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Silverstone (Race 2) – 12th september 2009

Beche and Mäkela's maiden victory!



The second race got under way in slightly cloudy conditions. Pole sitter Mathias Beche shot into the lead from Cronje, Zollinger, Kaufmann and Natacha Gachnang. On lap 3, Cronje slipped up and was passed by Zollinger and Gachnang.

With 12 minutes gone Beche was 14 seconds in front of Zollinger and 18

ahead of Gachnang. The Swiss girl was under pressure from Cronje and made a mistake on lap 11 letting the South African past.

On lap 14, the 25th minute, it was time for the first driver changes. Fisker and Chaveriat were the first to pit. Gavin Cronje was the first of the leaders to hand over when he came in on lap 17.

After the driver changes, Mäkela had a comfortable lead over Toulemonde and Verdonck. The new champion put pressure on the Applewood LD-Autosport driver straight away who fought back. But with 20 minutes to go to the chequer Toulemonde and Duchêne collided, when the former was trying to lap the Frenchman. Both cars restarted. Behind, a battle was raging between Mori and Hollings which ended in favour of the British driver who was racing on home turf.

On lap 31, with 5 minutes to go to the finish, Toulemonde collided with Chardon's car in a chicane, which cost him third place as Hines overtook them both. Damien also had to fight off Hollings until the end of the race.

After an hour's racing Beche-Mäkela broke DAMS's stranglehold and scored their maiden win of the season from Verdonck-Cronje and Robert-Hines who celebrated their first Le Mans Cup event with a podium finish.



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Valle Mäkela (winner): *"We've been waiting for this for so long! Now that we've broken our duck it'll be easier to win other races. The car was great today and my stint went off without problems. After Gavin's off we didn't have to push all that hard, but we wanted to keep up the pace in case of any minor glitches. I think it was the right strategy and I'm very happy."*

Mathias Beche (winner): *"The whole team was expecting this victory. It's a great relief. After all the disappointments we've had this year I'm really happy that we've won. This weekend, we set the fastest lap, pole position so nobody can say that we didn't deserve our victory. We're all very happy and I'd like to dedicate this win to the whole team, which has never given up despite the setbacks. I'd also like to thank my team-mate Valle who has been very quick as always. Today, he did two great stints. I came in with a big lead and he held on to it during his run."*

Nico Verdonck (2nd): *"The car's never vibrated like this before. It was also under steering, which made it very tricky to drive. Our second place is a good result taking all that into account. We've got nothing to complain about over the weekend as we won one race and the championship. Gavin and I are going to try and finish on a high note next weekend at Magny-Cours."*

Gavin Cronje (2nd): *"On lap three I had a problem with the rear of the car. The wheels suddenly locked up and that flat-spotted the tyres. I think we should have changed them but we decided to continue despite the strong vibrations in the steering. Thanks to Nico and the whole team, we managed to keep up a good pace until the chequered flag and we finished on the podium. I didn't reckon we'd have such a result when we fell back to fourth."*

Lionel Robert (3rd): *"I really enjoyed this race. It's fantastic to finish on the podium on my first outing, and it's a big surprise for me. I tested the car before the meeting and it only proved what I'd thought: it's very quick and very easy to drive. I'd like to thank Oreca and Boutsen Energy Racing for giving me the chance to tackle this new branch of the sport. Luke did a great job especially at the end when he caught our rivals. I'm really delighted with this weekend in Formula Le Mans and I hope to race again in it again very soon."*

Luke Hines (3rd): *"It's very different in relation to the GT1s that I normally race. I had to rethink a lot of aspects of my driving to adapt to a prototype like this. I'm delighted to have had this experience as the car's great and what I really liked was that I was always battling with someone. It's a fantastic championship."*



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