



ASTON MARTIN RACING

ASTON MARTIN QUALIFIES SECOND AND THIRD FOR OPENING LE MANS SERIES RACE IN SPAIN

Barcelona, 4 April, 2009. The two Aston Martin Racing cars will start tomorrow's opening Le Mans Series race at the Circuit de Catalunya in Spain from second and third places on the grid. Catalunya is the first race of the five-round Le Mans Series, which will take competitors to some of Europe's most classic circuits.

Englishman Darren Turner qualified the 009 car in second place, having set his time of 1m32.942s just before a red flag halted the session. German driver Stefan Mücke was third in 009 at the end of the session with 1m33.532s, despite losing time with a minor gearshift glitch and then traffic on his flying lap, making it two Aston Martins in the top three on the car's race debut.

Earlier in the day, the cars completed the final free practice session in preparation for qualifying and tomorrow's 1000-kilometre race. The free practice session, in which the cars finished fourth (007) and fifth (009) was not entirely problem-free for the Aston Martin Racing team, as the 007 car suffered some rear damage that needed repair before qualifying. Nonetheless, the team was able to continue the set-up work started yesterday and give the drivers more valuable track time as they build up their knowledge of the new LMP1 car.

The LMP1 qualifying session for tomorrow's race lasted just 20 minutes, with each driver having to perform instantly at their best against the 41 other cars competing in Spain, including 10 cars from the premier category. Track conditions were warm and dry during the afternoon's qualifying, despite some cooler temperatures in the morning. Tomorrow's race, which is expected to last approximately six hours, is scheduled to get underway at 11:30 and is due to last 215 laps. Before then, the cars will have a 20-minute warm-up on the 4.65-kilometre circuit, which is also the home of the Spanish Grand Prix.

Team Principal George Howard-Chappell commented: “We had a minor issue with car 007, which prevented Stefan from having a crack at pole: a pity as there is a point on offer for that this year. Nonetheless, we’re extremely happy to have two cars in the top three. Darren did an exceptional job in his first LMP1 qualifying session, and I’m sure it’s going to be a great race.”

Aston Martin is also represented in the GT2 class by the Vantage GT2 of Drayson Racing, driven by Englishmen Paul Drayson and Jonny Cocker. The team qualified 11th in class with a time of 1m50.492s for tomorrow’s race, which is the first European outing for the British squad.

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