



LE MANS SERIES

Round 1 – 8 Heures du Castellet, France
11 April 2010

OAK Racing Team Mazda France enjoys excellent start to the season! #35 finishes second while #24 just misses out on the podium

OAK Racing Team Mazda France enjoyed an excellent start to its 2010 season at the opening round of the Le Mans Series; the 8 Heures du Castellet. The Magny-Cours-based team ran at the front of the LMP2 field for much of the race with the #35 Pescarolo-Judd of Guillaume Moreau and Richard Hein, finishing a superb second on the same lap as the winning car. Meanwhile, the #24 machine of Matthieu Lahaye and Jacques Nicolet just missed out on a podium place, finishing fourth and on the same lap as RML's third placed Lola coupe.



It was a fine effort from François Sicard's team after the weekend had started badly. On Friday, the #24 suffered an engine failure on its out lap for first practice, as did the #35's powerplant during the third session on Saturday morning. Nevertheless, Lahaye turned in an exceptional performance during qualifying to put the #24 third on the grid. Team mate Moreau in the sister car however was unable to set a lap time as his mechanics worked feverishly to change the engine.

Sunday's eight-hour race was no less action-packed with Moreau suffering a puncture in the early stages, forcing him back to the pits, after a beautiful drive through the field having started dead last. On the other side of the garage, fortunes weren't fairing much better when Lahaye picked up a stop/go penalty for overtaking under yellow flags while running fourth. Later, co-driver Nicolet was handed a similar punishment for accidentally tagging Larbre Competition's GT1 class Saleen.

Despite their various problems, the pair of Pescarolo-Judds were still in contention. For the second time in the race, the #35 machine produced a fantastic comeback to lead an OAK 1-2 for half of the race. Unfortunately, during the final hour, the #35 was unable to resist the American Le Mans Series-winning HPD prototype, with the #24 also succumbing to Lola's HPD-powered coupe, leaving OAK Racing second and fourth in LMP2 when the chequered flag fell. It was a fantastic result for the team, not least because their impressive points haul is doubled at this round thanks to the leading contenders completing more than 1500 kilometres.

François Sicard, Team Manager: "I would have loved to see Jacques and Matthieu on the podium with Guillaume and Richard, but I am very satisfied with our performance today and the points we have scored. We have demonstrated that our technical package – an experienced team, Pescarolo chassis, Judd engine and Dunlop tyres – will be very competitive this year."

Guillaume Moreau: "Starting from the back of the grid, I took some risks whilst overtaking and was back in contention with the other LMP2 cars after only two or three



laps. After the puncture, we continued to push and with Richard made it back to the front. Then I managed a great triple stint, which is a lot around Le Castellet, attacking as much as possible whilst managing the traffic. Despite starting last, we led for a long time in the race but the HPD was too fast today. This second place is like a victory for the entire team."

Richard Hein: "The great asset of the team is its mental strength and we believed in achieving a good result throughout the entire weekend. I was cautious during my first stint as I did not drive much before the race. Guillaume did a crazy triple stint! I worked hard until the chequered flag to maintain the second place and I am delighted to have been able to reward the magnificent work done by the entire team."

Jacques Nicolet: "This is an excellent result, especially after the problems we had on Friday and Saturday. This rewards all the work done during the winter. I am personally disappointed to have missed the podium following a small mistake, but nevertheless we scored important points. The car is fantastic to drive, and we are going to continue to work as we have just received the new aero kit and haven't yet explored all of its potential. A second and fourth place in the opening race allows us to approach the rest of the season with great belief!"

Matthieu Lahaye: "The weekend finished much better than it started, even if it is a bit frustrating to miss the podium. It is a shame that both Jacques and I got penalised with a stop/go, but I genuinely did not see the yellow flags. I did not think that we would be this competitive as early as this weekend, which is very positive for the entire team as we can only progress from here. Despite the engine failure, which meant that we only managed one free practice session, we set the third fastest time in qualifying. The performance of the car is there and the best has yet to come."

LMP2 classification:

- 1) #42 Strakka Racing – Watts / Kane / Leventis – HPD ARX 01, 250 laps, 33 points
- 2) #35 OAK Racing – Moreau / Hein – Pescarolo Judd, 250 laps, 27 points
- 3) #25 RML – Erdos / Newton / Wallace – Lola HPD Coupé, 249 laps, 24 points
- 4) #24 OAK Racing – Nicolet / Lahaye – Pescarolo Judd, 249 laps, 19 points

ENDS

Contact: Sylvie Nicolet
+33 (0) 6 07 28 65 88
s.nicolet@oak-racing.com