



## Sunny week-end at the Nürburgring !

### Cool Pescarolo wins hot Eifel race

Pescarolo Sport maintained their perfect record in the 2006 Le Mans Series, winning the third round at the Nurburgring with three laps to spare over their warring challengers. Emmanuel Collard seized the lead after four laps of the 1,000 kilometre race and steadily increased his advantage, which was extended by Jean-Christophe Boullion and then by Eric Helary, who took the chequered flag with three laps in hand after six hours of racing.

Perfect weather conditions, with no clouds in the sky throughout the weekend, showed the Eifel circuit at its best. Shinji Nakano rocketed his Courage Mugen from the second row into the lead at the rolling start, taking pole-sitter Nicolas Minassian (Creation) and Collard by surprise, but after shadowing the Japanese driver in the opening laps Collard powered past, and soon afterwards Nakano headed for the Courage pit with a clutch failure, the replacement delaying the car by more than three hours. It was not classified.

### Who would be second?

Eight different teams raced in second position during the Nurburgring 1,000 Kms, the event which reached its six-hour limit six laps before the full distance was covered. Collard was the first, shadowing Nakano in the opening laps, then Nakano, and in succession Jean-Marc Gounon (Courage Mugen), Minassian, Marcel Fassler in the Swiss Spirit Courage Judd, Jan Lammers in the Racing for Holland Dome, Tommy Erdos in the RML MG Lola and briefly, Joao Barbosa who drove a storming race in the Rollcentre Racing Radical SR9 Judd.

In the end, though, it was the second fastest car on the track, the Creation Judd of Minassian, Beppe Gabbiani and Felipe Ortiz that claimed second place, the Frenchman hustling Alex Yoong into a mistake five minutes from the flag and overtaking the Dome while the Malaysian took a trip through the gravel. Gabbiani had been badly delayed by a deflated rear tyre during his middle stint, dropping from third place to sixth on his 'in' lap and losing two laps altogether.

In finishing third, Lammers and Yoong completed a clean sweep of the podium for John Judd's V10 engine. Fourth place went to the Chamberlain Synergy Lola B06/10 of Bob Berridge, Gareth Evans and Peter Owen. The yellow car started from the back of the grid when Berridge was unable to select any gears, a switch had been knocked into the off position, but then had a typically trouble-free afternoon.

The Zytek, a development of the car that won the event in 2005, needed new starter motors at almost every pit stop but still took Stefan Johansson and Hideki Noda to seventh place overall, and fifth in LMP1. The Swiss Spirit Courage LC70 Judd raced very strongly in the opening stages in the hands of Marcel Fassler and Harold Primat, but a broken front left stub axle dropped the car to 12<sup>th</sup> position at the end.

### Warriors duel in LMP2

A clash between Angel Burgueno and Joao Barbosa settled the contest for victory in LMP2 shortly before the finish, the Spaniard closing on the Portuguese and hitting the Radical into a spin that finished in the gravel. "When you are second you push harder, you take more risk" said ASM Lola team owner Miguel Amaral, and Barbosa accepted this knock with good grace. He and Martin Short had been changing gear manually since the mid-point of the race, the paddle shift mechanism failing, and the ASM Team Portugal Lola looked stronger as the race progressed. Burgueno was able to take a one-minute penalty in the pit-lane while Barbosa's car was patched up with tape, and still finished a lap ahead of Bill Binnie's Lola B05/40 Zytek.

Tommy Erdos and Mike Newton looked possible winners of the LMP2 class in the RML MG Lola AER until the brakes failed at the five-hour mark and pitched Erdos off the track. Ray Mallock's team found that a pad had disintegrated on the front left, and changed the calliper and both front discs in the space of 10 minutes, falling to fourth place in LMP2.



### **Larbre Aston top in GT1**

Larbre Competition's Aston Martin DBR9 won the GT1 category in 10<sup>th</sup> place overall in the hands of Pedro Lamy, Vincent Vosse and Gabriele Gardel, finishing 10.2 seconds ahead of the Alphand Aventures Corvette C5-R of Luc Alphand, Jerome Policand and Patrice Goueslard. The margin might have been more comfortable had Jack Leconte's team not realised that Vosse needed to complete another lap to qualify for points. Lamy was brought in moments before the flag for a quick driver change, a gamble that looked precarious as the flag was made ready and the Corvette closed in.

The Team Oreca Saleen S7R looked an almost certain class winner in the hands of Stephane Ortelli and Soheil Ayari until the four-hour mark, when the starter motor failed and lost the French team six laps. Third in GT1 was claimed by the Convers Menx Ferrari 550 team of Peter Kox, Robert Pergl and Alexei Vasiliev.

### **GPC Ferrari wins GT2**

GPC Sport's two Ferrari 430s dominated the qualifying session and one of them, driven by Stefano Zonca, Andrea Bellicchi and Marco Cioci won the GT2 class quite comfortably, finishing a lap ahead of the Autorlando Porsche GT3 RSR of Marc Lieb and Joel Camathias.

The deployment of the safety car in the fifth hour cemented the advantage of the GPC Sport Ferrari, but the sister car of Fabrizio de Simone, Luca Drudi and Gabrio Rosa was well in contention until de Simone was in collision with Donny Crevels' Spyker C8, while lapping the Dutch car. Both spun out and the altercation continued in the paddock, resulting in both drivers being disqualified from the results. Third in GT2 was taken by the Spyker of Mike Hezemans and Jeroen Bleekemolen, the C8 improving rapidly as the season goes on.

The fourth round of the 2006 Le Mans Series will be held at Donington Park, England, on August 28.