



Matmut



IMSA
Performance #76
CENTRE PORSCHE ROUEN

Le Mans Series – 1000 km of Silverstone - Race

IMSA Performance Matmut clinches Michelin Green X Challenge at LMS finale

With the curtain falling on the 2010 Le Mans Series last weekend at Silverstone, the IMSA Performance Matmut team can look back on what's been a successful fifth season in the championship. For the first time since 2006, the Normandy-based squad finished in the overall classification's top five at the end of what's been the championship's most competitive campaign ever. Even better however is their victory in the Michelin Green X Challenge, awarded to each class' most fuel efficient car and which guarantees IMSA Performance Matmut an invitation to next year's Le Mans 24 Hours. And all that despite Raymond Narac suffering from tonsillitis throughout the weekend!

For all of the post-race satisfaction, the weekend began on a stressful note when, on Friday evening, Narac left the Silverstone paddock in a weak physical condition suffering from fever and stiff muscles. IMSA Performance's driver and co-owner did not have to wait long for a diagnosis: tonsillitis, confirmed the Porsche doctor.

With so much at stake during the final round, there was little chance of the tenacious Normandy driver withdrawing. Instead, a combination of medication, recuperation and minimum driving on Saturday would help his condition come Sunday. But while Narac rested, co-driver Patrick Pilet was equally struggling, albeit with finding a set-up for qualifying. Tyre pressure issues significantly affected his Porsche's balance, leaving the team 11th on the grid.

Taking into account their unfamiliar situation, the team devised an equally unusual strategy. *"In order to allow Raymond to recover as much as possible, and also allow him to complete a large amount of time straight away with a minimum of driving, we decided he would take the start,"* explained Team Manager Franck Rava. It was a decision which would ultimately pay off.

"During the warm-up, I had a scary moment at the exit of Becketts simply because I did not have the same level of concentration as normal due to the medicine," said Narac. *"Before the start I decided not to attempt anything risky and potentially compromise what we came here for. The first stint was a bit difficult as I was clearly not in a good physical condition. For the second however I had recovered a bit, while Porsche's physical trainer had also prescribed some tablets which gave me more energy. Thanks to this, I was able to drive far more quickly than during my opening stint. In any case, even if I already knew it, the experience reinforced how crucial it is to be at the top of your fitness in this category. Usually, when all is well, the smallest problem can easily cost you several positions, but when you are seriously weak, the penalty is even greater."*



PORSCHE

Crédit photos : V-Images / Fabre



MOTUL

FLAT6
Magazine





Matmut



IMSA
Performance #76
CENTRE PORSCHE ROUEN

At the end of a prudent first stint, Raymond handed over to Patrick. The official Porsche driver, who was feeling no such physical affects, began the car's recovery during the second and third hours while also making sure not to take too many risks, "which was not easy this weekend with Peugeots and Audis competing," he later admitted. "The fight between the two factory teams makes the races quite tense and it is then necessary to be very careful." Raymond then took over around half-distance for another forty minute stint, after which Patrick was entrusted to bring the car home. At the end of the 1000kms, the Matmut-liveried #76 Porsche crossed the line sixth in the GT2 class, a decent result considering Raymond's condition and one which allowed the team to achieve its objective.



"Taking into account the condition Raymond was in this weekend, it would have been tough to hope for more in terms of a result," confirmed Pilet. "With the car we had and a team mate in great shape, we could have done much better. A podium? Difficult to say. What is certain is that this event has shown one more time just how competitive this category is. Amongst this company, to finish fifth in the championship and the leading pro-am crew is a great performance. Without the small issues at the beginning of the season we could have certainly finished in the top three, but we cannot re-write history. The team has done a formidable job throughout the season and in order to beat the crews composed by two and even sometimes three pro drivers, it shows how competitive the IMSA Performance Matmut team is."

The inaugural Intercontinental Le Mans Cup round won't live long in Raymond Narac's memory, even if clinching overall Michelin Green X Challenge victory is something of a consolation after finishing sixth on the road. "It was not a very enjoyable race for me but in a few days it will only be a bad and distant memory," he said. "On the other hand, our fifth place in the final classification and victory in the Michelin Green X Challenge will remain. That's what we must keep in mind. This reward will stimulate the team for the remaining part of the season, which is not over yet as this weekend we return to England, but to Brands Hatch, for the International GT Open round."

Rava did not miss his opportunity to congratulate the team at the finish. "In addition to the usual opposition, the Aston Martin and the BMW were both up there. Despite this and the bad shape of Raymond, we have achieved the performance which was required in order to secure the Green X Challenge win. The team's progression continues and since our victory in the FIA European Cup, we are accumulating good results."

Let's hope the run continues this weekend in England!

www.imsa-performance.fr



PORSCHE

Crédit photos : V-Images / Fabre



MOTUL

FLAT6
Magazine

