



ASTON MARTIN RACING

AFTER 6 HOURS – ASTON MARTIN IN TOP FOUR AT THE LE MANS 24 HOURS

Aston Martin has continued to build on the solid progress made during the first three hours of the Le Mans 24 Hours. After six hours of racing – a quarter distance – the 008 and 007 cars are running in a comfortable fourth and seventh places. The 009 car has been affected by further problems and is consequently 46th but still running.

Anthony Davidson is undertaking his first Le Mans stint with Aston Martin Racing in the 008 car, having taken over from Jos Verstappen who drove a triple stint to maintain the fifth position he had inherited from his team mate Darren Turner. Verstappen's drive was particularly impressive as the Dutchman was climbing a steep learning curve. "This was actually the longest consecutive period of time I have ever spent in the Aston Martin LMP1 car," he said. "During my triple stint I probably doubled the seat time I have had in the car so far. I really enjoyed it: towards the end of my stint my tyres went off, but this is normal with the track conditions and temperature. It was a nice comfortable drive to ease myself in."

For much of Verstappen's stint, he was running in close formation with Tomas Enge – who took over the 007 car from his team mate Stefan Mücke in the third hour of the race. "I'm pleased with my stint," said the Czech driver. "We found a good balance between going quickly and driving safely, which means that we have a good race pace as we can follow the cars in front without losing too much time. But there is such a long way to go that there is no point in predicting too much at the moment. For now, I'm very happy."

After completing his stint, Enge gave the car to his compatriot Jan Charouz – who lost a bit of time with a flat tyre just after 8:30pm, dropping the car down to seventh. The tyre was swiftly changed by the Aston Martin pit crew and the car is still lapping strongly as evening falls. Stefan Mücke, who took the start, is scheduled to take over the car again next.

Stuart Hall's stint in the 009 car got off to a fraught start when he had to bring the car in to have a water leak dealt with, losing around 15 minutes in the pits. He subsequently had to pit again to hand over to Harold Primat, who was delayed when the car had difficulty re-starting. Hall took over from Peter Kox, who drove a long middle stint.

"As we say back home in Holland, I don't think we have anything to shame ourselves with," commented Kox. "It's just a pity that we've encountered these problems. To do well at Le

Mans you always need a clean run, but although that possibility is gone for us now, we are still enjoying driving the car and we are going to keep on pushing to the end.”

The Drayson Racing Vantage GT2 continues to enjoy a strong run with 12th place in class. Englishman Jonny Cocker is currently driving.

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