



ASTON MARTIN RACING

ASTON MARTIN QUALIFIES FASTEST OF THE PETROL CARS AT LE MANS

Le Mans, 11 June, 2009. Qualifying for the 77th Le Mans 24 Hours took place on Thursday evening during two sessions, from 7pm to 9pm and from 10pm to midnight. After a rain-affected free practice on Wednesday night, conditions for qualifying were dry, enabling the cars to run on slick tyres for the first time on the 13.4-kilometre circuit.

Although start position is not so critical at the Le Mans 24 Hours, during which the cars are expected to cover more than 5000 kilometres in approximately 360 laps, all the teams are eager to benefit from the prestige of pole position. With the diesel cars enjoying their expected margin of superiority, Aston Martin Racing's three factory LMP1 entries will line up eighth, ninth and 17th on the grid for Saturday's race.

The 007 car of Jan Charouz (CZ), Tomas Enge (CZ) and Stefan Mücke (DE) was the quickest Aston Martin with a time of 3m27.180s, qualifying in eighth overall. The sister 008 car of Anthony Davidson (GB), Darren Turner (GB) and Jos Verstappen (NL) was ninth with a time of 3m27.704, while the 009 car of Stuart Hall (GB), Peter Kox (NL) and Harold Primat (CH) qualified 17th after setting a time of 3m33.968s.

The Speedy Racing Sebah team, running last year's Aston Martin-powered Lola, was third quickest of the petrol cars, meaning that Aston Martin engines occupy the top three petrol-powered places on the Le Mans grid this year.

"I used the first two hours of the session just to get used to driving the car in the dry," said Stefan Mücke, who set the 007 car's best time to place it eighth on the grid. "With free practice having been held in mixed conditions yesterday, this was our first chance to have some normal dry running. In the second part of the session I wasn't really going for a quick lap time, as our focus is firmly on the race. But the car felt very good and I was pleased with the time we produced, despite the fact that we were held up by a lot of traffic. It's a sign of the progress that has been made but the gap remains too big: there are clearly still two classes in LMP1, petrol and diesel. Our aim was always to be the quickest of the petrol cars and I'm delighted that we have achieved our goal so far. This makes me quite confident of our race pace, so I think we have the chance to do well."

The 007 crew encountered a setback towards the end of the session, when Jan Charouz went off at the second chicane on the Mulsanne straight and damaged the car. However, initial examination shows the chassis to be intact, so the car will be repaired in time for the start of Saturday's race.

Anthony Davidson set the fastest time in the 008 car, on his debut with Aston Martin Racing. "I'm very pleased with our performance, although it was far from an ideal lap," said the Englishman. "I had serious traffic and this is still a different style of racing to what I have been used to recently. However, I think our race pace is more indicative of our potential than qualifying, so this is very encouraging for the weekend. We've got very good straight line speed, which is going to help us deal with all the traffic during the race."

Peter Kox set the best time in the 009 car on his final timed lap of the session just before midnight. In GT1 the customer Jetalliance Racing team was third, while the Drayson Racing team qualified their Vantage GT2 ninth in class.

The 77th Le Mans 24 Hours will get underway at 3pm on Saturday 13 June.

-ends-

For further information please contact:

Sarah Durose +44 (0) 7801 265 126
Motorsport Communications Manager e-mail: sdurose@astonmartin.com

Website: www.astonmartinracing.com