



GOLD *Access*

05h - 07h

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Dimanche 18 juin 2006

05H - 07H



24 HEURES DU MANS®
17-18 JUIN 2006

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





dimanche 18 juin 2006 - 05h02

> PENALTIES AND OTHER PROBLEMS



Once again the No.12 Courage Competition Mugen pitted with a tyre puncture. Officials invited them back a lap later for a one-minute stop and go penalty. The last stop included some gearbox work.

The penalties continued as No.63 Corvette Racing C6.R was given a 3-minute stop and go for driving too fast during the last caution period and putting corner workers in danger at more than one corner.

Helping the Audi cause, the No.17 Pescarolo Sport Judd stopped for a routine stop and driver change with Eric Helary taking the helm; this enabled the No.8 Audi to extend its lead to just over two laps.

Smoking heavily in the corners, the No.32 Barazi Epsilon Courage AER pitted and went straight to the garage, smoke still evident.

Still not free of problems, the No.9 Creation Autosportif Judd came in for a seemingly normal stop, only to stall when trying to restart, and was finally pushed backwards into the garage. The report was the starter/alternator had failed.

Right after a straightforward routine stop, No.14 Racing For Holland Dome Judd went off course at the Playstation chicane. The car had 5 laps lead on fourth place overall, but that lead started to slip.

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dimanche 18 juin 2006 - 05h08

> 3AM - 5AM: THE RACE IS HALF COMPLETE

On the run up to the halfway point in the race, gravel was the big story. A number of competitors drove through gravel traps at some point during the first twelve hours, and the resultant debris spread across the track affected a number of others.



A respite for many drivers came with a yellow flag and safety car, necessitated by a single car incident involving the No.98 Noel Del Bello Porsche 911 GT3 RSR, which was eventually returned to the paddock on a flat bed truck, its rear showing heavy damage. The No.98 car put more gravel on the track.

As the caution period began, the No.7 Audi Sport Team Joest R10 came into the pits and was immediately wheeled into the garage in a cloud of smoke which proved not to be terminal as it later rejoined.

On the first lap after the Safety Car withdrew, the No.50 Larbre Competition Team Ferrari 550 Maranello once again found the gravel itself, this time near the Porsche Curves, and returned to the track.

For much of the time there was little change amongst the race leaders, and little cause for real concern. There was some excitement, however, when the leading No.8 Audi pitted unexpectedly and large vacuum cleaners were used to clean the car's many orifices. Gravel appeared to be the problem, but it was in fact a transmission issue: fifth gear could not be engaged. With the No.17 Pescarolo Judd bearing down, the Audi mechanics performed some technical wizardry and rebuilt the gear cluster in only nine minutes. The Pescarolo team was narrowly deprived of a chance to take the race lead, and the No.8 Audi went back out on track, though its lead had been cut from five to one and a half laps.

Atop GT1, the No.009 Aston Martin Racing DBR9 continued to lead the No.64 Corvette Racing C6.R by a gap that remained unchanged as the teams continued to match one another, even following driver changes which put Pedro Lamy in the DBR9 and Oliver Gavin in the Corvette.

Further back in GT1, the No.63 Corvette C6.R, in the hands of Max Papis, was given a heavy three minute stop and go penalty for dangerous driving under a yellow flag, reportedly for an incident involving the No.30 Gerard Welter WR Peugeot, which was trailing the entire field due to transmission problems.

The No.32 Barazi Epsilon Courage AER drove directly into the garage after completing almost half a lap with thick smoke pouring from its rear. The No.9 Creation Autosportif Judd came in for a routine stop, but stalled and was unable to restart due to a failed starter/alternator, and was wheeled into its garage for a replacement.

As the sun began to rise in the east and the second half of the race began, the previously impressive No.14 Racing For Holland Dome Judd went off course at the Playstation chicane. The car had 5 laps lead on fourth place overall, but that lead soon slipped. The No.7 Audi R10 took over third place in LMP1, and the multitudes of sleepy spectators began to awaken again.

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dimanche 18 juin 2006 - 05h38

> FRONT RUNNER RACING FOR HOLLAND DOME STRANDED OUT ON THE CIRCUIT

Serious problems have hit the No.14 Racing For Holland Dome Judd, driven by Alex Yoong. Running in third place overall, it stopped out on the circuit after going off; Yoong managed to get it going again but got no further than the PlayStation Chicane. The team tell us that both steering arms seem to be broken, and without steering it looked unlikely that Yoong will be able to get the car back to the pits.



The No.9 Creation Autosportif Judd, that had been back on the pace despite running in the middle of the field, was back in the pits to have a starter motor replaced.

The No.7 Audi Sport Team Joest R10, after 12 hours and 13 minutes of racing has recovered from the problems which hit it early in the race and moved into 3rd place as a result of the No.14 Racing for Holland car being stationary.

The No.24 Binnie Motorsports Lola Zytek received a stop-go penalty for overtaking under the yellow flags when the safety car was out for the No.98 Noel Del Bello Porsche 911 GT3 RSR, which had spun at Mulsanne.

dimanche 18 juin 2006 - 06h02

> DAWN AT LE MANS AND PLENTY OF RETIREMENTS ...

Dawn at Le Mans came at 05:43 after 12 hours and 43 mins of racing. This meant that the drivers faced a couple of difficult hours, with the sun low in the sky. It was particularly awkward at the Dunlop chicane.

As the race passed the half way mark there had been ten official retirements.

No.69 BMS Scuderia Italia Aston Martin DBR9 - accident;

No.37 Paul Belmondo Racing Courage Ford - accident due to a burst tyre;

No.77 Multimatic Panoz Esperante - ran out of fuel;

No.85 Spyker Squadron B.V. C8 - engine failure caused by an oil leak;

No.13 Courage Competition Mugen - broken gearbox;

No.61 Russian Age Ferrari 550 Maranello - engine failure caused by loss of coolant;

No.98 Noel Del Bello Porsche 911 GT3 RSR - accident at Mulsanne;

No.35 G-Force Racing Courage Judd - gearbox failure;

No.5 Swiss Spirit Courage Judd - gearbox failure;

No.90 White Lightning Racing Porsche 911 GT3 RSR - accident.



dimanche 18 juin 2006 - 06h36

> THE PACE HOTS UP



As the light improved, the two leading GT1 contenders, the No.009 Aston Martin Racing DBR9 and No.64 Corvette Racing C6.R, were able to set their fastest laps of the race; the two remain separated by less than a lap.

Sadly the No.14 Racing For Holland Dome Judd has now officially listed as retired. It had been a great effort running as high as 3rd overall.

Alex Yoong, who was at the wheel of the No.14 car, was back in the pits after his accident and told us: "The throttle stuck wide open and speared

me off into the wall; that broke the steering".

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dimanche 18 juin 2006 - 07h02

> 5AM - 7AM: DAWN BREAKS AS BATTLES IN EVERY CLASS CONTINUE TO RAGE

Soon after half-distance, dawn broke over the Le Mans circuit; the pace of the race continued unabated, some teams setting their fastest laps of the race as the drivers now have better visibility. With almost 200 laps completed at the halfway point, if the leading cars continue at this speed the race distance will be well over 5,000km, and may be 100km further than last year.



The race still has upsets in store, and the latest changed the top three. The No.14 Racing for Holland Dome Judd had held third for several hours; but then, with Alex Yoong at the wheel, the throttle stuck wide open and he was unable to avoid an accident. The car could have made it back to the pits, but the impact had broken both steering arms; with no steering, the car was stranded at the Playstation chicane and the team were forced to retire.

That allowed the No.7 Audi Sport Team Joest R10 into third, nine laps away from the sister No.8 Audi, which continued to lead. The two diesel-powered cars were split by the No.17 Pescarolo Judd, which was unable to match the pace of the flying Audis.

Behind the three LMP1 cars came the leading GT1 entry, the No.009 Aston Martin DBR9; less than a lap behind, in fifth, came the No.64 Corvette C6.R, with the third GT1 car, the No.007 Aston Martin, was four laps further back.

The No.25 RML Lola AER continued to lead LMP2, rising up to sixth overall after the No.14 had its accident. Their lead over the No.27 Miracle Courage Judd was up to six laps, with the No.24 Binnie Motorsports Lola Zytek in third; the No.22 Rollcentre Radical Judd ran been running third but was demoted to fourth with a variety of problems.

GT2 remains the most closely fought category; with ten hours remaining, the No.83 Seikel Porsche 911 GT3 RSR had risen to thirteenth overall, less than a lap ahead of the No.86 Spyker Squadron C8 Spyder, which in turn was being pursued by the No.87 Scuderia Ecosse Ferrari F430 GT, a lap further back.

The skies remain cloudless and the sun is slowly rising; Sunday promises to be as hot as Saturday. The diehard spectators who remained through the night are having their numbers gradually increase as less hardy folk rouse themselves and return to the grandstands. While the overall race lead may be remaining fairly static, the battles through the field are providing us with yet another classic race.

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