



GOLD *Access*

03h - 05h

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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 - 03h34

> SAFETY CAR, SECOND AUDI CONTINUES WOES

Could fuel economy become a factor in this very close race?



At night one may be forgiven for leading with interesting facts and following with the core race reports. Fascinatingly, it appears that after 10 hours of racing, the No.24 Binnie Motorsports Lola Zytek has completed 137 laps on only 7 stops.

Elsewhere, brave corner workers assisted the No.9 Creation Autosportif LTD Judd following its second spin at Arnage corner.

Indianapolis claimed a temporary victim as the No.6 Lister Storm Racing Lister stopped off course and needed assistance returning to the course. Driver Jens Moller had been requesting new tyres, and pushed too hard going into the corner, as reported by the team manager.

After having been reported slow on course, the No.007 Aston Martin Racing DBR9 made a fairly routine stop and driver change (Picinni). The driver was keeping the car safe by racing more conservatively after picking up some gravel from another driver's recent off course excursion.

At 03:14 (10:14 racing), an incident with the No.98 Noel Del Bello Porsche 911 GT3 RSR brought out the safety car. Just as the caution period began, No.7 Audi Sport Team Joest R10 came into the pits and was immediately backed into the garage with lots of smoke coming out of the bottom.

As soon as the pits were re-opened, all of the class leaders took the time to pit. Except for the No.7 Audi, all stops were routine with quite a few driver changes. Meantime, No.98 Noel Del Bello Porsche 911 GT3 RSR had been loaded on a flatbed and returned to the paddock with rear body damage. The yellow-flag racing lasted for 13 minutes.

On the first lap after the flag, the No.50 Larbre Competition Team Ferrari 550 Maranello found its way into the gravel just before the Porsche Curves, and returned to the track.

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> LEADING AUDI FALTERS, LMGT1 GAP GROWS



Dindo Capello rejoined the race in fourth overall, taking the wheel of the No.7 Audi Sport Team Joest R10 five laps behind the third place overall No.14 Racing For Holland Dome Judd piloted by Jan Lammers.

The LMGT1 class still had the top two cars on the same lap, but with more than two minutes separating class leader No.009 Aston Martin Racing DBR9 driven by Stefan Ortelli and the No.64 Corvette Racing C6.R driven by Jan Magnussen. Both cars made driver changes, Pedro Lamy taking over the No.009 and Oliver Gavin getting in to the No.64.

When Miguel De Castro drove the No.39 Chamberlain - Synergy Motorsport Lola AER to the pits, it trailed in the LMP2 class by over 3 laps behind class leader No.25 RML Lola AER under the careful hands of Mike Newton. The lead would lengthen as the No.39 was backed into the garage for more repairs which lasted around 28 minutes.

Overall leader, the No.8 Audi Sport Team Joest R10 pitted 11 minutes shy of 11 hours of racing and was backed into the garage. Gravel may again have played some role in slowing the car as the team used heavy vacuum hoses to clean every accessible space, although reports from the pit were to the effect that the gearbox was failing, and it was determined the car would not engage fifth gear. The team replaced the entire gear cluster. The lead was over 4 laps when the stop began.

Meanwhile, in LMGT2, two cars continued on the same lap, 2m 37s separating the leading No.83 Seikel Motorsport Porsche 911 GT3 RSR from the No.86 Spyker Squadron B.V. C8.

It took nine minutes to repair the No.8 Audi Sport Team Joest R10, its lead being cut to about a lap and a half.

He may have been 5 laps down in class, but Jorg Bergmeister had not given up when he posted the fastest lap of the race for the No.90 White Lightning Racing Porsche 911 GT3 RSR (4:07:031), in the dark, after 11 hours of racing! Two laps later, he bettered the lap with a 4:06.730, best for the car, second fastest race lap for all of GT2. Unfortunately, Bergmeister pushed too hard on the next lap and encountered gravel on the track at PlayStation.

After serving a stop and go penalty, the No.12 Courage Competition Mugen returned to the track only to slow again with a punctured right rear tire. The car was soon backed into the garage with damage that extended beyond the tire.

After only 7 laps, the No.8 Audi Sport Team Joest R10 stopped quickly in the pits to change all four tyres. The #17 Pescarolo shaved the Audi's lead still further by remaining on the track.

The second half of the race beckoned.

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