



LE MANS SERIES: 1,000KM DI MONZA RACE (April 27, 2008)

A THRILLING SPRINT FINISH ENDS IN VICTORY FOR PEUGEOT'S LAMY/SARRAZIN

The outcome of the 1,000km di Monza, second round of the 2008 Le Mans Series, was only decided at the end of the thrilling final 20 laps which saw Pedro Lamy first past the chequered flag with the N°8 908 HDi FAP following a virile scrap with Mike Rockenfeller and his Audi R10. The Peugeot of Minassian/Gené started from pole position but was delayed by transmission problems which dropped the car to 34th. The Franco-Spanish crew recovered from the setback, however, to bag fifth place to put Peugeot on top of the Manufacturers' standings.

With the N°2 Audi having to start from the pit-lane, the two Peugeot 908 HDi FAPs – manned respectively by Marc Gené and Stéphane Sarrazin – got away cleanly and spent a long spell at the front of the field, pulling gradually clear of their rivals. That gap was soon whittled down to nothing, however, when the Safety Car was sent out on two occasions, the second because of the spectacular crash by the Audi N°1 which was nonetheless able to continue the race. As the Safety Car pulled off the track, the Peugeots continued to lap clear at the front – followed by Ayari's Oreca – until Lap 56 when the N°7 Peugeot was forced to pit. Eight laps were lost as its rear-right drive-shaft was changed following a repeat of the problem that had affected it during the morning's warm-up session.

The delay marked the beginning of a magnificent fight-back by Minassian and Gené who battled hard with the N°1 Audi (Capello/McNish) up to the 145th of the 173-laps race, which is when the Courage Oreca of Ortelli rolled out of the race requiring the Safety Car to be sent out once again. Gené was at the wheel at the time and he later succeeded in passing Capello to cross the line in fifth place. He also recorded the fastest race lap.

While the Safety Car was still out following Ortelli's exit, Pedro Lamy continued to top the leaderboard in the N°8 Peugeot 908 HDi FAP, one lap clear of Rockenfeller and the N°8 Audi N°2, but he failed to hear an instruction to pit for fuel and consequently lost not only his leading margin but also first place itself. That sparked off a thrilling clash during the last 20 laps as the two cars lapped within thousandths of a second of each other at times. Lamy eventually caught the German car with just 10 laps remaining and attempted a pass at the first chicane. The bid forced him to cut the corner and earned him a 'stop and go' penalty which he complied with four laps from home following a second overtaking attempt. This time, the two cars actually touched each other; the Audi was forced to stop to change a wheel, leaving the Peugeot 908 HDi FAP to take the spoils. The result puts Stéphane Sarrazin and Pedro Lamy third in the Drivers' championship behind their Peugeot teammates, Minassian and Gené, who are in turn two points adrift of Rockenfeller/Prémat. In the Manufacturers' standings, Peugeot now leads by two points ahead of Audi. The season continues with the next race at Spa-Francorchamps where the Peugeot line-up will be joined by Jacques Villeneuve and Alexander Wurz.



Bruno FAMIN: "The N°7 908 had a double transmission problem. Both parts had covered a large number of kilometres but we had purposely left them on the car with a view to validating them prior to the Le Mans 24 Hours. Apart from that, we didn't have a single problem. It was a very satisfactory race from the technical point of view even though time is extremely tight because of the calendar."

Michel BARGE: "It was a superb race which ended in an extraordinary finale. It was a very close-run thing not only between Peugeot and Audi, but also in the different categories, and that can only be good for the Le Mans Series. This race marked the anniversary of our first win and we celebrated that with an all-Peugeot front row and the fastest race lap. It's a great result for Peugeot Sport and an excellent way to prepare for the Le Mans 24 Hours."

Pedro LAMY: "It was a very difficult race because our car suffered from oversteer, unlike the N°7 908 which had a better set-up. The last 20 laps or so of the race itself were very virile, but our tangle was nothing more than a race incident."

Stéphane SARRAZIN: "It was important to win here to stay in the chase for the title. It seems strange to be thinking in championship terms so soon into the year. But by the end of the next race we will have already passed the season's halfway point!"

Marc GENE: "Our car was excellent but it wasn't easy to catch Capello. Despite their spectacular off, Capello and McNish were quick all the way to the flag. Nicolas and I really had to push hard to finish in fifth place."

Next event: Spa-Francorchamps (May 9-11)

Monza – final positions:

- 1, P. Lamy/S. Sarrazin (Peugeot 908 HDi FAP), 173 laps in 4h 59m 7.955s (av: 201.019kph)
 - 2, A. Premat/M. Rockenfeller (Audi R10), +47.672s,
 - 3, H. Primat/C. Tinseau (Pescarolo), +4 laps,
 - 4, R. Kerr/B. Jouanny (Creation), +4 laps,
 - 5, M. Gené/N. Minassian (Peugeot 908 HDi FAP), +6 laps
- Etc.

Fastest race lap: Marc Gené (1m 32.449s)

Manufacturers' Championship

- 1, Peugeot (25 points)
 - 2, Audi (23 points)
 - 3, Pescarolo (16 points)
- Etc.

Drivers' Championship:

- 1, Rockenfeller/Prémat (16 points)
 - 2, Minassian/Gené (14 points)
 - 3, Lamy/Sarrazin (11 points)
- Etc.

Monza, April 27, 2008