



GOLD *Access*

01h - 03h

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Sunday 18 June 2006

01H - 03H



24 HEURES DU MANS®
17-18 JUIN 2006

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





dimanche 18 juin 2006 - 01h23

> 11PM TO 1AM: NIGHT IS ATTRITIVE

No lack of changes, on track and off.



Hours seven and eight were the beginning of real darkness; for its next quarter, the 24 Heures du Mans will be a true night race. The pace slows only a little, a rough calculation showing the race leaders - all in LMP1 - were averaging about seven seconds a lap more than their fastest times. In GT1 the pace was off by far less. If one considers it, this is incredible: large sections of the circuit are very dark, drivers often noting that the Mulsanne straight is pitch black at this time, but they go on slower.

Some years, night is an almost restful time at Le Mans; things proceed as planned for some teams, and end completely for others. This year there has been a succession of cars pitting, being wheeled into their respective garages, worked on, and returned to the track...and there has been a succession of cars falling off the track, many of them Porsche 911s of GT2 class.

Every time spectators relaxed and settled in for the long night chase, there was more news. The No.85 Spyker lost its engine. No.20 Pierre Bruneau Pilbeam Judd went off in the Ford chicane, near the pit lane entrance, and was pulled to safety by a tractor before returning to its garage. The No.32 Barazi Epsilon Courage AER experienced a brake fire while in its garage. The No. 16 Pescarolo Judd was driven directly into its garage by Nicolas Minassian, and remained there for an hour and twenty minutes as various parts were changed, reportedly including a starter motor and some electronic modules.

The apparently ill-starred No.2 Zytek pulled to a halt at Indianapolis corner while at nearly the same time the No.24 Binnie Motorsports Lola Zytek pulled into its garage and was all but disassembled by mechanics seeking an undisclosed problem. The No.2 Zytek was able to return to the race thanks to valiant work by the team, and eventually reported a probable crash involving the No.90 White Lightning Porsche 911 GT3 RSR. Pedro Lamy took the lead in GT1, giving Aston Martin fans a great lift, but it required a pit stop by Oliver Gavin in the No.64 C6.R Corvette to make it happen. Throughout these hours, the drivers barely slowed the pace. Night is not quiet at Le Mans.

As the ninth hour began the running order was:

LMP1: No.8 Team Audi Sport Joest R10 of Biela/Pirro/Werner, 130 Laps; No.17 Pescarolo Judd of Helary/Montagny/Loeb, 128 Laps; No.7 Team Audi Sport Joest R10 of Capello/Kristensen/McNish, 124 Laps

LMP2 No.25 RML Lola AER of Erdos/Newton/Wallace, 123 Laps; No.39 Chamberlain-Synergy Motorsport Lola AER of Amaral/de Castro/Hughes, 120 Laps; No.27 Miracle Motorsports Courage AER of Micaluso/Lally/James, 113 Laps

GT1 No.009 Aston Martin Racing DBR9 of Lamy/Ortelli/Sarrazin, 123 Laps; No.64 Corvette Racing C6.R of Gavin/Beretta/Magnussen, 123 Laps; No.62 Russian Age Racing DBR9 of Brabham/Piquet/Garcia, 120 Laps

GT2 No.83 of Seikel Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3RSR of Nielsen/Ehret/Farnbacher, 112 Laps; No.86 Spyker Squadron C8 Spyder of Bleekemolen/Hezemans/Kane, 112 Laps; No.87 Scuderia Ecosse Ferrari F430 GT of Kirkaldy/Niarchos/Mullen, 111 Laps

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dimanche 18 juin 2006 - 01h33

> MORE PESCAROLO PROBLEMS, LM P2 LEAD CHANGE

Not a quiet night in Le Mans



As the overall third place No.14 Racing For Holland Dome Judd pitted for the thirteenth time, it lost track position to the No.7 Audi Sport Team Joest R10, which has made an amazing return to form after its lengthy pit stop to change various parts. The driver change in which Stephan Johansson assumed control took longer than expected.

When the No.63 Corvette Racing C6.R made its latest stop, the car stalled. On restart, the car spun its tyres, giving rise to suggestions of a clutch problem, and officials were said to be looking into the situation. Spinning tyres in the pits is not acceptable at Le Mans. The Corvette Racing Team did the officials one better, however, bringing No.63 back to the pits and straight into the garage with a confirmed clutch problem.

With tyre problems of its own, the No.73 Ice Pol Racing Team Porsche 911 GT3 RSR rolled slowly to a stop in front of its garage, the shredded tyre having burnt the rear wing. More Ice, less heat might be needed for this car.

After 1h and 20m in the garage, during which the starter was reportedly changed, and upon which other adjustments appeared to have been undertaken, the Nicolas Minassian driven No.16 Pescarolo Sport Judd left the garage, started on its own, and rejoined the race well down in the field.

The No.90 White Lightning Racing Porsche 911 GT3 RSR headed into the gravel at Dunlop and had to be pulled out by corner workers, returning to the track soon after. Almost simultaneously, the No.80 Flying Lizard Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3 RSR also spun, and the car stalled in gravel.

Both Audis pitted at the same time, stop number 9 for overall leader, the No.8 Audi Sport Team Joest R10. Dindo Capello replaced Alan McNish during the eleventh pit stop for the No.7 Audi Sport Team Joest R10.

Andy Wallace, sitting in the car during a pit stop for the LMP2 class leading No.25 RML Lola AER, said "We have a vibration in the car, not sure what it is but they're working on it". Mechanics started changing three of the brakes as their lead shrank from 3 laps to nothing at all. The No.39 Chamberlain - Synergy Motorsport Lola AER took the lead in class as the former leader remained stationary.

Sometimes it takes a while to sort a car out: the No.72 Luc Alphand Aventures Corvette C5-R set it's fastest lap at the time after racing for 8h and 15m!

Perhaps the biggest news was that ace driver Franck Montagny put the No.17 Pescarolo Sport Judd into the gravel trap outside the Mulsanne corner. The car held second place overall at the time. Its three lap lead over the No.7 Audi R10 was in jeopardy as the car was pulled to an exit road, where it was able to restart and continue to the pits. The team changed the tyres, added fuel, and replaced the front bodywork, but the car seemed otherwise undamaged. Unfortunately for the Pescarolo team, this excursion gave the No.8 Audi R10 another lap's lead and brought the No.7 Audi R10 to within two laps of Montagny's car.

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> NO.7 AUDI STUMBLES, LM P2 LEAD CHANGES AGAIN

Teams get no respite



While the No.5 Swiss Spirit Courage Judd sat in the garage with a paddle shifter problem, the No.9 Creation Autosportif LTD Judd had a stop that lasted too long as the left rear wheel hub proved recalcitrant. This is the sort of problem that gives nightmares to team managers: time consuming and unavoidable. Driver Warren Hughes of the No.39 Chamberlain - Synergy Motorsport Lola AER reported during its extended stop that it "looks like the starter warning gauge" has come on, indicating a "starterator" problem, which is a Starter/ Alternator unit. In the LMP2 class Lola, this problem has occurred several times

over the last couple of years. The car had inherited the LMP2 lead when the No.25 RML Lola AER came in with "bad vibrations", but gave it back during the early part of these repairs.

Having lost a wheel, the No.73 Ice Pol Racing Team Porsche 911 GT3 RSR stopped off track near the PlayStation Chicane, but continued slowly on three wheels.

A bonnet-less No.61 Russian Age Racing Ferrari 550 Maranello made a visit to the pits for what looked like more than bodiless damage, including radiator issues. The bonnet was lost on the Mulsanne. The radiator was repaired, but it was unclear at time of writing whether the car would return to the race.

Overall leader, the No.8 Audi Sport Team Joest R10 made a routine stop, followed closely by its sister car, No.7. Within two laps, the No.7 Audi Sport Team Joest R10 returned to the pits, and was backed into the garage, the team blocking the view with spare front bodyparts while repairs began, but not well enough to prevent the media from seeing a broken left rear suspension. Meanwhile, the No.14 Racing For Holland Dome Judd continued on course, getting back the lap they needed to take back third place overall.

Second place overall, the No.17 Pescarolo Sport Judd completed a routine pit stop as the No.7 Audi continued to be repaired. Driver Franck Montagny vacated the No.17, and World Champion Rally driver Sebastien Loeb took over.

Continuing its treacherous journey, No.9 Creation Autosportif LTD Judd drove straight off at Dunlop as if it could not turn. After a little help from marshals, the car returned to the track.

Tom Kristensen exited the pits in the No.7 Audi Sport Team Joest R10 after the left rear half shaft was repaired. The car dropped to fourth overall, almost three laps behind the third place No.14 Racing For Holland Dome Judd.

dimanche 18 juin 2006 - 02h56

> ASTON MARTIN RACING NIGHT TIME DRIVER QUOTES



Aston Martin Racing has been putting on a spectacular show in the small hours. Racing the DBR9 with great verve against the equally superb Corvette Racing Team and their C6.R, at 03:00 the No.009 DBR9 and the No.64 C6.R are on the same lap, just under three minutes apart, and maintaining virtually identical lap times of around 3:56. The drivers have commented as follows:

Stephane Ortelli (009): "The car feels very good to drive and we can see how competitive we are relative to the opposition. In my stint, I drove as consistently as possible and was quite cautious in the traffic. There is still a long way to go."

Andrea Piccini (007): "It was definitely a stint of two halves for me. The first one was great: the car was handling well and I had very little traffic; the second one was very hard because I was always surrounded by slower cars, which made it harder to maintain consistent lap times. Still, I managed to make good progress up the order and we are going well."

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