



GOLD *Access*

23h - 01h

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Saturday 17 / Sunday 18 june 2006

23H - 01H

24 HEURES DU MANS®
17-18 JUIN 2006



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





samedi 17 juin 2006 - 23h00

> NO.16 PESCAROLO SPORT JUDD LOSING TIME IN THE PITS....



There was a lot of work going on in the Pescarolo pits. Following the earlier problem which hit Nicolas Minassian, the No.16 Pescarolo Judd was in its garage with the engine cover off and several engineers working on it. It returned to the race after losing about 17 minutes - but not for long. Minassian was in again at the end of the very next lap, and again into the garage. Another five minutes were lost, putting the car down to ninth overall.

The No.9 Creation Autosportif Judd picked up a puncture at the Mulsanne corner, and was forced to make a very slow trip back to the pits; the pay-off was that the car didn't suffer any significant bodywork damage.

The No.22 Rollcentre Racing Radical Judd, which had been leading LMP2, came into the pits and was pushed straight into the garage for work on the front of the car.

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samedi 17 juin 2006 - 23h10

> 9PM TO 11PM: CONTRASTING FORTUNES THROUGH THE FIELD AS NIGHT FALLS

As the race reached one-quarter distance, the pace at the front had settled down, with the top few cars running pretty much faultlessly. Not everyone was having such a comfortable time with numerous incidents through the field and more retirements.

The No.8 Audi Sport Team Joest R10 continued on its way, the progress of Biela/Pirro/Werner interrupted only by regular pit-stops. Just after 21:20 Emanuele Pirro passed the No.16 Pescarolo Judd to leave the entire field a lap down. The No.16 Pescarolo spent much of the time trading second and third places with its No.17 sister car, but then, at 22:19, the engine cut out in the No.16 car halfway down the Mulsanne straight. Nicolas Minassian pulled over and managed to get it restarted, then headed to the pits where the car was wheeled straight into the garage.

This allowed the No.14 Racing for Holland Dome Judd into the top three; this car is the only one in the field which has three former F1 drivers doing the driving. The Pescarolo stayed in the garage for 17 minutes, dropping down to seventh; however the problem hadn't been cured, and Minassian was straight back into the pit garage at the end of the next lap.

The problems which have hit various LM P1 cars have allowed the the LM P2s battling for the category lead to climb up the leaderboard. The No.22 Rollcentre Radical Judd and No.25 RML Lola AER swapped the lead as they worked through their routine pit-stops. When problems hit the No.22 car at 22:45, that left No.25 in sixth overall with a handy three-lap lead over the No.39 Chamberlain-Synergy Lola AER.

One of the cars that had dropped back was the No.7 Audi, which had earlier lost 20 minutes as various parts were replaced. That left them six laps down, but Tom Kristensen was unwilling to give up on his hopes of winning an eighth 24 Hours; he did a stint of astonishing speed, including setting a new lap record, going round in a remarkable 3:31.211.

In GT1 the two 'works' cars which have had a trouble-free run – so far were up into the top ten, the No.64 Corvette Racing C6.R continued to hold a slender advantage over the No.009 Aston Martin DBR9. The No.62 Russian Age Aston Martin DBR9 was third, two laps behind the leader. In the No.63 Corvette Ron Fellows was doing his best to make up for lost time, double-stinting and catching the No.66 Acemco Saleen by up to four seconds a lap.

The GT2 category was the most closely fought, the lead swapping hands on numerous occasions. By 23:00 the No.83 Seikel Porsche 911 GT3 RSR held the class lead, ahead of the No.86 Spyker Squadron C8 Spyder and the No.87 Scuderia Ecosse Ferrari F430 GT; but since all three cars were covered by not much more than a single lap, positions changed almost every time a car made a routine pit-stop.

The circuit was now in complete darkness, apart from those areas where floodlights offered some limited illumination. The pits remained a hive of activity; it seems that the most common problem of 2006 is electrical glitches of various sorts.

We have now had four retirements: during the two hours leading up to 23:00 the No.13 Courage Competition Mugen went out with a broken gearbox, the No.37 Belmondo Racing Courage Ford was pitched into instant retirement when it suffered a high-speed rear tyre blow-out and slammed into the barriers, and the No.77 Multimatic Panoz Esperante was forced to throw in the towel with electrical problems. They join the No.69 BMS Scuderia Italia Aston Martin DBR9 (accident).

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samedi 17 juin 2006 - 23h26

> PROTOTYPE CLASSES STRETCH OUT, GT CARS STAY CLOSE

Night reigns at Le Mans



Just before the top of the sixth hour, the leader in LM P2 class, the No.25 RML Lola AER made an unscheduled stop. Their lead was just over a lap and after a few adjustments they went back out to resume the fight. Out of the race, with a blown engine due to an oil leak, was the No.85 Spyker Squadron B.V. C8 after completing only 40 laps in the first 6 hours.

Allan McNish has kept up a scorching pace the No.7 Audi Sport Team Joest R 10 moving the car up to fifth place overall, but still 6 laps behind teammate Emanuele Pirro in the No.7 Audi R10.

Another leader in class, the No.83 Seikel Motorsport Porsche 911 GT3 RSR completed its sixth stop holding on to a one-plus lead in the LMGT2 class.

As the gaps LMP classes opened up in the LM P1 and P2 categories with over a lap between successive cars, the two GT classes remain close, with GT1 leader Oliver Gavin in the No.64 Corvette Racing C6.R on the same lap ahead of the No.009 Aston Martin Racing DBR9 in the capable hands of Pedro Lamy. The No.83 Seikel Motorsport Porsche 911 GT3 RSR led by over a minute from the No.86 Spyker Squadron B.V. C8, which carried on bravely after losing its sister car, No.85.

Just as the rhythm of night racing started to settle in, the No.20 Pierre Bruneau Pilbeam Judd went off in the Ford chicane with an apparent technical problem. The car was removed from danger by track workers using a tractor, and returned to its garage under its own power.

dimanche 18 juin 2006 - 00h01

> GT1 LEAD CHANGE, SMALL FIRE, MORE ZYTEK DRAMA



At midnight the air temperature was reported as 29 degrees Centigrade, the track temperature as 27 degrees Centigrade. Conditions have been hot and fairly humid

The No.32 Barazi Epsilon Courage AER had a brief fire in the garage as one of the brakes combusted, but it was quickly doused by the team. The No.6 Lister Storm Racing Lister was limping along near the Mulsanne corner. The car continued to the pits for an unscheduled stop.

Meanwhile the previously bogged-down No.20 Bruneau Pierre Pilbeam Judd found its way back to the pits. confusing the pit crew which had to ran to the entrance apparently expecting to push the car that was moving under it's own power.

The No.16 Pescarolo Sport Judd came into the pits with a fairly dirty front end, drove directly to the garage. Nicolas Minassian got out of the car as mechanics began to on the engine.

As if the No.2 Zytek Engineering hasn't endured enough drama, the car stopped at Indianapolis corner. At the same time the No.5 Swiss Spirit Courage Judd slowed, but appeared soon after on the front straight at normal speed, although a 5m 24s lap was a bit odd.

The No.24 Binnie Motorsports Lola Zytek pitted, was wheeled into the garage, and the mechanics swarmed around the rear of the car.

When the No.64 Corvette Racing C6.R came into the pits for a regularly scheduled stop, Olivier Beretta replaced Oliver Gavin in the car, but the team had a problem at the right front end which cost them the lead. It was the first in GT1 in quite some time, with Pedro Lamy in the No.009 Aston Martin Racing DBR9 inheriting a lead of 45s after the Corvette's out lap.

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dimanche 18 juin 2006 - 00h36

> PESCAROLO PROBLEMS, AUDI R10 RUNS STRONG, ASTON MARTIN DBR9 LEADS GT1

Night racing continues



After a pit stop by the No.64 Corvette Racing C6.R, the No.009 Aston Martin Racing DBR9 took the GT1 lead and improved by a consistent 2 seconds per lap. The numerous Aston Martin fans cheered every time the cars traversed the Grandstand Straight.

The No.22 Rollcentre Racing Radical Judd made the garage its home for a while as the team repaired a water leak.

The overall leader stopped for the eighth time, with Frank Biela driving the No.8 Audi Sport Team Joest R10 back out with a comfortable 3 lap lead. Marco Werner said "the car is good and we are hoping for the podium. The night is long but the day Sunday even longer".

At about the same time, the No.17 Pescarolo Sport Judd, in second place overall, also pitted; Franck Montagny remained at the controls.

Having moved up to fourth overall, the No.7 Audi Sport Team Joest R10 made a quick tenth stop and returned to the track without reducing the 6 lap gap between it and the No.8 Audi R10.

Its even harder to make up laps from the garage, but No.16 Pescarolo Sport Judd was still behind the door with unsolved electrical problems, as teammates and challengers made their normal stops and chip away at the 24 hours.

The team has no idea why, but the No.36 Paul Belmondo Racing Courage Ford pulled off and stopped somewhere on course. They had already stopped 10 times, and were running 42nd overall at the time.

According to the drivers of the No.2 Zyteck Engineering, John Nielsen and Philip Andersen, the car had a coming together with what they believe to have been the No.90 White Lightning Racing Porsche 911 GT3 RSR, and went into the gravel, where it suffered the same starting problems encountered earlier in the race. Andersen had the engine cover off, and worked some magic on the starter, finally getting it working again. From there it was into pits for a quick repair, a driver change in favor of Casper Elgaard, and the car returned to the track.

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