



GOLD *Access*

11h - 13h

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Sunday 18 June 2006

11H - 13H



24 HEURES DU MANS®
17-18 JUIN 2006

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





dimanche 18 juin 2006 - 11h03

> OFFICIAL RETIREMENTS AT 11:02 HRS, AFTER 18 HOURS AND TWO MINUTES OF RACING.



- No.69 BMS Scuderia Italia Aston Martin DBR9 - accident;
- No.37 Paul Belmondo Racing Courage Ford - accident caused by a tyre blow-out;
- No.77 Multimatic Panoz Esperante - electrical problems;
- No.85 Spyker Squadron B.V. C8 - engine failure caused by oil leak;
- No.13 Courage Competition Mugen -broken gearbox;
- No.61 Russian Age Racing Ferrari 550 Maranello - engine failure caused by loss of coolant;

- No.98 Noel Del Bello Porsche 911 GT3 RSR - accident at Mulsanne corner;
- 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;
- No.91 T2M Motorsport Porsche 911 GT3 RS - stopped on circuit;
- No.36 Paul Belmondo Racing Courage Ford - engine failure;
- No.14 Racing For Holland Dome Judd - accident;
- No.86 Spyker Squadron B.V. C8 engine - engine failure caused by a dropped valve;
- No.12 Courage Competition Mugen - engine failure;
- No.67 Convers Menx Team Ferrari 550 Maranello - accident;
- No.6 Lister Storm Racing - accident;
- No.39 Chamberlain-Synergy Lola AER - transmission failure;
- No.50 Larbre Competition Team Ferrari 550 Maranello - clutch failure;
- No.30 Welter Gerard WR Peugeot - caught fire.

dimanche 18 juin 2006 - 11h05

> MORE CARS FALL BY THE WAYSIDE



The No.50 Larbre Competition Team Ferrari 550 Maranello rolled to a halt out on the Mulsanne straight, close to the Michelin chicane; the clutch had failed, the driver could not get the car back to the pit and the team was forced to declare a retirement.

At 10:41 the No.39 Chamberlain-Synergy Lola AER, which had also come to a halt out on the circuit with a complete lack of drive, was also officially retired.

After what appeared to be a routine pit stop the No.9 Creation Autosportif Judd was suddenly taken back into its garage. They had been unable to start the car and were faced with a serious problem affecting the clutch and starter motor.

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> 9AM - 11AM: LAP AFTER LAP AS CONSISTENCY PAYS OFF

The end of the 74th edition of the 24 Hours of Le Mans draws closer, although there are still six hours to go; and, as the preceding eighteen hours have proved, anything can happen. The top three may have enjoyed a trouble-free couple of hours, but not everyone has been so lucky.



There were no changes at the top of the leaderboard as the final quarter of the race began, as the three LM P1 cars continued to lap with metro-nomic consistency; The No.8 Audi Sport Team Joest R10 squad of Bie-la/Pirro/Werner remain on course to claim the first ever victory for a diesel-powered car at Le Mans; they are over three laps ahead of the No.17 Pescarolo Judd of Helary/Montagny/Loeb. The sister Audi, the No.7 car of Capello/Kristensen/McNish, remains in third, twelve laps off the lead following several problems.

The top three in GT1 are also having a relatively trouble-free time, in fourth, fifth and seventh. Class leader remains the No.009 Aston Martin DBR9, almost exactly a lap ahead of the No.64 Corvette C6.R, which in turn remains five laps clear of the sister No.007 Aston Martin.

It has been a similar story in LM P2 – no changes in the top three. The No.25 RML Lola AER remains in sixth overall, well ahead of the No.27 Miracle Courage Judd, which in turn is comfortably ahead of the No.24 Binnie Motorsport Lola Zytek, which had lost a little over half an hour with clutch and starter problems.

If the other three classes remained static, the GT2 class was rather different. Just after 10:10 the No.93 Team Taisan Advan Porsche 911 GT3 RSR had just passed the pit lane entry when it slowed dramatically; that forced driver Philip Collin to complete an agonisingly slow lap of the circuit before he could reach his pit. In the garage the team quickly diagnosed gear selection problems; the car was still in the garage at the end of the eighteenth hour of racing.

That promoted the No.81 Team LNT Panoz Esperante to second in GT2, eight laps down on the No.83 Seikel Porsche. The No.93 car still held third, but was likely to be demoted further by the No.87 Scuderia Ecosse Ferrari F430 GT, recovering after an earlier rear wheel problem cost the team well over an hour.

The safety car was also called into action again, after an oil leak on the No.76 IMSA Performance Matmut Porsche spread oil liberally from Mulsanne corner to the Porsche curves. The marshals quickly attended to the fluid, and the safety car pulled in after ten minutes pacing the field.

The No.39 Chamberlain-Synergy Lola AER was forced to throw in the towel after it stopped out on the circuit. The driver, Miguel Amaral, reported a complete lack of drive, and was unable to repair the car.

The grandstands are starting to fill with fans, picking out their favourite spot from which to watch the finish of the world's greatest endurance race. At the moment there is no sign of the showers or thunderstorms which some forecasts have predicted may move in as the day develops; the sunbathing spectators will be hoping it stays that way.

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dimanche 18 juin 2006 - 11h42

> ONE MORE RETIRES, LEADERS KEEP IT MOVING



Leader of the LM P2 class the No.25 RML Lola AER headed into the pits and straight to the garage. Driver Andy Wallace reported the problem was the alternator, which had lost a belt. The secondary alternator was not providing any charge. The car had 15 laps over its closest competitor on class, the No.27 Miracle Motorsports Courage AER. This combination alternator/starter has been an ongoing problem for teams running Lola chassis.

As the sun continued to cook the track, keeping the cars and drivers cool became increasingly important. Imagine changing a red hot turbo charger on a car that had been running for 18 hours. Somehow the No.2 Zytek Engineering car has cleverly and astonishingly avoided having to abandon the race, in part by adding water everywhere possible to avoid overheating.

You never know who will show up at Le Mans: Emerson Fittipaldi arrived here for his first time yesterday. He is supporting his nephew Christian, a member of the Saleen team driving the S7R in GT1. 'Emo' evinced surprise and regret that he had never been before, and perhaps jokingly suggested he would come back next year if offered a good ride.

All three overall leaders made routine stops during this period. The No.8 Audi Sport Team Joest R10 stopped for fuel only, and maintained a 4-lap lead. Just before, the No.17 Pescarolo Sport Judd changed drivers, with Helary taking over. Last in the sequence was the No.7 Audi Sport Team Joest R10, which was driven from the pit by Tom Kristensen following a driver change. To the team's great disappointment, the No.76 IMSA Performance Matmut Porsche 911 GT3 RSR announced the car has retired with an oil leak in the engine: and possibly more. Will the heat bring more retirements?

dimanche 18 juin 2006 - 12h16

> GT1 QUOTES AND A DRIVER'S MILESTONE



With the hardest part of the day still to come, the No.009 Aston Martin Racing DBR9 has not been able to shake off the No.64 Corvette Racing C6-R. Seven hours before, the gap was about 2:30.00, and after just under 19 hours racing, the gap was slightly more than one lap with both cars lapping in an almost identical 3:56.000. Driver Oliver Gavin sounded confident that the Corvette would be still able to catch and beat the factory Aston Martin as heat builds up through the afternoon.

Thoughts about the Aston Martin performance so far? Pedro Lamy (No.009): "My second stint this morning was quite interesting because I came out of the pits behind the 64 Corvette, so I was able to use it to judge my speed. We are very competitive and the car is running well." Andrea Piccini (No.007) added "There

was a vibration on the front left of the car. It was worse at high speed, but it seemed to clear. We're continuing to drive flat-out and there is still a long way to go in the race, so anything can happen."

Liz Halliday continues to gain experience in the No.33 Intersport Racing Lola AER. "I don't think I've ever done this much time at once in a racecar. The team is doing a great job, the car has been quite smooth. I've gotten a lot further this year than last." She continued "Its great to see all the fans as you drive through the night and day, its what makes this race great. With 5 hours to go, I'm keeping my fingers crossed".

And a little after Noon, the ambient temperature is 29 degrees, the sun is strong, and rain seems a slightly empty threat.

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> DRIVERS COMMENT ON THE CONDITIONS AND LMGT2 CAR RETIRES

In each of two successive laps the No.2 Zytek Engineering car made its way into the pits. The first stop included an alternator change. The next stop involved a closed-door session in the garage for the ailing - but apparently indestructible - Zytek.

At every stop, the number of media gathering around the race- leading No.8 Audi Sport Team Joest R10 continues to grow. It's a good thing for Audi that their pit is almost at the pit exit making it easier to get past the crowd, as did Frank Biela who jumped into the car on the twenty third, and latest, stop. Win or lose, every lap the Audi leads is historic for the diesel- powered machine.

After slowing, and then appearing to run out of fuel, the No.91 T2M Motorsport Porsche 911 GT3 RS retired at 11:27.

A little more about the heat, Liz Halliday from the No.33 Intersport Racing Lola AER is out of the car and in street clothes. "Basically its so hot that my driver suit is soaked. I don't know if I'll be getting back in the car or not, probably near the end", she said. The paddle shift system had failed on the car, and with manual shift only, her hands were quite bruised and blistered. Just one of the perks of driving at Le Mans!

Even when things are going relatively well, they can still wear on a driver. Emanuelle Pirro pondered the nature of time "I don't know how the minutes can be so long in France." He added "The team has done a really good job on the car, the setup is good and the engine continues to perform".

dimanche 18 juin 2006 - 12h59

> REVISED WEATHER, LMP2 LEADER WOES



Leading takes effort. The No.25 RML Lola AER kept holding onto the class lead of over 11 laps, but during its last pit stop it was, for no obvious reason, wheeled into the pit garage backwards, often a sign of serious problems. In fact, the team explained that it was to have a "good look at everything and a very very slight misfire". The car returned to the track, driver Andy Wallace having been charged with taking it easy and holding on to a 10 lap lead.

The revised weather forecast now calls for clouds tonight, the chance of rain is almost nil. But it will still be hot for the next 4 hours.

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