



22/09/06

1000 KM OF JARAMA – FREE PRACTICE SESSIONS

Warm sunshine greeted competitors for the fifth race of the 2006 Le Mans Series in Jarama, north of Madrid, and the weather is expected to hold for this title deciding race. Though the LMP1 and GT2 classes were both decided at Donington, the LMP2 and GT1 categories will crown their champion this weekend on the twisty, exciting 3.850km track. Temperatures are expected to remain constant at 24 degrees Centigrade (75 Fahrenheit) throughout the weekend, boding well for a dry event on Sunday.

The circuit has already proven to be hard on tyres and on brakes, and on such a short track, traffic is widely expected to play its part in the final result. "You are all the time going from high speed to very low speed here, which makes it very hard on the machine," confirmed Spaniard Antonio Garcia, who will be challenging for the GT1 title with Peter Hardman and David Brabham in the Team Modena Aston Martin DBR9.

Thirty seven cars took part in the practice sessions on Friday, though already the Binnie Motorsport team faces a race against time to repair their Lola for qualifying following a dramatic pit lane fire after just two laps of the Spanish circuit. The team fought the blaze, eventually putting it out but the visibility was reduced on the circuit, which caused the session to be stopped.

The overall times were headed by the Courage Competition Courage LC70s of Shinji Nakano and Haruki Kurosawa. The Mugen-powered Courage was fastest in the afternoon with a time of 1 minute 24.617s, ahead of Jean-Marc Gounon, Gregor Fisken and Alexander Frei, which was second with 1m24.832s.

The Pescarolo Sport team, which has won every race of the season, headed the time sheets during the first session with a time of 1m25.145s, although they bettered that in the afternoon with a 1m24.844, good enough for third fastest lap today. "We are just setting up the car for this circuit," smiled Henri Pescarolo. Xavier Pompidou, the reigning GT2 champion, has moved to the front of the grid to share the new Lavaggi Sport, Giovanni Lavaggi designed and driven Lavaggi LS1. Making its competition debut, the car set a best lap of 1m28.697 in the afternoon session, just outside the top ten overall.

Brazilian driver Tommy Erdos was fastest in the LMP2 class behind the wheel of his RML Lola, lapping the circuit in 1m25.715s, ahead of the ASM Racing for Portugal Lola which was 1.5s slower. Neither car suffered any problems. Tim Greaves and Stuart Moseley were third fastest in their Bruichladdich Radical, still impressing during its debut season.

Antonio Garcia's morning time of 1m29.977s in the Team Modena Aston Martin DBR9 was good enough to remain fastest in the class during the warmer, faster afternoon session during which Soheil Ayari and Stephane Ortelli headed the GT1 times with the ORECA Saleen, with a time of 1m30.345s. The PSI Experience Corvette of Pertti Kuismanen, Jos Menten and Markus Palttala trailed the Corvette by three tenths of a second. Third was Vincent Vosse, Gabriele Gardel and Pedro Lamy in their Larbre Competition Aston Martin, while Antonio Garcia's morning time of 1m.29.977s

Marc Lieb and Joel Camathias have already secured the GT2 class title in their Autorlando Sport Porsche, and headed the free practice times today. Lieb's best time was a 1m33.955s to lead Ferrari, Spiker and Panoz and TVR in the category.

FREE PRACTICE SESSIONS- TOP TIMES (of both sessions)
"LM"P1

Pts	N°	TEAMS	CARS	DRIVERS	BEST TIME
1	13	COURAGE COMPETITION	Courage LC 70 Mugen	NAKANO/KUROSAWA	1:24.617
2	12	COURAGE COMPETITION	Courage LC 70 Mugen	GOUNON/FISKEN/FREI	1:24.832
3	17	PESCAROLO SPORT	Pescarolo C60 Judd	COLLARD/BOULLION/ANDRE	1:24.844

"LM"P2

Pts	N°	TEAMS	CARS	DRIVERS	BEST TIME
1	25	RML	MG Lola EX 264	NEWTON/ERDOS	1:25.715
2	40	ASMTEAMRACNGFORPORTUGAL	Lola B05/40 –AER	AMARAL/ANGEL DE CASTRO/BURGUENO	1:26.733
3	21	TEAMBRUICHLADDICHRADICAL	Radical SR9 – Judd	GREAVES/MOSELEY	1:27.232

"LM"GT1

Pts	N°	TEAMS	CARS	DRIVERS	BEST TIME
1	50	ASTONMARTNRACINGLARBRE	Aston Martin DBR9	LAMY/GARDEL/VOSSE	1:29.977
2	55	TEAM ORECA	Saleen S7R	ORTELLI/AYARI	1:30.345
3	70	PSI EXPERIENCE	Corvette C6-R	KUISMANENMENTEN/PALTTALA	1:30.603

"LM"GT2

Pts	N°	TEAMS	CARS	DRIVERS	BEST TIME
1	76	AUTORLANDOSPORT	Porsche 996 GT3 RSR	LIEB/CAMATHIAS	1:33.955
2	97	GPC SPORT	Ferrari 430 GT	DRUDI/ROSADE SIMONE	1:34.719
3	78	AUTORLANDOSPORT	Porsche 996 GT3 RSR	KRISTENSEN/SIMONSEN	1:34.749