



April 2011

Pescarolo

Henri **PESCAROLO**

on the return, success and the magic of Le Mans

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TOUR AUTO

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Tour Auto is a vintage road rally in France. We figured we'd share some photos by *Julien Mahiels*.

Interview

HENRI PESCAROLO

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Geoffroy Barre talks to sportscar racing's greatest living legend about equivalency, emotion and excellence.



Photo: Jake Yorath

EVENTS

l'endurance is:

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Aston Martin driver *Peter Cate* gives us an exclusive insight into his weekend at the Nordschleife.



Photo: Martin Meiners

May



This month, *l'endurance* photographers will be at ILMC Spa, GT1 + GT3 Algarve and British GT Snetterton.

photography@lendurance.co.uk

EV



GT Open **MAGNY COURS**

May 14-15

GT Open is not short of entries and their opening round could well be a corker in France. It features GTE as its top class, a stage the class perhaps deserves!



Photo: Jake Yorath



**MUST
SEE**

LMS + ILMC **1000KMS OF SPA ROUND 2**

Spa Francorchamps, May 5-7

A 60 car entry makes this one unmissable. If you're not going, then make sure you catch the action either on TV or with Radio Le Mans.

UK Coverage: Motors TV, radio at RadioLeMans.com

EVENTS



GT3 Europe **ALGARVE ROUND 1**

Sachsenring, March 26-27

**HOT
PICK**

There is almost nothing better than GT3 racing. Close action, spectacular cars and stunning grids have made this a global favourite.

UK Coverage: Live on GT3europe.com

Photo: Brecht Decanq

GT1 World **PORTUGAL**

Algarve, May 7-8

The GT1 World Championship has not failed to thrill this season and at the rollercoaster track in Portugal, expect nothing less from the big beasts.

Australian GT **EASTERN CREEK**

May 28-29

Australian GT continues at Eastern Creek with the second half of the Stirling Moss Australian Trophy. More fireworks can be guaranteed down under.

British GT **SNETTERTON**

May 14-15

The Avon Tyres British GT Championship continues in the east after an action packed opener at Oulton Park. *l'endurance* will be there to bring you coverage.



GT1 World **GERMANY ROUND 3**

Circuit de Al, March 26-27

GT1 makes it's first ever visit to the Sachsenring, more famously the host of Germany's MotoGP. What else is there to say but 'expect good racing'?

UK Coverage: Live on GT1world.com/tv

Photo: Jake Yorath



OBITUARY

MARTIN BARTEK

Founder of Matech Competition, who passed away aged 44 in April. By *GT1World.com*

Martin Bartek, team principal of the Matech Competition GT teams, has died at the age of 44.

The team owner entered his Ford GT cars in the FIA GT1 World Championship and FIA GT3 European Championship in recent years and enjoyed success on track.

Matech claimed the GT3 Team Champion title in 2008 with the Ford GT3. Bartek also ran two Ford GTs in the inaugural GT1 World Championship in 2010, taking victory at the opening race in Abu Dhabi.

The team continued its

strong running throughout the season with German driver Thomas Mutsch finishing as vice-champion.

Bartek also represented the GT1 teams on the GT Commission at the FIA.

The Matech Ford GT cars, which Bartek developed, now compete under the Marc VDS Racing and Belgian Racing teams.

Stephane Ratel, CEO and founder of SRO Motorsports Group, said: "Martin played a major role in the FIA GT3 European and GT1 World Championships. We have lost a friend."

In memory, this month's 'In Focus' is dedicated to the fantastic creations of Matech Competition.

In
FOCUS

Jake Yorath
Silverstone 2008





Синтез
ГРУППА СИ



SINTEZ
ГРУППА СИ



HEGEMANN
20000



In
FOCUS

Jake Yorath
Silverstone 2008





In
FOCUS

Jake Yorath
Silverstone 2008





In
FOCUS

Brecht Decancq
Brno 2010







Alex Roache
Silverstone 2010





In
DEPTH

GRAND TOURING

Meet Le Tour Auto: a French historic road rally. Photos by *Julien Mahie*



NG
ls









Vêtements...
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LE MOUËL**

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A beautiful Alpine A110 negotiates a village lane and handily placed period signage.





Beautiful scenery and beautiful machinery characterise the Tour.



In
DEPTH

TEAM GREEN

Peter Cate gives us an exclusive insight into a weekend with the Aston Martin Vantage



IN
N team.



Receiving an ovation having pushed the car over the line to ensure an Aston Martin 1-2 finish.

Photo: Martin Meiners

Blue skies, sunshine and temperatures in the twenties? It doesn't sound much like spring in the Eifel mountains, but that was the scene greeting teams arriving at the Nürburgring in early April for the first round of the 2011 VLN Endurance Series, which was to be contested by no less than 165 cars. After a winter of partial track resurfacing, the Nordschleife was finally back in action.

Aston Martin Motorsport entered two V12 Vantages: 'Kermit' (#126), driven by Chris Porritt, Richard Meaden and Oliver Mathai, and 'Woody' (#122), driven by Wolfgang Schuhbauer and myself. Between them, the two cars delivered an impressive eight class wins and eight second places during 2010. We all had a lot to live up to!

Woody is effectively the same benchmark specification as the last race in 2010, albeit with the new-spec Yokohama tyres, whilst for 2011 Kermit has been upgraded to a paddle-shift gearbox and completely revised suspension. The race weekend was to offer an interesting comparison between the two.

The team took to the track on Friday for a familiarization session to ensure both human and machine were working as they should after the long off-season. With Woody being slightly down on top speed along the main straight, adjustments were made to the rear wing to reduce drag - always a compromise with the desire for more downforce around the 86 twists and turns of the 14-mile Nordschleife. After a final outing with Chris

trying the car for comparison, a gearbox niggles meant a late night and a herculean effort from team to replace it. Kermit, meanwhile, was running well, although some modifications were needed to manage engine temperatures ahead of qualifying.

Saturday dawned with clear skies, but the track was awash with dew that failed to evaporate even after several laps running in the warm morning sun. Wolfgang took Woody out first, waiting as long as possible before leaving the pits to try and get some dry running. As the clock ticked, however, he was forced to take wet tyres, eventually handing Woody over to me with time remaining for three flying laps.

The moment I took to the track it was obvious conditions were borderline. Kermit was still on wets but I could see a dry line forming, so Wolfgang and I had agreed to go for slicks. It was a real challenge trying to warm them up. The track was still wet through Hatzenbach, down Fuchsröhre, around Bergwerk and several other critical places, so it was a matter of trying some different lines to find grip and maintain speed, and being sensitive on the throttle - 510bhp on slicks in the wet can be interesting!

Still, it was the right decision because the lap times tumbled in the final minutes, and our last effort (9:30.541), although far from a dry time, was good enough to put us 30th on the grid and second in class behind the Lexus LFA of Gazoo Racing. Kermit qualified third in class with a 9:41.761, completing a strong grid for the team. The pit crew identified a problem

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**510BHP ON
SLICKS IN THE
WET CAN BE
INTERESTING!**

PETER CATE

The purposeful V12 Vantage is one of the most popular and distinctive cars in the series.





Leap of faith: the Nordschleife represents a unique challenge for car and driver alike.

Photo: Martin Meiners



Kermit (below) and Woody (bottom) are regular contenders for class victory in the VLN.



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THE MARSHALS
AT THE
NÜRBURGRING
ARE ALWAYS
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UNFORTUNATELY
A FEW DRIVERS
JUST DON'T SEEM
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COMMON SENSE.

PETER CATE



with Kermit's rear suspension and set about affecting a repair before the race start at midday.

The four hour race itself began in perfect conditions, if a little hot for engines and drivers. Wolfgang took Woody's first stint, whilst Chris was behind the wheel of Kermit, and in the chaos of the opening lap, Chris emerged ahead and began to attack, pulling the car up to the low thirties overall. Woody, meanwhile, was trapped amongst traffic, and eventually came in for the first scheduled pitstop in 48th place overall. The next stint

was mine - the team dropped the rear wing slightly to aid straight-line speed, fitted a brand new set of Yokohamas and brimmed the tank for a further eight laps.

Straight away I found that Woody, whilst well balanced in the corners, just wasn't able to achieve the top speeds seen with Kermit. We're not talking much, but a few km/h here makes a huge difference - the main straight is 3km long and we hit top gear in four places!

Initially I was struggling to match Kermit's times (the best being a 9:01.535 from Richard), but after pitting for fuel and

tyres I was more comfortable with the second set of Yokohamas, allowing me to push and get down to a 9:04.249 on my second to last lap.

As ever at the Nordschleife the traffic was problematic, with all sorts of crashes around the track bringing out the yellow flags. The marshals at the Nürburgring are always fantastic, but unfortunately a few drivers just don't seem to have any common sense. One of the Ginettas side-swiped me and nearly put us in the barriers at Schwedenkreuz after driving down the centre of the track for a few kilometres. I know



Photos: Martin Meiners

Wolfgang was forced on to the grass at one point, too.

All this was forgotten, however, as the drama unfolded in the closing stages. Kermit was enjoying a trouble-free run to the line with Oliver handing back to Chris after a 'splash and dash' fuel stop. They took a fantastic win in the SP8 class and 22nd overall (the pole-sitting Lexus languishing in 112th spot) - a superb achievement for Aston Martin Motorsport.

Unfortunately Woody didn't want to come home quite so easily, popping a bonnet catch with three laps to go which caused the opposite catch to fail a few moments later. We sit so low in the car that the open bonnet started to block my vision of the track. At high speed it was opening about five or six inches - corners like Schwedenkreuz and Tiergarten were somewhat challenging, and the brow before Brunchen had to be done mainly by memory!

A side problem of the open bonnet was the immense heat from the powerful V12, which instead of venting out of the sides of the car came directly into the cabin. Still, the aerodynamics were obviously better - I set my quickest lap like that!

With Wolfgang and I having climbed to 27th place, our excellent pace meant one extra lap would need to be completed within the four hour race duration. I was radioing in the fuel meter readings at Döttinger Höhe every lap. Just as I was about to radio in for the last time, with about four kilometres to go to the finish, the engine spluttered and it was clear the car was running on fumes.

We knew with the extra lap

that fuel would be borderline, but after the 24 hours last year - when I had a fuel pick up problem at the same location when driving Kermit - I knew there was a chance it could happen again. I coasted down the straight but the gradient becomes uphill and we ground to a halt. I tried all the tricks, managing to get the engine to fire enough for us to creep up the hill and around Tiergarten, but it died within sight of the finish. There was nothing for it but to get out and use leg-power! These cars are absolutely cutting-edge, with bonded aluminium and composite for lightweight, but when you've just driven a double stint, with the bonnet open for the last few laps, they're not the most compliant machines to push for half a kilometre. I'm glad I keep fit but I could barely raise my arms when the car crossed the line!

Unfortunately I didn't push quite fast enough and we lost a few places overall, but we still brought Woody home second in class (29th overall) to secure first and second for the team. Customer outfit Mathol Racing's Vantage GT4 was also victorious in the SP10 class (for GT4 cars) with drivers Wolfgang Weber, Norbert Bermes and Rickard Nilsson at the helm. Their success rounded out a great weekend for Aston Martin. The overall race was won by the factory BMW M3 GT of Jörg Müller, Augusto Farfus and Uwe Alzen.

Next time out at the Nordschleife (VLN, May 28th) I'll be back behind the wheel of Kermit, as part of Aston Martin Motorsport's build up to the Nürburgring 24 hours in June. Hope to see you there!





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THE CARS ARE
CUTTING EDGE,
BUT THEY'RE
NOT THE MOST
COMPLIANT
MACHINES TO
PUSH FOR HALF
A KILOMETRE!

PETER CATE



Photos: Martin Meiners

In
DEPTH

"WE ARE HERE,

l'endurance speaks to Henri Pescarolo. Interview by Geoffroy Barre &

Henri Pescarolo should need no introduction in these pages. Le Mans winner as a driver, a Formula One driver back in the day and one of the most successful team owners in sportscar history.

To come back to the Le Mans Series, as if nothing had happened, with a victory, was crucial for Pescarolo Team Autovision.

“Yes, it was important! The year 2010 was a year of death. I felt I had to get closer to my investors to take a further step, but I came across a swindler that destroyed my team in a year. 2010 was a year of disappearance.

At that point, I decided with my staff (who were unemployed) and several partners, to rebuild a team: Pescarolo Team. That’s what happened with the help of two friends, Jacques Nicolet and Joel Rivière, who helped me to take over the assets of Pescarolo Sport. We were able to run this team with the arrival of a new partner, Autovision.

The race at Le Castellet had phenomenal importance to us because we had to prove ourselves and all those who thought I would never revive the team, that the same team would return and at the 2009 level, a potential winner. Victory at Castellet has been cru-



Photo: Jake Yorath

WINNING."

Jake Yorath

cial to reassure us of our level of competition. It also sent a signal to those who had not thought too much of our return that we are here, winning from the start."

What Jacque and Joel did shook the world of motorsport. Everyone in the sport saw this gesture (the purchase Pescarolo Sport's assets) as a gesture of love for racing and one of great friendship. Have you been aware of the impact on the world of motorsport in general? The guard of honour from the other teams at the 6 Hours of Le Castellet was a fine expression of the emotion that is still aroused by Pescarolo.

"It was actually a reward, more than recognition. There are people who took financial risks in taking over the assets, which gave me confidence in my ability to recreate the team. But they told me clearly, when they handed me the keys, that they will not be part of Pescarolo TEAM as a company, and will not participate in funding the team. From the start I took full responsibility and the burden of finding the necessary funding to boost my team and ensure a competitive year. For all those who helped, who trusted, it's a great reward.

What really warmed my heart, in 2010 and early 2011,

having been in the hands of a crook, I realised that there were people who redeem mankind. We created the organisation Pescarolo 2011, because people wanted to help but did not know how. With this, we had 1300 people registering and almost €100,000 was collected in donations. Everyone at Le Mans with green hats and green flags in 2010 supported me tremendously. It just warmed my heart. Winning the first race we participate in is the greatest gift we could give to all those people who believed in us."

I guess you know your potential, and of course victory was the goal, but did you expect this type of race? A masterful first stint from Christophe Tinseau, a completely disastrous start that we all saw, the struggling Rebellions, the new AMR-One in trouble... Surely this scenario could not be predictable?

"I never imagined the 6 Hours of Castellet like that. The pre season test really reassured me. During testing we never really know how the teams will shape up, but what reassured was to see four LMP1 cars will fight for the championship grouped into four tenths. It was not confirmed before the race, because the tests are not racing.

Qualifying was also reassur-

ing, because we had pole position until the last lap (before Neel Jani finally took pole). What worried me, though, was the serious mistake we made, not to check the thickness of our plank before qualifying. So we withdrew our time, and we started from last place.

From there, I was very worried because knowing that we are all close to each other, with Zytek and Rebellion, from the last row we had the potential to be caught up in an accident and to complete the stint 30 or 40 seconds behind is never easy. I knew from experience that racing when you're racing six hours, 30 or 40 seconds is not necessarily irreversible. We then made sure, with [technical chief] Claude Galopin, the team and the drivers, to make no mistakes.

What is so positive to see is that we did not win solely because Rebellion had problems but because we were in a rhythm."

You have a 100% French crew, not so easy to imagine just a few months ago. Christophe Tinseau has stayed loyal, Manu Collard left Corvette to be at your side and Julien Jousse, the new guy. Was there a little stage fright?

"No, no nerves, on the contrary: a lot of confidence from the team for the drivers and vice versa. This is normal, because

Photo: Brecht Decancq

Pescarolo TEAM are a recrudescence force in 2011 and are aiming for glory in the LMS.





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PlayStation
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Merim
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MICHELIN

PlayStation
MOTUL
Merim
Telecom
MICHELIN

AUTOVISION

La Sarthe

PKM

“
FROM THE
START I
TOOK FULL
RESPONSIBILITY
TO BOOST
MY TEAM
AND ENSURE
A COMPETITIVE
YEAR.

HENRI PESCAROLO



for two of them it is simply home.

Remember that Manu Collard learned endurance with me, as a team mate in the Courage. We won two LMS championships together. Tinsseau never really left! What surprised me was that Julien Jousse was also calm. For him it was something new, early in his prototype career. He doesn't know the team nor his engineer, but he discussed everything with perfect composure and followed the instructions as requested. He was as fast as his team mates and has largely contributed to the victory!

It is great to see that we were right to take Julien Jousse with us, because he is part of a breed of great drivers.”

Will the arrival of manufac-

turers in numbers (Nissan, Toyota, Honda and new Peugeots and Audis) help develop the equivalency formula? We know the topic interests you closely, of course. Can the arrival of the big names help you lobby the organisers?

“Yes, that's what I've been saying for four years! The day there will be manufacturers running petrol engines, against the diesels, lobbying with the organisers, will be the day we have true equivalence.

I still think this year it won't be the case. We haven't driven together so we'll see, and I hope I'm wrong, but from the feedback we've had, the performance of Peugeot at their Ricard testing shows we are far short of establishing equivalencies. I am not sure either

will show their performance at the Le Mans test. Despite the decrease in displacement, the equivalence is identical and the situation has not moved.”

The LMS is now shadowed by the ILMC, for many races, when regulars LMS teams are joined by ILMC teams. What are your thoughts about this, with LMS and ILMC sharing many of the same events?

“Patrick Peter has announced that 2011 will be the last year of the Le Mans series as a top level championship.

For 2012, and without being disparaging about it, the championship will become a feeder series for the ILMC Endurance Championship. For the moment, therefore, it makes more sense to attack this championship with its hard



Photo: Jake Yorath

Photo: Dan Bathie



Pescarolo last won the Le Mans series in 2008 (above) but are back again in 2011 (below).



Photo: DPPI/ Le Mans Series



WHAT REALLY WARMED MY HEART WAS THAT I REALISED THAT THERE WERE PEOPLE WHO REDEEM MANKIND.

HENRI PESCAROLO

to beat competitors like Rebellion Toyota and Zytek rather than do battle with Audi and Peugeot in the ILMC with a non-existent budget and knowing as well, that I don't stand a chance of beating them this year.

On the other hand, I have won the Le Mans Series twice, so to take the title for its final year is a goal within our reach.

The other reason is the calendar. For Audi and Peugeot it is important to go to win in China but with my current sponsors we are more based in the European market which fits perfectly with the LMS calendar.

After Le Mans 2011, will the main objective be to move into ILMC in 2012 and to find sponsors for this?

"I am already working towards 2012. My role as team boss is to look at the medium term to assure finances for the current season. I don't know if I will achieve what I want, but it is true that the car is beginning to date and it wouldn't be bad to produce a new one when I have the means. If not for 2012, then for 2013.

We will evolve the current car but a lot will need changing. We are going to try and get back on the course we were on at the end of 2009, beginning

of 2010."

You have been a team manager for a little more than 10 years, and this year will be the 11th year of participation of Team Pescarolo, without Henri at the wheel. What do you say to his? Ten years since I stopped driving without my realising or these 10 years as a manager have been longer than the 10 years as a driver?

"10 years is the sum total of the life of Matra Sport. It is a period which seems extraordinary for French motorsport but you forgot that it was only 10 years.

Pescarolo has already survived for 11 years; I guess it is a feat to have survived longer than is normal perhaps. I believe it is a real feat if you consider it within the context of the current situation in France, a country where the image of the car has fallen victim.

It is politically incorrect to talk about the car, a motorist is a speed assassin, cars are machines that make holes in the ozone, and motor racing holds no interest. To succeed in finding sponsors in this context, plus the economic crisis, I consider it is exceptional that we are still here."

In an interview given to Auto

Journal several years ago (perhaps even decades) you were already talking about the anti-car situation and you also talked about speed on the motorways. Notably, you said that "people do not know how to brake, hold the wheel, nothing. If they were taught to drive you wouldn't need limits, apart from in traffic conditions." A lost cause, or an idea you still hold?

"A lost cause. Shelved. When I say that we have the best road network in Europe and I think we do Paris/ Marseille at 130 km per hour, that's completely feeble, but well, let's not talk about that, I take the TGV now!

On the other hand, what we forget to mention is that automobile engineering and sub-contractor represent 12% of the PIB in France. The car allows you to dream, go anywhere. But talking about the car in such negative terms has driven away the French Grand Prix, making it difficult for French drivers to make it to the top."

Thanks for your time Henri, and good luck for the season.

Henri Pescarolo and Pescarolo TEAM continue their fight for the Le Mans Series at Spa, on May 7th. Look out for more success on the horizon!

SPEED

l'endurance are going to Le Mans Series 10



00KMs of Spa. We're going with Speed Chills.
speedchills.com

ROU

Photo: DPPI/ Le Mans Series



ND UP

Le Mans Series **PAUL RICARD**

Page 68

Pescarolo scored a win in comfortable circumstances in France. It was like they'd never been away.

Blancpain Series **MONZA**

Page 40

The latest SRO project came to fruition in Italy and it was Porsche who scored victory with AutOrlando Sport.

World **ROUND UP**

Page 78

All the reports from around the world this month including ALMS, GT1 World, and national championships.

GT1WORLD BELGIUM

DOUBLE TOP

Zolder, April 10 By Alex Roache

From the cutting-edge sandy oasis and wide, sweeping turns of Yas Marina in Abu Dhabi, the FIA GT1 World Championship headed to Europe and to the fast, tree-lined confines of the Zolder circuit in Belgium.

And while Zolder has historically had to make do with the billing of Belgium's second best circuit, there was no mistaking the excitement and anticipation as the world's foremost GT series arrived at the Circuit Terlaemen - these cars were going to look epic around the venue's quick, narrow undulating turns.

Qualifying didn't disappoint. Quite apart from the actual competition between the teams, the mere sight of the GT1s thundering through the forest, kerb-hopping and tail-sliding in the corners, was enough to keep any fan entertained. The fact there was a genuine fight on for pole position was a bonus.

After qualifying two it was looking distinctly like the Young Driver AMR squad was on for the front row, with the #7 car of Alex Müller and Tomas Enge pipping its sister DBR9 of Darren Turner and Stefan Mücke to fastest time. The top ten was covered by exactly one second - it was looking close.

It was, however, the #37 All-Inkl Lamborghini of Dominik Schwager and Nicky Pastorelli which once again stole the limelight, clinching its sec-

ond consecutive pole position by almost half a second. The Young Driver DBR9s would start second and third on the grid for the qualifying race, followed by the Hezemans/Catsburg Corvette and the Dumbreck/Westbrook Nissan GT-R.

More sunshine and cloudless skies greeted teams and fans on Sunday for the weekend's main event. The previous afternoon had seen the All-Inkl squad break its GT1 duck in convincing fashion - a feat it had been threatening to do from the moment the cars took to the floodlit track at the season opener in Abu Dhabi. You'd have been forgiven, however, for thinking the #38 Murciélago of Dominik Schwager and Nicky Pastorelli would have been the car to clinch the outfit's first win, showing as it has done blistering qualifying pace in the first two rounds of the championship.

A grid penalty at Yas Marina and the first corner carnage in the Zolder qualifying race, however, conspired to bestow that honour on the sister #37 car instead, meaning it was Marc Basseng and Markus Winkelhock who lined up at the front of the grid for the championship race alongside the impressive Hezemans/Catsburg Corvette.

As the pack rolled towards the red lights over the start-line, the third and fourth placed Aston and Lambo of Müller and Wendlinger were





QUALIFYING RACE

MIXED FORTUNES FOR LAMBORGHINI

It was formation flying as the lights went green for Saturday's qualifying race, the 600bhp V12 powerplants in both the pole-sitting Murciélago and the second placed Aston an absolute match for one another on the drag down to turn one.

But any notions of a tidier start than in Yas Marina were quickly thrown out the window as the two leaders dived onto the brakes into turn one. Mücke braved the outside line, banking on being able to hold position and steal the inside line for the right-hander at turn two. What he didn't bank on was the determination of All-Inkl's Nicky Pastorelli, who wasn't prepared to give an inch to the Aston as they hurtled side-by-side towards the apex.

The two cars collided and chaos ensued, with Mücke

spat straight into the gravel and Pastorelli pirouetting round in the middle of the track, sending the jostling 18-car pack into a panic as each driver tried to guess where the Lamborghini wasn't going to be by the time they arrived. Unfortunately for Richard Westbrook in the #22 JRM Nissan GT-R, he guessed wrong, crunching into the stricken Murciélago and ending his afternoon's challenge. Bas Leinders in the Marc VDS Ford GT was also out on the spot. The #37 Lambo, however, had the bitterest pill to swallow - it was seeing a hard-earned pole position come to nothing for the second consecutive time.

Out of the maelstrom and into the lead emerged what could only have been a somewhat surprised Nick Catsburg in the Exim Bank Team China Corvette. The 23 year old Dutchman and reigning Euro-

cup Mégane Trophy champion was sixth into the first corner after a tardy start, but found the way opening up for him and at the end of the first lap was two seconds clear of the fast-starting Fred Makowiecki in the Marc VDS Ford GT and Markus Winkelhock in the remaining All-Inkl Lambo.

Makowiecki had pace, though, and soon cruised up to the back of Catsburg where he sat hounding the bright red Corvette for a good 17 laps. Catsburg's resilience and mistake-free driving under enormous pressure belied his lack of experience at the top level of GT racing, and it was only as the pit window opened that the Ford GT was able to get a better run out of the first corner and take the lead into Sterrewachtbocht.

With the exception of Makowiecki and the Belgian Racing Ford GTs of Vanina Ickx



and Martin Matzke, which were busy breaking team rule number one by running into each other at turn seven, everyone pitted more or less straight away.

The Hexis AMR squad worked its usual magic in the pitlane, turning in a blisteringly quick stop for the #4 Hohenadel and Piccini car to leapfrog All-Inkl (now with owner-driver Marc Basseng behind the wheel) and the Exim Bank Team China Corvette (taken over by Mike Hezemans) for second.

Marc VDS had left its stop until the latter end of the pit window, such was its confidence in Makowiecki's pace and track position. However, disaster awaited the Belgian squad as the Frenchman finally taxied down the pitlane to hand over to Maxime Martin - a wheel socket problem left the Ford GT stranded on the jacks and losing crucial

time. The Hexis Aston swept into the lead as the Ford plummeted down the order.

With the clock ticking down, the new top three were glued together on the racetrack and the battle for victory in the qualifying race was well and truly on. Third placed Marc Basseng wasted little time behind Hezemans, nosing up the inside of the Corvette at turn two - the Dutchman didn't make it easy, but respectfully conceded the position and could only watch as the All-Inkl Lamborghini set off in pursuit of Hohenadel.

Basseng was evidently comfortable on his new tyres and it wasn't long before the Murciélago was breathing down the neck of the Hexis Aston and making its intentions clear. The #37 car was much stronger on the brakes, and with four minutes to go made a bid for the lead

around the outside of the final chicane. Hohenadel had seen it coming and went defensive, but the Lamborghini, squirming around on the dust at the edge of the track, glanced off the Aston's off-side rear wheel. At first it looked like Basseng had simply run wide and given the Hexis car some breathing space, but it soon became clear that all was not well with DBR9 - it limped over the line, crabbing, and was swallowed up by Basseng, Hezemans and Alex Müller, who was in turn being hunted down by Swiss Racing's Karl Wendlinger who had sniffed the possibility of a podium.

And that was how they finished, Wendlinger just missing out on third as he challenged Müller's Aston over the line. All-Inkl could take consolation for the first corner demise of 37 with a win for 38.



Photo: Brecht Decancq

Beche bounces off Dumbreck as Hennerici flees the scene of the crime in the background.





“
THERE WAS NO
MISTAKING THE
EXCITEMENT AS
THE WORLD'S
FOREMOST GT
SERIES ARRIVED
AT THE CIRCUIT

already breaking formation and impatiently hounding the front row. It was as orderly a start as you could expect from 18 impatient racing drivers, and as the gantry lights turned green the chorus of eight and twelve cylinder engines rose to a crescendo with over 10,000bhp blasting towards the first corner.

Hezemans edged into the lead initially, but into the braking zone Basseng pulled it back, locking his front wheel but commanding the inside line and holding first. All eyes, however, were on the middle of the pack, where Ricardo Zonta's Nissan GT-R speared dramatically across the track and pinned the second Sumo Power car of Jamie Campbell-Walter against the wall. Both Nissans scraped along the concrete at massive speed, sending smoke, debris and the odd panicked photographer in all directions. Replays seemed to show that a Sumo Power pincer movement had caught Frenchman Michaël Rossi unawares, the DKR Engineering Corvette clipping the left-rear of Zonta and sending the Brazilian slamming at 90 degrees into his teammate. All three cars were out on the spot.

“It has been a bad weekend for us,” remarked Zonta later. “Today at the start, the Corvette hit me so hard in the main straight it spun me round and I ran into the other Nissan. Another race over. It's difficult to take.”

The JRM Nissan GT-R of Peter Dumbreck was to endure an equally frustrating afternoon having miraculously negotiated the first corner chaos. While the order had settled down at the front with Basseng leading

Hezemans and Müller, the Scot was on the move, dispatching Mathias Beche's Belgian Racing Ford GT for 10th and then cruising up to the back of Marc Hennerici's Marc VDS machine. Dumbreck pounced into turn two, drawing alongside the Ford and appearing to have the corner. The German had other ideas though, and slammed the door shut, clouting the Nissan's nose and sending Dumbreck into a spin which Beche simply couldn't avoid. The bright yellow Ford clattered into the black GT-R, forcing them both into retirement.

“In my eyes I was fully alongside of him,” said Dumbreck when quizzed about the Hennerici collision. “I saw him turn in and I tried to get out of it. I get collected, he spun me around and we are out of the race.”

With cars littered everywhere - including the Murciélago of luckless duo Pastorelli and Schwager, which had expired around the back of the circuit - the race director took stock and deployed the safety car, neutralising proceedings.

Racing resumed just as the pit window opened. The top three stayed out, Basseng catching Hezemans napping on the restart and stretching a lead of several car lengths over the Corvette as a train of cars from fourth placed Wendlinger to eighth placed Hennerici pitted all at once. With the field relatively bunched up after the safety car period, the pitstops would be crucial and any teams dropping tenths of a second during wheel changes could expect to lose positions on the track.

Wendlinger handed the Swiss Racing Murciélago to Peter Kox,



Krumm (left) started again but was left frustrated. Ickx finally got her start, but struggled while Brabham (right) had a tough time.

Photos: Brecht Decanq

Photo: Brecht Decancq

Swiss Racing Team are relishing in their switch to Italian machinery from last year's GT-Rs.





ss Racing Team.ch

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who emerged still ahead of the #3 Hexis Aston - now with Stef Dusseldorp at the helm - and the two Marc VDS Fords. No sooner had they rejoined the track than Mike Hezemans filtered into the pits, the third placed Young Driver Aston of Alex Müller tucked under his rear wing. Following them in at some distance was the Hohenadel Aston Martin, but the lightning fast Hexis squad had different ideas about where they wanted the #4 machine to rejoin. To everyone's disbelief, when Piccini jumped in the car and screamed out of the pits, he was ahead of the Young Driver AMR car and the #11 Team China Corvette - the car had leapfrogged from ninth to second during the stops, taking to the track ahead of Tomas Enge who emerged in front of Catsburg.

Like Makowiecki in the qualifying race, Basseng was leaving it late to pit, but when he did - handing over to Winklehock - the team suffered none of the same issues the Marc VDS crew endured, maintaining a comfortable lead which it would not lose.

With the order at the front - Winklehock (All-Inkl), Piccini (Hexis AMR) and Enge (Young Driver AMR) - remaining more or less status quo until the chequered flag, it fell to seventh placed Fred Makowiecki

to provide the rest of the afternoon's entertainment. The Frenchman had taken over from teammate Maxime Martin and was very quickly making a nuisance of himself to championship leader Stef Dusseldorp. The ensuing squabble allowed Stefan Mücke to close dramatically, and on lap 22 a failed attempt by Makowiecki to pass the Dusseldorp allowed the Young Driver Aston through to seventh.

Makowiecki's problem was nigh on insurmountable - his Ford GT's chassis was well-balanced and handling beautifully through Zolder's quick, narrow turns, but its V8 powerplant lacked the straight line grunt of the Astons he was battling. He didn't give up, but battle was in vain and all he could do was settle for eighth.

“
EVERYONE HAS
TO CHASE US
NOW AND I LIKE
IT THAT WAY!

MARC BASSENG

Back at the front, to the elation of the All-Inkl Münnich squad - and an anxious Marc Basseng watching from the pit garage - Markus Winklehock brought the #37 Lamborghini home to score the team's first GT1 championship race victory in style ahead of Piccini/Hohenadel and Enge/Muller. And in a brilliantly opportunistic piece of driving, Peter Kox in the Swiss Racing Lambo outdragged the Corvette of Catsburg to the line, pipping it to fourth by a mere 0.025s.

The day, however, belonged to All-Inkl's Basseng and Winklehock, whose double win catapulted the pair to the top of the Drivers' Championship.

“It's been an incredible, amazing weekend,” beamed Basseng. “I didn't believe it was possible! It's good for us to be leading the Drivers' Standings - everybody has to chase us now and I like it that way.”

A sentiment which I very much doubt is shared by their rivals, who will be keen to reclaim the initiative as the FIA GT1 World circus moves to Portimão in the Algarve for round three at the beginning of May. Last year the Portuguese venue delivered one of the best races of the year, and fans will be hoping for more of the same. *l'endurance* will be there - we hope you'll be watching.

CHAMPIONSHIP RACE

WINNERS

MARC BASSENG (GER)
MARKUS WINKELHOCK (GER)

ALL-INKL.COM LAMBORGHINI MURCIELAGO 670R-S



SECOND

CHRISTIAN HOHENADEL (GER)
ANDREA PICCINI (ITA)

HEXIS RACING ASTON MARTIN DBR9



THIRD

ALEX MÜLLER (BEL)
TOMAS ENGE (CZE)

YOUNG DRIVER ASTON MARTIN DBR9



QUALIFYING RACE WINNERS

MARC BASSENG (GER)
MARKUS WINKELHOCK (GER)

ALL-INKL.COM LAMBORGHINI MURCIELAGO 670R-S



DRIVERS' STANDINGS

1st:

Basseng/ Winkelhock 49

2nd:

Dusseldorp/ Piccione 36

3rd:

Piccini/ Hohenadel 30

TEAMS' STANDINGS

1st:

Hexis AMR 69

2nd:

All-Inkl.com 50

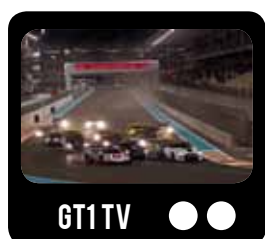
3rd:

Young Driver AMR 47

NEXT ROUND

Portugal

Algarve, May 7 & 8



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SPEED

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BLANCPAIN ENDURANCE SERIES

AUTORLANDO OFF TO PERFECT START

Monza, Round 1, April 17 By Dan Bathie



The Autodromo Nazionale Monza played host to the first round of Stephane Ratel's latest brain child, the Blancpain Endurance Series. The three hour race saw many lead changes but the chequered flag would fall on the Italian AutoOrlando sport team whose consistent performance made good use of their Porsche's frugal fuel use to score victory.

As the race got underway in rolling start fashion, Andrea

Invernizzi in the pole sitting Black Bull Swiss Racing Ferrari lost several places as the cars fought for position into the Variante del Rettifilo. It was the WRT Audi of Andrea Piccini that emerged in front and led the blast through the Curva Grande closely followed by Markus Palttala in his Marc VDS Ford GT. Briefly third was Henri Moser, the one time GT3 champion unable to hold team mate Yann Clairay behind for any great length of time. The Frenchman carried

on his progress and soon took the Aston to the front, passing Piccini on Lap 4. Piccini's experienced team mate Stephane Ortelli was another man making progress, the Monégasque taking second from Piccini and was soon in a fight for the lead.

Lap 11 saw the Matt Griffin / Jack Gerber AF Corse Ferrari 458 and the Philip Shearer / Lionel Comole Sport Garage Ferrari 430 in the barriers at the Ascari Chicane due to oil on the track dropped by the Level Racing Porsche. The AF Corse

nGas Group since 1948



Photo: Brecht Decanq

car was able to re-join but lost a lot of time, while the Sport Garage Ferrari retired on the spot. A lot of the teams were hoping for a safety car at this point to help with fuel mileage, but it never came. Just after 40 minutes into the race and Ortelli finally made his move into the lead but the WRT team's joy was short lived, a few minutes later and the sister car suffered a puncture while running in third place. Piccini managed to get the car back to the pits without causing any considerable damage and handed the car over to his team mate Greg Franchi. Unbelievably the team were left with a sense of déjà vu as a few laps later leader Ortelli was left with a deflating tyre, handing the lead back to Clairay.

The first cars began their pit stop cycles and it became clear



Lotus won GT4 with the Mansells and Piscopo and Reiter's Hayek and Kox won Pro-Am.



Photos: Brecht Decancq



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THE THREE
HOUR RACE SAW
A HOST OF LEAD
CHANGES



The start. Pole sitter Invernizzi has already slipped to seventh while Piccini leads.
Photo: Brecht Decancq

that the only cars that would manage the three hour race on two stops would be the Porsches and the Lamborghinis. Peter Kox and Marc Hayek would stay out longest and thus briefly lead, but the greatest beneficiaries were Porsches. Both AutOrlando and De Lorenzi racing jumped forwards, however the De Lorenzi Porsche lost its pit advantage after having to serve two drive-through penalties for pit lane infringements. Meanwhile, Filipe Albuquerque passed the AutOrlando Porsche

for the lead of the race but his lead was short lived, the Audi man forced to stop for the final time promoting the two stopping Porsche to first with a comfortable lead that seemed impossible to overcome by Albuquerque. It was. The Portuguese driver went after Ruberti with a string of fastest laps but the gap was still over a minute come the chequered flag. Third place had looked to have been going to the Hexis Aston Martin of Frederic Makowiecki, but the Frenchman

suffered a mechanical failure with just a few laps remaining sending his DBRS9 straight into the gravel at the Parabolica. Inheriting third was the Marc VDS Ford GT in the hands of Markus Palttala, Maxime Martin and Bas Leinders. Lotus Italia Scuderia Giudici, driven by Edoardo Piscopo, Leo Mansell and Greg Mansell took the honours in the GT4 class while Marc Hayek and Peter Kox took the Cup class victory for pro-am teams in their Reiter Lamborghini Gallardo.



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AMERICAN LE MANS SERIES TOYOTA GRAND PRIX OF LONG BEACH ASTON MARTIN FLEX THEIR MUSCLES

Long Beach, California, Round 2, April 16 By Jake Yorath



Photo: ALMS



Muscle Milk Aston Martin Racing took their first win of the 2011 season at Long Beach, comfortably defeating the Lola Mazda of Dyson Racing, the only other LMP1 entry in the field. Lucas Luhr and Klaus Graf drove a calm and consistent performance, steering clear of the various incidents to earn the spoils.

In GT, BMW again were the

victors in comfortable fashion, Joey Hand and Dirk Müller winning despite the best efforts of team mate Bill Auberlen, whose early mistake had cost Hand the lead in farcical fashion.

From pole, Chris Dyson led to the first corner for Dyson, the smaller and lighter of the two Lola chassis able to stay ahead during the opening corners. However, it was not long be-

fore the Aston Martin powered car was ahead, Luhr passing in just the fifth turn of the first lap. He would not be headed again and would not have to endure any great pressure from either Dyson or team mate Guy Smith. A curious pit strategy, involving tyre pressures but no tyre change, did little to help the Mazda's chances.

Klaus Graf took the white, black and red car over with a

comfortable lead and steered home to a 24 second victory. The gap at one stage had been closer to a full minute. It could barely have been easier to secure the first Lola Aston Martin victory in the American Le Mans Series. The race ended under caution after a late clash between GTC competitors Craig Stanton (having earlier broadsided the final hairpin and held up a handful of front running GT cars) and Dion von Moltke, the latter suffering a hairy looking impact with the wall with a handful of laps remaining.

“In my head, I had planned to get by Chris in the first corner, but that didn’t work out quite well,” commented Luhr in his post race television interview. “He really made a good start and didn’t give me a chance to get by him. But I saw I was quicker in the Carousel, so I dived into Turn 5 on the inside and tried to build out a gap.”

“We tried to make it on one stop, which for me meant that I had to save some fuel,” added team mate Graf. “It’s a different driving style to save fuel, so I tried to do that and it worked out pretty good.”

The GT race was a far more dramatic affair. Joey Hand started on pole for BMW, with Corvette Racing’s Olly Gavin alongside. With a good start, the American on board German machinery soon had Challenge prototypes between himself and the yellow peril.

Gavin himself was under pressure from behind, Auberlen and Lizards pilot Pat Long looking to stay on terms with the early breakaway leader. Long passed Auberlen into turn one, which hung the BMW out to dry. Through went Scott







“

**WHEN I WENT OUT, I KNEW I HAD TO PUSH LIKE CRAZY
BECAUSE YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON!**

DIRK MÜLLER



Sharp's Ferrari too (top Ferrari on the grid after qualifying woe for Risi) and alongside came Corvette man Tommy Milner. Unfortunately for BMW, their ex employee could only nudge the white car into a spin at the super tight Fountain, leaving Auberlen stranded. Struggling to execute a three point turn, the car was still there as the pack came round a second time.

In his attempts to clear the track for the pack, Auberlen succeeded only in blocking his own team mate and leader, Joey Hand. "I was thinking, 'I'm going to the right.' He went to the right and next thing you know we were

both jammed in there. That changed it up a little bit, but it wasn't Bill's fault; he couldn't see me," explained the young American.

Gavin and Long went through but Auberlen forced his way back to the front and onto the effective lead lap. Hand, meanwhile, down to third, took up station behind Long and as the Porsche took an opportunistic lunge at Gavin in traffic, the BMW snuck through both cars to once again lead the GT class. It was vintage GT racing.

The weekend would end in disaster for Long, as he slid hard into the wall and damaged his car too badly to con-

tinue. The same was also true of Scott Sharp, the Extreme Speed man hitting the unforgiving Californian concrete even harder than the Porsche did and leaving his rear corner destroyed.

The only late drama for BMW was the caution, Dirk Müller able to take the car over in a clean stop and finish the race untroubled. "When I went out, I knew I had to push like crazy because you never know what's going on," the German pilot . "Luckily [I saved my tires] because Jan [Magnussen] pushed really hard at the end. I was happy to see the yellow at the end, to be honest!"

Second were Corvette, Gavin

Photo: ALMS

From dead last, Vilander produced a virtuoso first stint to help Risi to a good points haul.





BOARDFULL

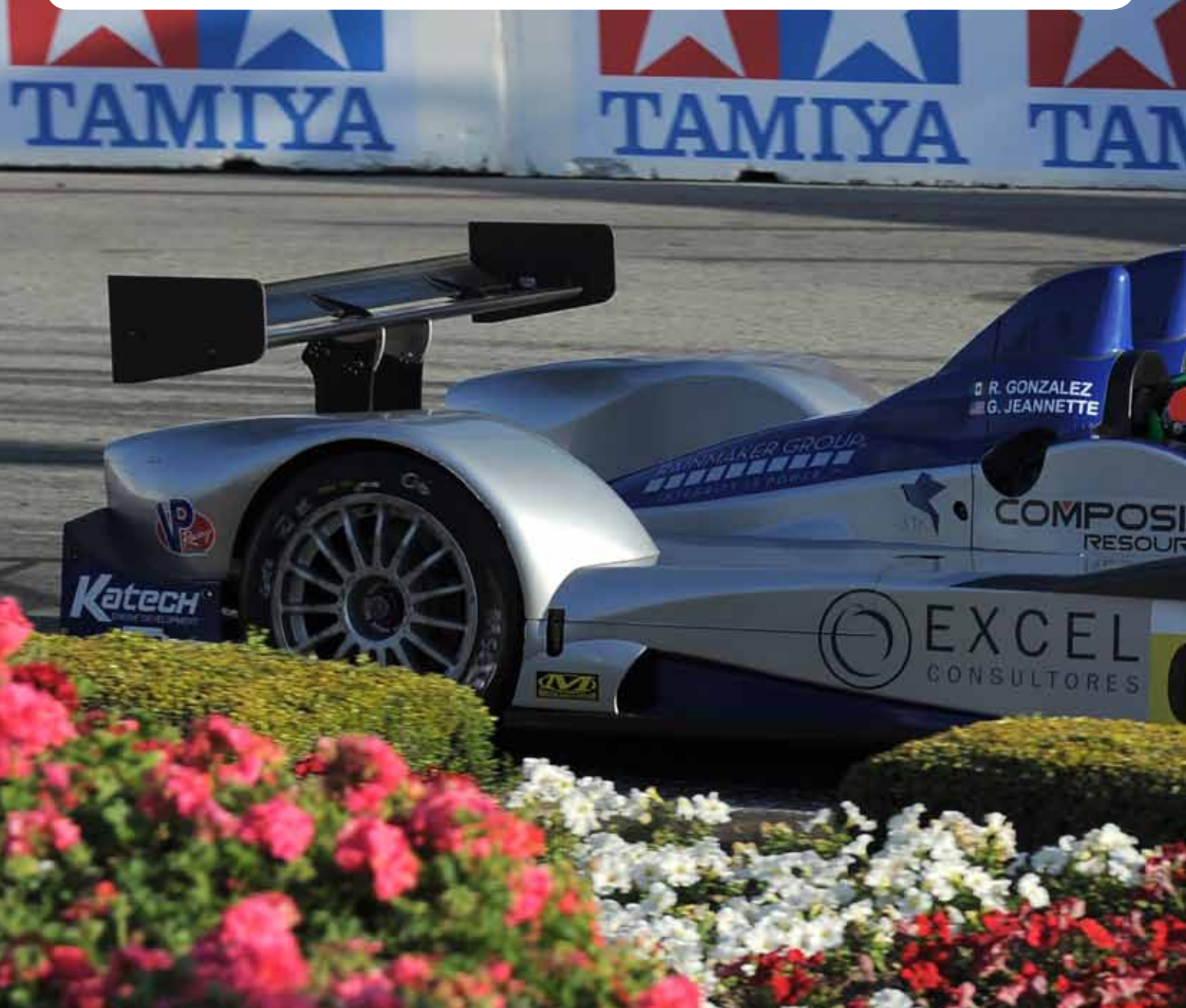
OT TECHNOLOGIES

DXL

MAMI

Photo: ALMS

Gunnar Jeanette was imperious again, as he helped Ricardo Gonzalez to victory in LMPC.



handing over to Jan Magnussen to complete their race. Chief beneficiaries of ESM crash were Risi's Toni Vilander and Jaime Melo. After the latter's mistake in qualifying, the former drove superbly to bring the car through the field on a very tight circuit and leave Melo with a good position. He consolidated well.

Having briefly led, the best of the Porsches were Team Falken Tire. Brian Sellers and Wolf Henzler came home in fourth position, ahead of Milner and Olivier Beretta for Corvette.

Bruno Junqueira and Christiano Da Matta rounded out the top six with a solid run for Jaguar; the best ever result for the car in GT racing.

LMP2 was a rather flat affair. With only two cars entered, both by Level 5, only one took the start. Scott Tucker and Christophe Bouchut each drove just enough laps to score points (45) before parking the car and saving it in preparation for the Le Mans test that followed just six days after this event.

In LMPC, a late charge by the ever impressive Gunnar Jean-

ette saw him take the spoils, sharing his car with Ricardo Gonzalez for the CORE Autosport outfit, their first LMPC win on their second outing.

GTC saw experienced Jeroen Bleekemolen, who drove for Rebellion Lola at Sebring, and Tim Pappas take victory for Black Swan Racing.

The series is now on a break, returning on the 9th of July at Lime Rock Park, where Muscle Milk scored their first ever victory last season. Look forward for more cracking racing in America!



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06

LMPC

COOPER GAY

KELIP

LE MANS SERIES SIX HOURS OF CASTELLET **PESCAROLO RETURN TO THE TOP**

Paul Ricard, Round 1, April 3 By *Jake Yorath*



Photo: DPPI/ Le Mans Series



Pescarolo Team, running in their first race since 2009, took an emotional yet controlled victory at the Six Hours of Le Castellet, the first round of the 2011 Le Mans Series. The Pescarolo 01 Judd, running to 'grandfathered' regulations, had a comfortable victory despite having its qualifying times cancelled and being forced to start from the back of the grid.

A relatively serene race was preceded by a calamitous start procedure. As the lights went out at the start, those at the back of the grid charged forwards, while those at the front seemed more restrained: they could see that, despite what the starter may have thought, the safety car was still on the circuit (and, ironically, would remain there for some time). The reason the safety car had remained on circuit were spinners on the warm up lap, but this was not communicated to all the drivers.

It caused a disastrous concertina, a particularly disastrous one for Stuttgart. All three of their pro cars, from Fel-

bermayr, IMSA and Prospeed, were wiped out before they'd reached turn one. Also caught up were Jota, their Aston Martin Vantage debuting in inauspicious circumstances, to continue further but greatly delayed. IMSA's second car, the GTE-Am entry, also suffered heavy damage.

In the confusion, Matias Beche earned himself a starring role, leaping around the LMP1 cars in front of him to reach the top three in his LMP2 Oreca Nissan. Once the race settled into a rhythm, Neel Jani was able to stretch his legs and begin to pull away in his Rebellion Lola Toyota, having started from pole position.

The race would not be long without trouble for the Swiss team, though. First, it was a flying door that caused Jean-Christophe Boullion to have a brief pirouette. The Frenchman returned to the pits for attention and would not be in contention again. Second LMP1 casualty was the unfortunate Olivier Pla. Having shown good pace throughout the weekend, the Quifel ASM Zytek suffered a blow out on





Calamity. Confusion at the start wiped out all the Porsche pro teams in one fell swoop, as well as seriously hampering Jota's Aston effort. Matias Beche, meanwhile, managed to streak almost into the lead in his LMP2 Zytek.

Photos: (main) DPPI/ Le Mans Series, (sequence, right) Rudolf Periny



YELLOW PERIL GTE

With such a disastrous start for Porsche, Ferrari's 458 Italia was left with little genuine opposition on its European racing debut. JMW Motorsport, returning to the Italian side after a troubled year with Aston Martin, scored victory with stalwart Rob Bell and new driver James Walker.

It was an enthralling race, despite the woes that befell the German cars, and a race characterised by the balance that is now so equal between Hankook (Hankook Farnbacher), Michelin (AF Corse) and eventual winners Dunlop (JMW) tyres on the same machinery. There seemed little difference between the various rubber in neither performance nor longevity and at vari-

ous points during the race, a series of enthralling battles were fought between the three.

The opening hour was a straight fight between the three. Allan Simonsen, Gianmaria Bruni, Toni Vilander and Rob Bell fought hard and fair, once again proving that GT racing is in rude health. At the end of the first hour, the Italian team held the advantage (Bruni), with the German squad second (Simonsen) and the Britons third (Bell). Vilander was fourth.

A brief period in the lead for Young Driver man Alex Müller (in the new and improved Aston Martin Vantage GT2) was as close to a threat as Ferrari would see all race. The fights would eventually break

up. Hankook suffered the indignity of a drive through for a pitstop infringement, while an ill conceived tyre strategy left Fisichella defenceless against a charging Rob Bell in the final hour, forcing him into an extra stop to consolidate second on fresh tyres.

GTE-Am was a happier affair for Porsche. The sole untroubled 997, Felbermayr Proton's 88, took victory with Christian Reid and Horst Felbermayr senior and junior at the wheel. AF Corse were second with an F430 Ferrari for Piergiuseppe Perazzini, Marco Cioci and Stéphane Lémeret. Third were Kessel, though they missed out on second by just a handful of seconds despite a spectacular late Phillip Peter charge.



66
PRO

ANDIUM
TRUST
b-line
SHELL

WALLEN



Photo: DPPI/ Le Mans Series



the Mistral straight. He drove back too fast though, and in his haste forced lengthy repairs to be necessary before the car would see the circuit again.

Having cleared the safety car period caused by the straight full of shattered Zytek, Neel Jani soon had 35 seconds in hand over the chasing P2 cars, Christophe Tinseau beginning to thread the Pescarolo through the backmarkers. However, Jani, too, would soon be troubled. His Lola slowed and would be forced into the box. Rebellion's challenge had lasted less than an hour.

So it was, then, that Tinseau would take the lead after just half an hour's proper racing; a charge to match Boullion's on board the same car, in similar circumstances, back at Silverstone in 2009. In LMP2, a remarkably consistent perform-

ance from Strakka Racing saw them lead despite a car horribly strangled by restrictions on its brand new HPD engine. Jonny Kane's performance was certainly one to admire. He was second overall in the ARX-01d, with the Boutsen Energy Oreca just behind.

The Pescarolo would not be troubled again. In a performance reminiscent of days of old, Tinseau's fellow Frenchmen Julien Jousse (making his Pescarolo debut) and Emmanuel Collard (who is no stranger to the team) took their turns at the wheel to ensure that the win was safe.

Though there was much debate about the performance of the HPDs of Ray Mallock and Strakka, their frugality and efficiency was enough to see the black car heading the class until Nick Leventis's lesser ex-

perience caused them to drop back.

They would eventually take an unlikely third place in class. Victors were Greaves Motorsport, their Zytek (originally an LMP1 from way back in 2007) taking class honours in the hands of Frenchman Gary Chandon, long time Greaves exponent Karim Ojeh and Briton Tom Kimber-Smith. Second on their LMP2 debut were Pecom, Argentinians Luis Perez Companc and Matias Russo joined by Pierre Kaffer. With Kaffer a factory connected Ferrari driver, it is a possible pointer of interesting developments for that team in the future.

Formula Le Mans victory fell to Pegasus Racing, Germans Mirco Schultis and Patrick Simon joined by Julien Schell of France on the top step of the podium.

LES VINGT QUATRE HEURES DU MANS OFFICIAL TEST DAY

AUDI WELL ON TOP AT LA SARTHE

Circuit de la Sarthe, April 24 By *Jake Yorath*

Audi Sport continued to impress on the road to les Vingt Quatres Heures du Mans, by dominating the Test Day in seemingly comfortable fashion. They ended first, second and fourth with a best time of 3:27.687 for Tom Kristensen.

The new R18 TDI, in simple silver and black livery (varied, of course, across the three cars), was fast, reliable and

consistent over the course of the day. It was not until the very end of the day, in fact, that Peugeot were able to get into the top three. However, Stephane Sarrazin's time, set with only a few minutes left, was just 0.189 seconds from fastest, and 0.002 seconds from second place. Rockenfeller was the man who was second, with a 3:27.818.

It was not so much straight pace that was so impressive for Audi, but their ability to repeat it ad nauseam; the cars were circulating at a regular pace, often below 3:30, which was surprising to many, despite traffic. The traffic was lessened by big problems for Aston Martin, who's AMR-One did just 15 laps (one car didn't run at all) after engine lining prob-





Audi ultra

BOSCH
MAHLE

3



Photo: Brecht Decanq

Aston Martin Racing suffered more woes; this time, engine linings.







Photo: Brecht Decancq



lems forced them to stop.

Pescarolo TEAM were fastest petrol, though nine seconds shy. Manu Collard wound up with a 3:36.683 while Rebellion were not far behind with Neel Jani's 3:37.809. Their other car was delayed after a suspension failure for Belicchi cost the Italian time, before Guy Smith visited the gravel later on.

In GTE, a banzai effort from Allan Simonsen (on his day off from British GT racing at Oulton park) meant that the good day for Danes continued, as he was the only GT

car under four minutes in the Hankook Farnbacher Ferrari 458. His 3:59.966 shaded the similar Ferrari entered for AF Corse (Toni Vilander setting the time). BMW (Schnitzer, as always in Europe) were 'only' third, having dominated GTE in the ALMS and ILMC thus far in 2011. Jorg Müller set the time in the 55 car. Makowiecki was fourth for Luxury racing.

LMP2 saw a very Oreca Nissan flavoured scoresheet. Fastest were Signatech, Franck Mailleux managing a 3:42.992, with the 'works' Matmut car second. Greaves were third

for Zytek. HPD's RML were again looking choked, with Tommy Erdos managing a best of 3:48.174; that's more than five seconds gap.

Positive news for Lotus in GTE, too. The new Evoras, run by Jet Alliance Racing, both ran trouble free and all the drivers completed their necessary 10 laps and though not on the ultimate pace, showed excellent potential. They also looked very mean in black.

Keep page turning to see a few more photos from the test from our photographer Brecht Decancq.



Photos: Brecht Decancq



Left to right: Robertson missed Long Beach to be at the test and despite a trying time, all their drivers are now qualified for Le Mans. Lotus impressed greatly. Peugeot had little answer to Audi's pace.



AVON TYRES BRITISH GT CHAMPIONSHIP

SCUDERIA VICTORIOUS

Oulton Park, Round 1, April 25 By *Jake Yorath*

Porsche and Ferrari shared the spoils at the opening round of the British GT Championship at Oulton Park, in glorious Easter weather. In race one, David Ashburn and Richard Westbrook swept to victory from pole for Trackspeed but in a topsy turvy race two, Scuderia Vittoria took a first ever win for the Ferrari 458 with Michael Lyons and Charlie Bateman.

With qualifying split into two sessions (the 'amateur' drivers qualifying for the first race, and the 'pros' for the second) there was entertainment galore. A first ever pole fell to the 458 for race one with Michael Lyons, while Westbrook took pole for the second race for Porsche. There was disappointment for Vittoria as their times from the second session were wiped for a ride height infringement. They were forced to start last.

So race one got away, and it was a clean start with Ashburn was beaten to the first corner by Lyons. The Ferrari would build an advantage of six seconds over the opening stint, with Ashburn looking a tad lonely in second while David Jones, driving the Mercedes SLS for the first time in anger, held off United Autosports' Mike Guasch.

Lyons' hard work was smashed to pieces at the stop. New to the car, Charlie Bateman stalled three times as he tried to leave the pits and would rejoin sixth. Westbrook took over the lead. It fell to Matt Bell, taking over from Guasch, to charge after the lurid green bumper of the Trackspeed car and like a greyhound to a fake rabbit, the young Geordie went chasing. He just didn't quite have enough time or speed to get close enough, but it was a close run thing and

a valiant effort. Having at one time been seven seconds back, he finished only a second behind.

"The Audi had the edge at the finish and it wasn't pretty through the final laps," smiled the relieved Trackspeed charger. "We've got work to do but David did a great job in his stint and we're delighted to start the year with a win and some good points."

Third were Beechdean Aston Martin having run a quiet race that got rather quieter just past the finish line as the big V12 expired in a cloud of white smoke, leaving them no car for race two. They had made their way through a scrap featuring Godfrey Jones in the Mercedes and Tim Bridgman, having taken over the second Trackspeed Porsche from Gregor Fisker. Some rather robust defence from the silver car led to contact that punctured Bridgman's





Photo: Jake Yorath

Photo: Dan Bathie

Trackspeed made the most of a lovely day to win race one but couldn't take the double.





tyre, leaving him out.

The Beechdean car, driven by Charlie Adam, got through Jones and behind came Allan Simonsen, on fire again in his Rosso Verde F430. He got close, but only managed fourth. The Joneses were fifth, with Vittoria sixth.

Race two was far more calamitous. Westbrook charged to the first turn in the lead but Marcus Clutton's KTM went scything into the barrier and the repairs were lengthy. Having started from the pitlane, Tim Bridgman was soon back on the tail of the pack despite an extra pitstop thanks to the ensuing pace car.

As the safety car dove in, Westbrook went on a charge (the fifteen second pitstop penalty for winning race one surely in his mind) and set fastest lap, but to no avail. The safety car was out again, Stefan Hodgetts and David McDonald crashing their Ginettas together. It worked beautifully for Bridgman, the first man past the pits with the window open under the safety car, leaving Fisker therefore in a very good position.

On the next lap, almost everyone (bar United Autosports, who would later regret this decision) pitted. It was Hector Lester in the lead, from Lyons; that would not be the situation for long. The youngster was soon through and disappeared, winning by a massive 21 second margin.

Lyons was certainly happy. "Charles did a great job in his stint but the Safety Cars certainly played into our hands," he said. "The team really hit the mark on the pit stop but as I left the pits there was another Ferrari out of position. I managed to squeeze through, and as I rejoined, I knew we had a chance. I got ahead of Hector and then was able to drive off into the distance. It's great to get a win after we had just one day of testing before this weekend. Me and Charles are quite even on pace and we've got to be among the favourites after this weekend."

It was about to get worse for Lester. A wild lunge from David Ashburn caused big contact and the Irishman was in the gravel at Lodge through no fault of his own. He would re-

join, but all hopes of a good finish were lost. For Ashburn, it wasn't any better, soon passed by Jones and then called for a stop go for a hasty release from the pitstop. The Mercedes had a cruise to second from there.

United Autosports could well have won but for their late pitstop decision (a deliberate choice by the team) that dropped Mike Guasch to 12th. He drove superbly to recover third place and the Sunoco driver of the day award. Ashburn was fourth with Fisker crossing the line fifth but penalised a minute (Bridgman had cut the chicane under safety car) to leave the second Trackspeed car tenth. CRS's two Ferraris were promoted to fifth and sixth.

In GT4, ABG Motorsport-run KTM X Bow of Peter Belshaw and Marcus Clutton won the first race before crashing later in the day and leaving the win to Jake Rattenbury and Josh Wakefield's Century Ginetta. After Freddy Nordstrom's Lotus won but was penalised for overtaking under yellows.

The series visits Snetterton on May 14th and 15th.



Photo: Jake Yorath

ADAC GT MASTERS

ALPINA AND LAMBORGHINI SHARE SPOILS

Oschersleben, Round 1, April 24 By Jake Yorath

A record field greeted the 2011 season of the ADAC GT Masters in spectacular style at the opening round in Oschersleben, boasting 38 of the world's best GT racing cars. The honours were split between brothers Stuck for Lamborghini and the Alpina of Dino Lunardi and Alex Margaritis over the two races.

Blazing sunshine provided the background for the weekend (as it did across most of Europe) and race one started with Margaritis, having starred in GT1 in 2010, on pole position in the lurid green B6. The Grecian ace ran away from the field before handing over to Frenchman Lunardi, who drove

comfortably to ensure victory for LIQUI MOLY Team Engstler.

"A perfect start to the season," said Margaritis of his successful introduction to ADAC GT. "The start with this large field did concern me, but in the first curve fortunately everything went well."

Lunardi praised his teammate and spoke of the hard work that went into his debut victory in the series. "Alex handed a very good car over to me. It was very hard, I had to concentrate so hard, right until the end."

Second place (at the very last gasp!) fell to Daniel Keilwitz, who had taken over from Diego Alessi in the Callaway

Corvette. Third were Christer Jöns and Jens Klingmann for Abt Audi.

In the second race, Frank Kechele's Reiter Lamborghini started from pole. Neither he nor stablemates Kox and Hayek would see any luck though. Kechele retired while Hayek suffered a puncture. Ferdinand and Johannes Stuck were therefore left a clean run to victory in their Lamborghini.

"Unbelievable," said Johannes Stuck. "We would have never expected that!"

Third place in race one became second for Jöns and Klingmann, while Lunardi and Margaritis finished third after their race one win.





VLN LANGSTRECKENMEISTERSCHAFT N'GRING BAVARIANS MANAGE WIN

Nordschleife, Round 1 March 26 By *Dan Bathie*

BMW Motorsport converted a one - two in qualifying to claim victory in the first VLN round of the season. Andy Priaulx took pole position, but it was the sister car of Augusto Farfus, Uwe Alzen and Jörg Müller who triumphed in the first race of the 2011 season.

The BMWs didn't have it all their own way though. Not long into the race, a very fast Manuel Lauck took the lead in the Pinta Racing Porsche GT3 R. After an hour the top three (the Pinta Racing Porsche, the eventually victorious BMW and the Manthey Porsche) were separated by less than a sec-

ond. The challengers however would soon fall by the wayside though to leave BMW to take the victory in comfortable style.

Manthey's Porsche lost drive out on track while Pinta's entry was slowed with a lack of fuel leaving it to finish in a disappointing tenth. The second placed BMW of Andy Priaulx, Dirk Müller and Dirk Werner finished some 50 seconds behind the victorious trio after being delayed in the pits.

Third place went to the Black Falcon Mercedes SLS AMG GT3 of Jeroen Bleekemolen, Thomas Jäger, Jan Seyfarth and Kenneth Heyer.

FFSA GT FRENCH FANCY

Ledenon, Round 1 & Nogaro, Round 2, By *Jake Yorath*

After two rounds and four races, the FFSA GT Tour has seen some great racing, some controversy, and three different winners in two different cars.

At the opening weekend in Ledenon, Graff Racing took both wins with the Mercedes SLS GT3. Derlot Renaud & Gérard Tonelli were awarded the win in race one despite a severe safety car issue, which caused a shortened race and 50% points. Second place belonged to Laurent Groppi and Patrick Bornhauser for Larbre Competition (Porsche) and third to Audi France, for Ortelli and Ferry.

Race one saw the same pair triumphant. Second were Badey and Beaubelle (Ferrari) and third Ortelli and Ferry again.

At Nogaro, Larbre won race one. Laurent Groppi and Patrick Bornhauser took victory thanks to a clever pit strategy. Second were Graff Racing, this time Panis and Debard scoring a second place ahead of Beltoise and Pasqualli for Porsche.

Race two fell to Anthony Beltoise and Laurent Pasqualli, the French duo surviving a late rain shower to take the spoils ahead of Tonelli and Derlot, with Hallyday and Ortelli in third.





Photo: Sören Herweg



VDEV

RAIN IN SPAIN FALLS KINDLY FOR IMSA

Jarama, Round 1, March 27 By *Sam Tickell*

Twenty-nine cars lined up to start the Four Hours of Jarama in VdeV's GT race.

Le Mans Series regulars and Porsche 'works' team, IMSA Performance staked their claim to the Championship after taking a one-two. IMSA Performance entered three cars in the event, with the title defending team Pascal Gibon and Christophe Bourret coming home in sixth. They left it to Raymond Narac and Anthony Pons to win by 15 seconds from Phillippe Pollette and Jean-Michel Neyrial. The IMSA Performance cars did not have pace in qualifying starting in the mid pack but were able to use the weather

to their advantage. After one hour the IMSA cars were over a minute off the lead but by half distance, the rain had upset the leaders, allowing the Porsches to take the lead, and eventually the win at the Spanish venue.

The VdeV Prototype Challenge proved to be a Norma affair for their four hour race at Jarama.

The M20 cars took the first four places in the race but they were assisted by the early teething troubles from the new Wolf GB08 cars and niggling issues for the Ligier JS49s. The race started on a wet track and threatening skies. Tyre choice

proved vital and the choice of dry tyres at the first stop put Ander Vilarno/Bruno Bazaud in the box seat. They were able to go on to take the win from Philippe Mondolot /David Zollinger and Jean Marc Menahem/Marc Faggioninato.

The VdeV Classic Endurance Challenge also got underway with a four hour enduro.

David Ferrer/Yvan Mahe (Lola T70) battled with Bernard Moreau/Miguel Langin (Porsche 911) and Michel Quiniou /Jean-Jacques Paoletti (Chevron B16). After battling early in the race, the Lola T70 was able to make a break mid race to win by over a lap.



Photo: Jurek Biegus

BRITCAR ENDURANCE SERIES ECLIPSE PUT OPPOSITION IN THE SHADE

Rockingham, Round 2, April 16 By Jurek Biegus

The second round of the 2011 Britcar MSA British Endurance Racing Championship took place at Rockingham Motor Speedway in Northamptonshire and saw an entry of 32 cars.

Class 1 saw the Neil Garner/Azteca Mosler of Javier Morcillo and Manuel Cintrano take pole position, 7 tenths of a second faster than the Strata 21 Mosler of Paul White and Calum Lockie in P2. The winners from Silverstone, The MJC Ferrari of Witt Gamski and Keith Robinson, qualified in P7 just behind the Eclipse Motorsport Ferrari which was making its season debut.

The class 2 field was led by the GT3 Racing Dodge Viper followed by Simon Atkinson and Glen McMeniman's Lamborghini GT4 whilst the class 3 pole went to the Hawthorn

Motorsport Porsche 997.

After the start the Azteca Mosler dropped to 7th after a mistake at the Deene hairpin leaving the Strata 21 Mosler in front followed by the Viper. The other big loser was the Eclipse Ferrari which was forced to start from the pitlane after the starter motor failed causing the engine to flood.

The Strata 21 Mosler led for 6 laps before being passed by the Rapier SR2 of Mike Millard which then began to pull away from the field at 2 seconds a lap before the safety car cut his eventual 31 second lead. Mechanical failure eventually forced the Rapier to retire, handing the lead to the Azteca Mosler but after a pitstop found itself back in 4th place. By this point the Eclipse Ferrari had made its way from

the back of the field and was now leading closely followed by the MJC Ferrari.

The final 40 minutes of the race was all about the Ferraris who followed each other closely until a mistake by Keith Richardson in the MJC Ferrari gave the final victory to Eclipse who managed to hang on despite hitting a wall 20 minutes from the end. MJC came in second with the Azteca Mosler following in third place.

The Dodge Viper with Aaron Scott and Craig Wilkins won the class 2 race followed by the Lamborghini GT4 of Simon Atkinson and Glen McMeniman. Class 3 was won by the Eurotech Porsche 997 with the Hawthorn Motorsport Porsche in second followed by the Lotus Exige of Dan Norris-Jones and Fulvio Mussi in third.

SPEED EUROSERIES

MOORE SUCCESS FOR WFR

Paul Ricard, Round 1 April 3 By *Sam Tickell*

WFR made a winning return to motorsport and their 2011 SPEED EuroSeries campaign. The Series will support the Le Mans Series during 2011, running two 90 minute races each weekend.

The new-for-2011 WFR03 had to play catch up after being out qualified by the, also new, Wolf GB08 driven by Alex Caffi and Maurizio Fratti took pole (with a time

that was not too far off the LMP2 times for the Le Mans Series). During race one, the Wolf cars had a slow pitstop, allowing the WFR cars to take the win. Warren Hughes/Jody Firth led Joey Foster/Nigel Moore, something that was repeated in race two. Race two though was much more straight forward with the WFR cars leading the entire way - or so it would seem. The fi-

nal few metres would see the lead change after Jody Firth backed off too much for the formation finish allowing the sister car to take the win.

Firth admitted, "I celebrated too early!"

A slightly embarrassed Moore observed, "I didn't expect him to back off like that," after having slipped past to win by about a tenth of a second.



Photo: speedeuroseries.com

ITALIAN GT CHAMPIONSHIP

AUDI SPORT ITALIA DOMINATE

Vallelunga, Rounds 1 & 2, April 17 By *Jake Yorath*

Audi Sport Italia faced little opposition on their way to a pair of one-two finishes in the opening rounds of the Italian GT Championship at Vallelunga.

In both rounds, Marco Bonanomi and Andrea Sonvico led home the sister Audi R8 LMS of Dindo Capello and An-

drea Cicognani. In the GT2 class, sole entrant Victor Racing (Porsche 997) took victory in both rounds with Victor and Giovanni Coggiola sharing driving duties.

In GT Cup, race one fell to Giorgio Sanna and Davide Stancheris (Team Imperiale Lamborghini Gallardo) and

race two to Giacomo Piccini and Stefano Livio, in an MIK Corse example of the same car.

The fantastically monikered Tiziano Cappalletti, sharing his Nova Race Ginetta G50 with Stefano Pozzi, won both rounds in the GT4 category.

Italian GT visits Misano on the 5th of June.



PIRELLI WORLD CHALLENGE LONG, DAVIS ON TOP

St Petersburg, Round 1, March 27 and Long Beach, Round 2, April 17 By *Sam Tickell*

The first round of the 2011 Pirelli World Challenge got underway at St Petersburg with two races.

Porsche factory driver and ALMS GT2 champ Pat Long (pictured) made his full time debut in the Series as he will do double duty in 2011 with ALMS. St Pete was purely a Pat Long affair with the American acer winning both races in his Privacy Star/Entrust Porsche 911 GT3.

Long started from pole in race 1 and was never headed on his way to victory. He didn't have it all his own way in race 2 as Randy Pobst in the K-Pax Volvo and James Sofronas in the GMG Porsche 911 GT3 led the way until Long passed Pobst on lap 11 and Sofronas with three laps

to go. Long ended up winning race 2 by 0.6 of a second.

"I have to say, the whole World Challenge series is really strong. There was no clear sailing or easy job this weekend," Long said after race 2.

In the other classes Jason von Kluge (Ford Mustang) and Eric Foss (Ford Mustang) won the GTS class races and Lawson Aschenbach (Honda) and Tristian Herbert (VW) won the two TC battles.

Round 2 was held on the streets of Long Beach and unlike round 1, Pat Long did not have it all his own way.

In fact the ALMS driver only finished fifth in the single race that was held after rolling at the start and incurring a penalty. Brandon Davis (ACS Express/Sun Micro

Ford Mustang Cobra) battled with Jason Daskalos (Dalsin Developments Dodge Viper) throughout the race. Davis was able to pass Daskalos for the lead after going side by side for three corners on lap 11. Davis was then able to extend his lead, winning by a little over two seconds from Daskalos and James Sofronas' GMG Porsche 911 GT3.

"It was great," Davis said. "I've tried so hard in the Mustang to run up there the last few years...It was one of those races that it just seemed like it was destiny."

The GTS and TC classes both saw the winning cars disqualified in scrutineering leaving Paul Brown (Ford Mustang) and Shea Holbrook (Honda Civic) to take class honours.

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