



## LE MANS SERIES: 1,000 KM DE CATALUNYA Circuit de Catalunya (Barcelona): April 6, 2008 (RACE)

### A SIGNIFICANT FIRST WIN

The first round of the 2008 Le Mans Series at Barcelona had the makings of being a real thriller, and so it was! The drama-packed 1,000km race kicked off at a blistering pace and ended in success for Team Peugeot Total with the 908 HDi FAP shared by Nicolas Minassian and local star Marc Gené.

With Automobiles Peugeot's Managing Director Jean-Philippe Collin in attendance, as well as more than 28,000 spectators, including 4,200 guests of Peugeot Spain, the two Peugeot 908 HDi FAPs lined up on the front row of the grid with high hopes of a top result.

As the start lights switched to green, the N°8 car driven by Portugal's Pedro Lamy pulled away cleanly to profit from the pole position claimed the previous day by team-mate Stéphane Sarrazin. He promptly proceeded to pull slightly clear of the field, including Nicolas Minassian in the sister car which got off to a timid start. *"Pedro's acceleration at the start took me by surprise," commented Nicolas Minassian. "He was on the throttle very quickly and I found myself back in fourth place."* The French driver nonetheless soon eased into third place before engaging in a virile tussle with the N°1 Audi driven by Allan McNish. On Lap 13, Minassian profited from their battling to find a way through before knuckling down in a bid to make up the seven seconds that distanced him from the other 908 in which Pedro Lamy was having a little trouble in the traffic. Hardly had the gap been bridged, however, than their impending duel was interrupted when the Safety Car was sent out, a phase which allowed McNish to steal a march on his rivals. Sitting on the tail of the Audi driver as the all-clear was given once again, Stéphane Sarrazin tried to find a way past but was hit by an Aston Martin on Lap 42. *"I didn't really understand McNish's move," stressed Stéphane. "For a moment, I thought he had a problem because he braked hard in an unusual place. I hit my brakes, too, but Enge wasn't able to avoid me with his Aston Martin."* The N°8 908 HDi FAP's rear right floor was damaged in the collision and the car had to pit for a new diffuser, losing 11 laps and all chance of victory in the process.

There was further drama on Lap 55 when **Catalonia's Marc Gené** leapt more than a metre in the air after launching his car off a kerb. *"There was a misunderstanding with a backmarker. In trying to avoid him, I took off on a kerb and my car landed very awkwardly. I thought it was damaged, but I can tell you that the 908 is a really strong car!"* Two laps later, despite his brief flight, Marc Gené found himself in front when the N°1 Audi hit mechanical trouble. After that, the N°7 car enjoyed a trouble-free run all the way to the flag thanks to some consistent laps which allowed the crew to control from in front. Ten laps from home, however, a driver change suddenly became necessary when Gené started to suffer from a bad attack of pins and needles in his right leg. It was therefore Nicolas Minassian who crossed the line to hand Peugeot victory in the first LMS race of 2008.

INFO PRESSE 908 HDi FAP





Meanwhile, the two drivers of the N°8 car, Pedro Lamy and Stéphane Sarrazin, posted a series of fastest race laps before once again finding themselves in traffic. *"I was hit at the rear left by another car," related Pedro Lamy. "That sent me fishtailing and I couldn't avoid hitting a Lamborghini. We both ended up parked in a gravel trap. I had to wait for help to get going again and then had to make a pit-stop to change the bonnet."* The Franco-Portuguese pair ended the race in 12<sup>th</sup> position, with the day's fastest race lap to show for their efforts.

**Michel Barge:** "This is a superb win on several accounts. First of all, it's a great result for Marc Gené who does so much for Catalonian motor sport and for Nicolas Minassian who put in a great run. At the same time, we were joined here by Audi and that gave us a chance to see that the 908 HDi FAP is competitive. I believe we are on the right track to be able to put in strong sprints each time out with a good level of reliability."

**Bruno Famin:** "It was a very good weekend technically because we didn't have a single problem. All the drama resulted from race incidents! We were running with the same specification as Sebring, and the N°7 car was equipped with a certain number of elements – including the engine – that had done all the running in the American race. We now total a distance of 5,500km, while the le Mans 24 Hours will probably last something like 6,000km!"

**Nicolas Minassian:** "It's been a great day. The team is progressing all the time and is extremely reactive. We pushed as hard as we could and the car proved both quick and reliable. It was quite an easy win at the end of the day."

**Marc Gené:** "I am above all delighted to have won my home race here in Catalonia. I would also like to thank Peugeot for giving us such a strong and competitive car. Our only problem came towards the end of the race when I got a bad case of pins and needles in my right leg. I was forced to hand over the wheel to Nicolas for the final laps."

## Next round: Monza (April 26-27)

### Barcelona – final positions:

- 1, M. Gené/N. Minassian (Peugeot 908 HDi FAP), 215 laps in 5h 59m 30.812s (av: 167.030kph)
  - 2, A. Premat/M. Rockenfeller (Audi R10), +1 lap
  - 3, S. Mucke/J. Charrouz (Lola Aston Martin), 3 laps
  - 4, E. Collard/J-C. Boullion (Pescarolo), +5 laps
  - 5, R. Capello/A. McNish (Audi R10), +6 laps
  - 12, P. Lamy/S. Sarrazin (Peugeot 908 HDi FAP), +15 laps
- Etc.

Barcelona, April 6, 2008