



GOLD *Access*

19h - 21h

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Saturday 16 June 2006

19H - 21H



24 HEURES DU MANS®
17-18 JUIN 2006

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





samedi 17 juin 2006 - 19h04

> 5PM TO 7PM: FRANTIC ACTION IN THE FIRST TWO HOURS



When the French flag was waved by Jean-Martin Folz, President of PSA Peugeot-Citroen, on the stroke of 5pm, the action got under way in the 24 Hours of Le Mans; and, less than four minutes later, history was made when a lap was led by a diesel-powered car for the first time ever: Allan McNish, in the No.7 Audi Sport Team Joest R10, had the honour of leading that first lap.

After that, the incidents came fast and furious. The two Audis set a searing pace at the head of the field, McNish pursued by Frank Biela in the sister No.8 Audi; they quickly pulled out a lead over their pursuers, who were led by the No.16 and No.17

Pescarolo Judd cars.

It was all for nothing; on lap 5 the No.69 BMS Scuderia Italia Aston Martin DBR9 slammed into the wall on one side of the Porsche curves, bouncing across the track with one wheel completely torn off and slid to a halt against the opposite wall. The driver, Fabio Babini, was unhurt, but the car was terminally damaged, becoming the race's first retirement.

The safety car came out while the debris was cleared up, but this caused more problems. Many cars headed for the pits, including the top four in GT1; the two works Corvette C6. The No.64 and 63 cars, made it out ahead of the two works Aston Martin DBR9 cars, with the No.009 getting out before its No.007 sister car. But after Darren Turner went back out in the No.007 car, it was obvious that the car had been losing fluid while stationary; he came back in on the next lap with the leak having worsened and the team wheeled it into the garage.

They quickly diagnosed a broken oil line, together with a damaged undertray. According to team boss Dave Richards, Turner had done the damage on the curbs in the pit-lane entry. Six laps were lost while the damage was repaired.

The drama in GT1 continued when Johnny O'Connell, in the No.63 Corvette C6.R, hit debris and went into a slow spin in the Porsche curves; he brushed the barrier and came to rest facing the wrong way. After spinning it around and getting back to the pits the crew set about replacing the damaged parts, dropping two laps in the process.

After two hours' racing the two Audis were circulating at the head of the field with a handy lead, the No.7 car some 30s ahead of the No.8 Audi. The superior fuel consumption of the diesel-powered R 10s enabling them to run longer between stops than their pursuers. They were followed by the two Pescarolo Judd entries, the No.16 car just a handful of seconds ahead of the sister No.17 entry.

An equally fierce battle for LM P2 honours raged, the top three running on the fringes of the top ten. The No.39 Chamberlain-Synergy Lola AER car held the advantage for much of the time, just over a minute ahead of the No.22 Rollcentre Radical Judd. The No.25 RML Lola AER held third, only seconds behind the Rollcentre car.

The problems which hit the works teams allowed others to get into the top three in GT1, although the No.64 Corvette C6.R ended the period leading the class, less than 10s clear of the No.009 Aston Martin DBR9; third was held by the No.72 Luc Alphand Corvette C5-R three minutes further back.

In a remarkable performance the No.76 IMSA Performance Matmut Porsche 911 GT3 RSR had made it into the class lead – remarkable because the car had started at the back of the grid. The car was being hotly pursued by the No.87 Scuderia Ecosse Ferrari F430 GT, less than 10s back; the No.90 White Lightning Porsche was in third, a minute further back.

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samedi 17 juin 2006 - 19h33

> IN THE THIRD HOUR, THE RACE BEGINS TO SETTLE DOWN

Excitement is undiminished as the race begins to mature.



As the third hour began, there was only one car out of the race, the No.69 BMS Scuderia Italia Aston Martin DBR9. Whilst pitting for the second time, the No.16 Pescarolo Sport Judd was delayed a couple of seconds by a photographer blocking the way. The photographer was brushed aside by the car after failing to hear repeated warnings, but was unharmed.

At 19:17 (02:17 running), the No.61 Russian Age Racing Ferrari 550 Maranello has a shredded left rear tire, and had about two thirds of the circuit to negotiate before returning to the pits, which took 10 more minutes. After

quick repairs the Ferrari returned to the track.

At 19:26 (02:26 running) the No.25 RML Lola AER driven by Andy Wallace led by less than 25 seconds in LMP2. The No.22 Rollcentre Racing Radical Judd was second, just as the No.22 pitted. After No.25 pitted, it dropped to third in class, behind No.22 and the No.39 Chamberlain - Synergy Motorsport Lola AER.

The race continued as the shadows started to lengthen.

samedi 17 juin 2006 - 20h00

> LEADERS PIT, LEAD CHANGES, AND OTHERS FALTER

The third hour proves to have almost non-stop action, with surprises.



At 19:39 (02:39 racing) the No.13 Courage Competition Mugen driven by Shinji Nakano, stopped on the grass verge near the Mulsanne corner. The marshals quickly pulled it behind behind the wall.

At 19:39 (02:39 racing) the No.77 Multimatic Motorsports - Team Panoz Esperante stopped on track; further information was not immediately available.

At 19:41 (02:41 racing) the No.30 Welter Gerard WR Peugeot had a big shunt, bouncing over the curbs and ending up backwards in the grass.

At 19:45 (02:45 racing) both the No.7 and the No. 8 Audi Sport Team Joest R10s pitted within seconds of each other and came out 7.633 seconds apart, with No.7 still leading.

At 19:47 (02:47 racing) the No.61 Russian Age Racing Ferrari 550 Maranello returned to the track after his shredded tyre incident.

At 19:48 (02:48 racing) the No.7 Audi Sport Team Joest R10 had an unexpected return to the pits for a splash of fuel, and a quick adjustment to the bodywork near the driver; this may have been the 'fly screen' designed to protect the driver from excess wind buffeting. This put teammate Dindo Capello in the No.8 Audi Sport Team Joest R10 into the overall lead.

At 19:51 (02:51 running) the No.16 Pescarolo Sport Judd pitted for fuel.

At 19:52 (02:52 running) the No.85 Spyker Squadron B.V. C8 stopped on the track.

At 19:53 (02:53 racing) the No.20 Bruneau Pierre Pilbeam Judd backed into the garage. Within two minutes the car returned to the pit lane, started on its own, and returned to the race.

At 19:57 (02:57 racing) the No.13 Courage Competition Mugen was backed into its garage. No reason was given.

At 19:58 (02:58 racing) the No.63 Corvette Racing C6-R, driven by Max Papis suffered left rear body damage. The tire seemed undamaged, but a long piece of the Corvette's yellow fender was sticking out of the car's left bodywork.

At 20:00 (03:00 racing) the No.85 Spyker Squadron B.V. C8 restarted.

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samedi 17 juin 2006 - 20h28

> NO.7 AUDI IN TROUBLE, OTHERS FIND PROBLEMS TOO

Superb racing continues



At 20:04 (03:04 racing) the No.12 Courage Competition Mugen pitted with right side exhaust exhaust problem.

At 20:04 (03:04 racing) the No.2 Zytek Engineering was backed into the garage. This car had numerous engine problems during the week.

At 20:05 (03:05 racing) the No.19 Chamberlain - Synergy Motorsport Lola AER spun and stopped in the gravel trap at 63bis; it has been moved to safety by the marshals, using corner rescue tow tractor.

At 20:07 (03:07 racing) the No.85 Spyker Squadron B.V. C8 returned to the race. A coolant leak had caused the car to stop at the Playstation chicane earlier, with a loss of bodywork. The car returned to the pit lane, was push-started, and drove to its pit under its own power, where it was backed into the garage.

At 20:08 (03:08 racing) the No.63 Corvette Racing C6-R pitted and the team replaced the rear bodywork. When it returned to the race, the car was eighth in GT1 class, twenty-fourth overall.

At 20:16 (03:16 racing) the No.8 Audi Sport Team Joest R10, being driven by Marco Werner, led both LMP1 class and the race overall by 57.804 seconds over the No.7 Audi R10. The No.16 and No.17 Pescarolo Sport Judds trailed by a single lap.

At 20:19 (03:19 racing) the No.2 Zytek Engineering car was still in the garage; mechanics continued to work on the engine.

At 20:22 (03:22 racing) the No.37 Paul Belmondo Racing Courage Ford spun off near Indianapolis corner. The right rear tire exploded, doing severe damage to the rear bonnet, which flew off along with other parts including the rear wing. The driver, Yann Clairay was able to get out of the car without help, but there was a small trail of fire in the grass behind the C65. The fire was quickly extinguished by the firemen.

At 20:23 (03:23 racing) the No.7 Audi Sport Team Joest R10, running in second place overall stopped in the pits and was wheeled into the garage. The car's windscreen was apparently shattered by debris from the No.37 car, and may require a new radiator. There are unconfirmed reports the car is also suffering an electronic or engine management problem.

At 20:24 (03:24 racing) the No.19 Chamberlain - Synergy Motorsport Lola AER rejoined the race.

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> NO.7 AUDI RETURNS, TIGHT RACE IN LMP2



After more than three hours, incidents were still affecting some of the leading runners. Thomas Enge, in the No.007 Aston Martin DBR9, overshot the Mulsanne corner, having to spin the car through 180 degrees to get it facing the right way; it was reported that the problem had been caused by steering problems.

Meanwhile the Audi crew continued to work on the No.7 Audi Sport Team Joest R10, finally getting it back on track after replacing the ECU 'black box' and the fuel filter. The latest stop left the car six laps down; it will take an heroic effort if Tom Kristensen is to claim his eighth win.

The battle continued to rage in LMP2, the two leading cars running with less than 30s between them; the No.25 RML Lola AER had the class lead, ahead of the No.22 Rollcentre Racing Radical Judd.

The No.24 Binnie Motorsports Lola Zytek was in the pit garage attempting to resolve overheating, apparently caused by an engine management malfunction, but they were hopeful they would soon be back on track, with Allen Timpany continuing to do the driving duties.

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