

## **2011 Le Mans Series LM GTE Pro and 2011 Le Mans 24 Hours entrants**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

##BEGINS##

## **JMW MOTORSPORT: UPS AND DOWNS AT IMOLA**

### *Gearbox Gremlin Thwarts JMW Motorsport at Imola*

JMW Motorsport had a weekend of mixed fortunes at Imola for the third round of the 2011 Le Mans Series. A promising qualifying and excellent race pace was to be reduced to disappointment when a most unusual gearbox gremlin raised its unwelcome head causing a retirement.

The weekend had begun in promising fashion with Rob Bell at the wheel for what was to be an electrifying qualifying session. The pace of the JMW Ferrari 458 was right up there but as the timing screen updated every other second it became apparent that only a hair's breadth would split the top guys. Indeed, Rob qualified in 5<sup>th</sup> but this position belied the fact he was mere hundredths off the front row! With such a tight field in the class, and then the wider implication of a huge grid on a narrow circuit, the race was set to be thrilling.

Imola was basking hot by Sunday, without a cloud in the sky. Rob started the race and made a clean getaway, soon moving up a spot into third. The day was looking good as Rob's pace saw him on pace with the opposition and then soon past them. A swift pitstop saw the handover to James who put in a solid stint. However, it was to be in Rob's second stint that the first signs of the gremlin in the works appeared.

Into his second stint Rob began noticing the gearbox become 'sticky' as its temperature also showed signs of increasing. The sticky gearbox was to cause problems and was a contributing factor as Rob made an excursion into the 'kitty litter'. Extracted from the gravel trap, Rob was able to make it back to the pits and although time was lost it was clear that even driving within the confines of the problem, the team were still in a useful position.

The mystery of the gearbox continued as James took the wheel and within 15 laps of his second stint he radioed back that selecting gears was becoming difficult at times. Towards the end of his stint James couldn't select gears below fourth. Coming back to the pit with fourth gear as the lowest option made it extremely difficult and unsurprisingly James did trip the pit lane speed gun earning a 30 sec penalty to rub some salt into the recent wounds!

The team battled on and Rob returned to the track but just short of the four and a half hour mark defeat was admitted. It was with a curious interest the gearbox was opened to reveal, to much surprise, a seemingly healthy looking gearbox! On closer inspection the problem was found – a single tooth had broken off and been 'travelling' around the gearbox causing mischief and finally lodging to create a terminal problem.

An unusual retirement cause but, the knowledge of being on the pace, made for mixed emotions leaving Imola.

##ENDS##

## Notes to editors

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### JMW Motorsport

JMW Motorsport are based in Colchester, United Kingdom and entered the 2009 LMS Series as a new team borne from previous incarnations to bring together a formidable group of proven winners. Team Principal Jim McWhirter's team's technical department is headed by Steve Bunkhall with Tim Sugden as Team Manager. The team are racing the much anticipated Ferrari 458 in 2011.

Behind the wheel for the 2011 LMS season are British drivers Rob Bell and James Walker.

Website: [www.jmwmotorsport.com](http://www.jmwmotorsport.com)

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### Photos

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