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Formula LE MANS



Hungaroring 1000 kms – Le Mans Series

Second victory on the trot for DAMS!

Andrea Barlesi, Gary Chalandon and Alessandro Cicognani drove their Formula Le Mans to victory on Sunday on the Hungaroring, avoiding the many traps of a race that was very hard on both men and machines.



The DAMS team has gained a psychological advantage in the battle for the 2010 FLM Cup title by scoring its second victory on the trot in the Le Mans Series. After its Portimao success thanks to the no.44 car driven by Jody Firth and Warren Hughes, this time victory went

to Gary Chalandon, Andréa Barlesi and Alessandro Cicognani in the no. 43 Oreca-flm09 prototype.

The DAMS' young guns had a trouble-free race and have tightened their stranglehold on the 2010 FLM Cup by extending their lead by 4 more points over their closest rival, Hope PoleVision Racing. After a bad start, the Swiss team snatched third place after a race punctuated by no fewer than 18 pit stops! Olivier Lombard provided invaluable back up for Steve Zacchia and Luca Moro who are only 6 points behind the DAMS drivers. Silverstone will be the theatre of the showdown for the attribution of the championship title.



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JMB Racing took advantage of the chaotic start to the race to score another podium finish after Spa, but this time on the second step. Maurice Basso, John Hartshorne and Peter Kutemann made no mistakes and

moved up another place in the category.

Applewood Seven's races seem to have followed the same pattern since Spa. Bruno Toulemonde's team is very quick in qualifying and scored another pole in Hungary thanks to Mathias Beche, but retired early on in the race with a mechanical problem. The squad will be out for revenge at Silverstone.

The Boutsen Energy Racing outfit had to cope with several collisions with Ferrari F430 GTs, which resulted in damage to the rear of the no. 45 FLM prototype on two occasions. The second collision cost Nicolas de Crem, Bernard Delhez and Dominik Kraihamer third place.



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Winners' quotes

Andrea Barlesi (B), no. 43 DAMS driver: "You have to go for every point when you're in front in the championship and your sponsors expect you to hold on to the lead. We won here and you can't do much better than that! We were a bit nervous when we arrived as we didn't really know the circuit all that well. I don't think that this track is very suitable for this type of racing with a lot of overtaking. We did a lot of passing and we were also passed very frequently, and that created a lot of tension from start to finish. I followed our team manager's excellent advice. We haven't bagged the title yet and the pressure will be a lot higher at Silverstone. We know that the team's very experienced, and that we've got a great car so it all helps to boost our confidence!"

Gary Chalandon (F), no. 43 DAMS driver: "In motor racing you have to have the odd bit of luck. It's not very nice to see your team-mates retiring, but that's racing and it wasn't the team's fault. We crossed our fingers in the hope that the car would last. Today, I wasn't in the best of form physically speaking because of a recent bout of food poisoning, so the challenge was all the greater for me. The circuit, which doesn't seem adapted to our prototype, was an additional obstacle to overcome. We're leading the championship and we've opened up a small gap, but we have to come good at Silverstone and try to bag the title, whatever the circumstances. Let's just keep a low profile and concentrate on the next race."

Alessandro Cicognani (I), no. 43 DAMS driver: "It was a very exciting race for me with a very hectic start. I had a minor collision without any damage on lap two. I tried to open up a big enough gap. The car was easy to drive in the traffic and I'm delighted with the result: it's made me forget my Portimao disappointment. It's my very first career win and I'm over the moon! I feel really good in Formula Le Mans and with DAMS. There's a great ambience and I'm learning a lot from Loïc David's engineers and mechanics."

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Loïc David, DAMS Team Manager (nos 43 and 44 FLMs): “A great victory for the young guns! Third at Le Castellet, second in Portimao and first here, they’ve been on all the steps of the podium this year! They deserved the win. We were in the first ten in the overall classification for a long time and then we had minor problems (anti-roll bar, broken louvers) towards the end of the race, which dropped us down the field without compromising our victory. We took the time to repair things, change drivers and tyres as the car was sliding a bit at the end. We didn’t take any risks given our lead. Our young guns drove very well as night visibility was limited with a lot of traffic on this very narrow, very short circuit. No. 43 had an almost perfect weekend with very little contact. We should have been on the podium with no. 44, which was on the pace, but we ran into an engine problem. It was impossible to change the component in question as we’d have had to strip down the engine so we retired the car. We’re very disappointed for Jody and Darren. We came to Budapest determined to hang on to the championship lead, which we did. The title will be decided at Silverstone with the major endurance teams. We’re generally very reliable. Today we had some bad luck; we’ll arrive in England to go for the win with both cars. You can bet on it!”

Quotes

Benoît Morand, Hope PoleVision Racing Team Manager no. 47 FLM, 3rd: “Finally we made it to the finish and we’ve managed to limit the damage. We carried out eighteen pit stops as we had to bring in no. 47 every eight laps because of a fuel pressure problem. Each time the tank emptied we lost power. We coped with the situation as that’s all part of endurance, adapting to problems. Then we took advantage of the incidents that hit the other teams, otherwise we wouldn’t have been able to finish on the podium.

It was a big blow to our morale when the car came into the pits with this problem early on. We managed to find a way to keep it in the race even if it wasn’t really ideal. Olivier and Steve did a fantastic job especially when you think that Olivier’s only eighteen: he showed tremendous maturity and Steve was perfect at the end of the race. We’ll have to analyse these

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last couple of races and draw the right conclusions, as bad luck certainly isn't responsible for all our problems. I can already tell you that after Silverstone, we'll go to Zhuhai in China to race in the Asian Le Mans Series round. Losing Christophe's car in the warm up was the other major setback of the weekend."

Jean-Michel Bouresche, Team Manager JMB Racing no. 46 FLM, 2nd: "We adopted our usual strategy: namely, a steady race, no driver errors on the track to avoid mechanical problems. The FLM is reliable. We know we have to set it up properly and also look after it well. Because of the heat the components took a real thrashing. I expected several cars to suffer in all the categories, and I thought there'd be more collisions. Finally, there weren't that many. Few incidents peppered the race given the number of categories and speed differences. We've got a lot of motor racing experience, and we know this circuit well as we've competed here on several occasions. Our experience paid off!

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