



GOLD *Access*

07h - 09h

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Sunday 18 June 2006

07H - 09H



24 HEURES DU MANS®
17-18 JUIN 2006

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





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 LM P2, getting 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 got up 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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dimanche 18 juin 2006 - 07h21

> FAST LAPS COMING IN AS THE SUN GETS UP ...



The No.39 Chamberlain-Synergy Lola AER came in for an unscheduled stop, and was wheeled into the garage with accelerator problems; it went out again but ran slowly; it soon returned to the garage, where a blown turbocharger was diagnosed.

The No.24 Binnie Motorsports Lola Zytek suffered a right rear puncture, and to save damage to the body work from flailing rubber it came slowly back to the pits.

Martin Short brought the No.22 Rollcentre Racing Radical Judd into the pits for a long stop and some serious work throughout the car. After a very lengthy stop the car returned to the race with new bodywork as well.

Eric Helary, No.17 Pescarolo Sport Judd, reported that they had tyre problems with the change in ambient temperatures, he was complaining of both under-steer and over-steer. As the track warmed up, he found that there was no grip. The team think that more down force might help solve the problem.

The No.87 Scuderia Ecosse Ferrari 430 GT had been running 3rd in LM GT2 but it had to make an unscheduled stop because of vibrations coming from rear. They found that the left rear wheel was jammed on, so the team used a fire extinguisher to cool the wheel off. Next, they tried to drill out the offending nut; when this didn't work, they were forced to take a chisel to try to remove the wheel. This continuing stop dropped them down the GT2 order, promoting the No.93 Team Taisan Advan Porsche 911 GT3 RSR up to third.

Another car that speeded up as it got light was the No.007 Aston Martin Racing DBR9 driven by Tomas Enge. He set a new fastest time for LM GT1, 3:50.770.

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dimanche 18 juin 2006 - 08h13

> DRAMA AT THE HEAD OF THE RACE FOR AUDI

The No.7 Audi Team Joest R10 came in for a routine pit-stop and headed out again - but Tom Kristensen brought the car straight back, where it was wheeled into the garage.



The team immediately set about replacing the turbocharger on the right side of the V12 diesel engine - a tricky job, as the red-hot unit already fitted had to be removed. The stop took almost 20 minutes; not enough for them to lose third place, but dropping them ten laps back from the second-placed car, the No.17 Pescarolo Judd. The No.8 Audi continued its largely untroubled progress in the lead.

Allan McNish took over the No.7 Audi; earlier, he had spoken about the time the car lost during the night. "During my last stint, the car was running fine, it was very well balanced", he explained. "I slept through most of the night; when I went to bed, we were 3 laps away from the Pescarolo, but when I woke up, I was told about the suspension problem, and we were 7 laps behind. Not the best of news to wake up to." The turbo problem simply made things worse.

The No. 62 Russian Age Racing Aston Martin DBR9 made an unscheduled stop with a broken front damper, and the team went on to carry out what looked like a very leisurely repair.

At 7:37 the No.6 Lister Storm Racing, with Nicolas Kiesa, driving, hit the wall at Indianapolis, coming to rest in the gravel before being pulled to safety. It then returned to the pits.

No.67 Convers Menx Team Ferrari 550 , with Alexei Vasiliev driving, hit the wall at he Porsche Curves, badly damaging the front. It looked like the driver faced an uphill struggle to get the car back to the pits.

The No.8 Audi had a brief scare when it was stopped at the pit lane exit by a marshal, because the front left head light was not working. The crew pushed it back to the pit and changed the entire front bodywork, costing them only about a one minute delay.

At 08:07hrs, after 15hrs and 7 mins of racing the No.86 Spyker Squadron B.V. C8 was forced out of the race with with a broken valve. The car had gone well, running consistently in the top three in the class, battling with the leading Porsche and Ferrari.

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dimanche 18 juin 2006 - 08h38

> QUOTES FROM AUDI, WHILE RATE OF ATTRITION REMAINS HIGH



Drama occurred at the Michelin Chicane when the No.30 Gerard Welter WR Peugeot caught fire. The whole rear end of the car was engulfed with flames, although the marshals quickly extinguished the conflagration.

At 08:18 the No.7 Audi Sport Team Joest R10 was back out again after a turbo change. The problem, and the ensuing repairs, cost almost 20 minutes, although the car retained its third place overall.

Dr Ullrich, Head of Audi Sport, commented: "Most of the problems on the No.7 car are related to the accident with the Aston Martin. We hadn't seen the damage to the under tray, so the car had to come back in. There was probably more damage which we had not seen. As for the turbo, we are used to racing turbocharged cars, but this is the first time this has happened to us. We have never had so many problems on a car in Le Mans as this year.

"As far as rain is concerned, whether it rains or not, we will have to be as quick as possible, because there are serious contenders out there."

Frank Biela, driving the leading No.8 Audi, said: "The car is perfect, very easy to drive. The only problems are those small details that can cost us precious time, like the headlamp bulb. You really have to be 100% all the time." When asked to compare R8 and R10 at Le Mans, he said: "Both cars are different, but very pleasant to drive."

The No.39 Chamberlain-Synergy Lola AER was once again back in its pit garage at 08:23; the team were replacing the turbo temperature sensor.

The No.91 T2M Motorsport Porsche 911 GT3 RS came to a halt on the approach to the Ford chicane; after a few minutes it was pushed away by the marshals, looking as if its race may be over.

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dimanche 18 juin 2006 - 08h59

> 7AM - 9AM: SUNSHINE, QUICK LAPS, MAJOR AN MINOR DRAMAS

The morning brought little respite for the teams, as dramas and incidents continue to strike cars all through the field. The 2006 edition of the 24 Hours of Le Mans is proving that the race remains the sternest possible examination for the competing teams, cars and drivers.



Just as the fifteenth hour got under way, the No.87 Scuderia Ecosse Ferrari F430 GT made an unscheduled pit-stop, suffering from a vibration at the rear. The pit crew were unable to shift the left rear wheel nut, so the car was wheeled into the garage; it was over an hour before it would reappear.

No matter what the mechanics tried, the wheel nut refused to budge; they tried cooling the hub with a fire extinguisher, they tried drilling around it. In desperation, they resorted to taking a hammer and chisel to the spokes of the wheel so they could dismantle the entire hub. The problem seemed to be that the drive pegs, which transfer power to the wheel, had sheared off. That allowed the wheel to turn on the hub, and the whole assembly became almost welded together.

The car finally got back on track at 08:14 following the heroic efforts of the crew, but it left them well down in the GT2 category – a great shame, since the car, driven by Kirkaldy/Mullen/Niarchos, had been consistently battling in the top three of the class. They are now 20 laps off the class lead.

More problems struck at the top of the timesheets, when the No.7 Audi Sport Team Joest R10 suffered a turbo failure. Tom Kristensen had just made a routine stop, and was forced to return immediately; as soon as the car was in the garage the mechanics set about replacing the turbocharger on the left bank of the V12 diesel engine. This was a tricky process, as the existing unit runs at up to 1,000 degrees C; they did sterling work and the car was soon back on track in the hands of Allan McNish, having lost almost 20 minutes; it retained third, but dropped to ten laps back from the car in second.

That remained the No.17 Pescarolo Judd, which had a trouble-free couple of hours. The bad news for the team is that they seem unable to get within about 3s per lap of the leading No.8 Audi, which has stretched out a 2-lap gap at the head of the field.

In GT2, disaster struck the No.86 Spyker Squadron C8 Spyder; they were handed a comfortable second place in the class by the woes of the No.87 car, but at 07:41 it was wheeled into the garage. The problem proved to be a broken valve, and that was it – the car was out of the race.

The No.83 Seikel Porsche 911 GT3 RSR continues to lead the GT2 class, with the No.93 Taisan Advan Porsche up to second, although six laps away from the leader, with the No.81 Team LNT Panoz Esperante a further half-lap back.

The leading GT1 car continues to be the No.009 Aston Martin DBR9, fourth overall; the lead over the No.64 Corvette C6.R remains at around a lap. The other 'works' Aston Martin, the No.007 car, remained in third, five laps back from the Corvette.

Similarly, in LMP2 were there no real dramas or anxieties in the top three places; the No.25 RML Lola AER is in sixth overall, almost ten laps clear of the No.27 Miracle Courage Judd, which in turn is five laps ahead of the No.24 Binnie Motorsports Lola Zytek.

There was one other major incident during the two hours, and it came at 08:14. The No.30 Gerard Welter WR Peugeot pulled off at the Michelin Chicane with the car on fire. The fire quickly took hold across the whole of the rear of the car, but prompt action by the marshals quickly extinguished the blaze; it looked like the driver, Julien Briche, would need a minor miracle to get the car back to the pits, unless it is on the back of a transporter.

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