERS

#### Race setup rather than starting position the final focus of Pescarolo Sport



Running third and fourth overall going into the last half hour of qualifying, the Pescarolo drivers were rather disappointed with their performance: No.17 Pescarolo Judd driver Franck Montagny, fourth overall:

"I didn't manage to get a clean lap, I was slowed down by a car in the last curve, and also by a yellow flag.

I'm very disappointed, because it is always a great feeling to get pole position, but then, this is Le Mans.

I am very happy with the setup of the car. We just moved the brake balance towards the front to make the car even more comfortable. The setup is absolutely perfect."

Emmanuel Collard, currently third overall:

"On my last set of tyres, everything was really great. I got the quickest time for the day in the first sector. In the straight, I came up behind a prototype. I flashed my headlights, but had to brake behind it, and lost three seconds.

I am very disappointed not to have taken the pole, but we all know that qualifying in Le Mans is also about traffic, and how to avoid it. Before the break in the session, it was too warm for the tyres and the engine." As of 11:30PM, it seemed the Pescarolo drivers had given up on pole position.

Partenaires "Privilège" des 24 HEURES DU MANS 2006





jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 23h30

### > THE FIGHT FOR POLE LOOKS ALL BUT OVER

The two Pescarolo cars, currently in 3rd and 4th, were unhappy at not being able to take full advantage of their cars which were running very strongly, being caught out by traffic on their 'hot' laps.

With 45 minutes to go until the end of the qualifying sessions, there was no change at the top of the timesheets and the fight for pole looked all but over.

jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 23h32

### > QUOTE FROM THOMAS ERDOS NO. 25 RML LOLA AER

#### Set up is everyone's concern as qualifying nears end.

Lying 11th over all and first in LMP2 with thirty minutes left in Thursday qualifying, the No. 25 RML Lola AER's Thomas Erde commented:

"We are very happy with our result, but we were not running for pole.

We put in our best time at the end of the first session tonight, and we did not even try to improve it during the second session. We were concentrating on having all our drivers run in the dark.

We are working a bit on the rear suspension, in order to make the car more comfortable for the drivers.

We set our time on race tyres, not on qualifying ones."



jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 23h32

### > SOME DISAPPOINTMENTS

#### Some team hit trouble - a far from ideal preparation for the weekend's race.

The No.62 Russian Age Aston Martin DBR9 team installed the race engine in the car; however, the installation lap was not satisfactory. Noel del Bello was disappointed by this session's results, his No.98 Porsche 911 GT3 RSR having been the slowest car on track.

jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 23h38

### > QUOTE FROM CHRISTIAN PESCATORI NO. 69 BMS SCUDERIA ITALIA ASTON MARTIN DBR9

#### The "Italian" DBR9 was balked in qualifying

The No. 69 Aston Martin DBR9 lay third in its GT1 behind the works Aston Martins with twenty minutes left in qualifying. Driver Christian Pescatori reflected:

"The car was very, very quick.

On several occasions, I had to slow down because of traffic, and because of cars hitting the gravel traps.

If we had been given the opportunity of a clean lap, I think we could have managed [GT1] pole position.

We are now working on the setup of the car, not going for a fast lap."



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jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 23h45

### > THE BMS SCUDERIA ITALIA DBR9 GOES THIRD IN GT1

While everyone was waiting to see whether the works Corvette squad would challenge for the GT1 class lead, it was the private Aston Martin entries who have responded. The No.69 BMS Scuderia Italia DBR9, driven by Christian Pescatori, went third in class, pushing the No.67 Convers Menx Ferrari 550 Maranello down to 4th position.



The No.62 Russian Age Aston Martin DBR9 spent much of the session in its pit garage, the crew busy installing the race engine. Once the work was completed the car went back out on track to check the installation.

jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 23h47

### > QUICK QUOTE FROM A HAPPY DR ULLRICH – TEAM MANAGER OF AUDI SPORT TEAM JOEST

**The front row seems all but guaranteed with 10 minutes to go.**

"The No. 8 car will not be going back out. We are working on the race setup for the No. 7 car. We are very happy, everything is running fine"

With ten minutes of qualifying remaining, the No.7 Audi R10 was in provisional pole position, with a time of 3:30.466, and the No. 8 Audi R10 was close behind, just a tenth of a second slower. This made it very likely that Saturday will see the first ever front-row start for a diesel-powered car in the Le Mans 24 Hours.



jeudi 15 juin 2006 - 23h56

### > QUOTE FROM A WORRIED ROMAIN DUMAS - NO. 76 IMSA PERFORMANCE MATMUT PORSCHE 911

**Car damage raises tension; ankle damage causes concern**



The No. 76 IMSA Performance Matmut Porsche 911 GT3 RSR, holding the provisional LM GT2 pole, crashed heavily towards the end of the lap; Luca Riccitelli was at the wheel. Team-mate Romain Dumas spoke about the problems the team faced

"Luca went off in the Karting curve; the car is badly damaged. A bunch of our mechanics went out to see the state of the car, and it appears that the chassis is bent. Even worse, Luca's ankle has swollen to twice its normal size. We are not at all sure he will be able to drive this weekend. We put in a very good time, and we could have improved it. However, we do not know if we will be able to start the race."

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