



ASTON MARTIN RACING

AFTER 12 HOURS: ASTON MARTIN REACHES THE HALFWAY POINT

Following 12 hours and approximately 2750 kilometres of racing at Le Mans, Aston Martin has reached the halfway point of its first participation in the endurance classic with an LMP1 car. Jan Charouz currently occupies fifth place overall in the 007 car, having taken over from Tomas Enge at around 2:30am.

Enge maintained a strong fifth position throughout his stint, which was problem-free. “Actually, I wasn’t as happy with this stint as I was with my first stint,” explained Enge. “I seemed to get a lot more traffic this time round for some reason, and when this happens it is really difficult to find a consistent rhythm. Towards the end of my stint I also began to lose grip: I’m not sure why. But generally speaking I have to be happy: the car has been really good and reliable, so we are right up there.”

Conditions remain dry and comparatively warm, although some rain could fall later on Sunday morning, potentially bringing the 77th Le Mans 24 Hours to a dramatic finale.

Following some repairs to fix earlier accident damage, Jos Verstappen took over the 008 car shortly after midnight. However, one of his first tasks was to serve a five-minute drive-through penalty that was handed to the team as the result of an earlier collision that caused the accident damage. After serving the penalty, Verstappen set some rapid lap times before handing over to Anthony Davidson.

“Of course a penalty like this feels like hours rather than minutes when you are actually there,” said Verstappen. “But afterwards I really enjoyed myself. The main thing about this car is that it feels very comfortable, which makes it easy to drive quickly. It’s a pity our car had the problem with the collision as I think we could have been in the same position as the 007 car or maybe ahead of it, but that’s racing. There’s still an extremely long way to go so let’s see what happens.”

The 009 crew is now reduced to two members – Peter Kox and Harold Primat – after the race stewards decided to exclude Stuart Hall for his part in a crash with an LMP2 car earlier.

“After that incident, the stewards have decided to exclude me from the meeting,” said Hall. “So I won’t be driving the car again this weekend. I made a mistake and I’m sorry. Everyone I’ve spoken to says that the penalty is a little harsh but there’s nothing I can do. I’m gutted.”

The 009 crew had other problems to worry about as well. At 2:20am the car stopped out on the circuit while Harold Primat was driving, and it reached its pit box 10 minutes later. The water pump controller was changed in 15 minutes and Peter Kox took over the driving. However he lost electrical power just one lap afterwards and had to return to the pits for further attention.

The Drayson Racing Vantage GT2 continues to make progress, with Scottish driver Marino Franchitti currently holding 11th place in class.

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For further information please contact:

Sarah Durose
Motorsport Communications Manager

+44 (0) 7801 265 126
e-mail: sdurose@astonmartin.com

Website:

www.astonmartinracing.com