



## ASTON MARTIN RACING

### **ASTON MARTIN SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETES LE MANS PRACTICE**

Le Mans, 10 June, 2009. The three Aston Martin crews have all completed the necessary running to go through to qualifying at Le Mans on Thursday, after the opening six-hour free practice session at La Sarthe.

The practice session, which lasted from 6pm until midnight, was the first opportunity that teams had to drive the legendary Le Mans circuit, in both daylight and night-time conditions. The weather throughout the evening was wet and dry with intermittent rain, making grip levels extremely inconsistent.

Nonetheless, according to the rules of the Le Mans 24 Hours, all the drivers had to complete three laps of night-time running to be sure of taking their place during qualifying – which is scheduled for Thursday evening. Furthermore the ‘rookie’ drivers at Le Mans had to complete 10 clear laps in order to be allowed to participate in the race.

With conditions extremely difficult, the priority for Aston Martin was to get through the evening safely and accumulate valuable data during the team’s first run with its new LMP1 car on the Le Mans circuit. Although there could be some rain during qualifying, the weather for the race is expected to be largely dry. This meant that the team concentrated on finding a versatile set-up that would work well in a variety of conditions.

At the end of the six-hour session the 008 car crewed by Anthony Davidson (GB), Darren Turner (GB) and Jos Verstappen (NL) was the quickest of the three works Aston Martins with a time of 3m35.996; putting the crew in a provisional eighth overall. The 007 car, driven by Jan Charouz (CZ), Tomas Enge (CZ) and Stefan Mücke (DE), was ninth with a time of 3m36.732s. Car 009 – crewed by Stuart Hall (GB), Peter Kox (NL) and Harold Primat (CH) – was 11<sup>th</sup> with a time of 3m38.490s.

007

Jan Charouz: “This was really tricky weather, but it allowed us to test in a variety of different conditions and learn a lot about the tyres. The grip was really inconsistent, but it’s the same for everyone. I think we are as well-prepared as we can be under the circumstances for

qualifying, but if conditions stay like this tomorrow, it will be mostly a question of finding exactly the right moment to go out in order to set a competitive time.”

Tomas Enge: “We got through everything we needed to, although it probably would have helped us more if conditions had remained dry. My understanding is that it will be mostly dry for the race, so I hope we can have some more time in the dry tomorrow as this is what we need most. The car seems quick, so if we have good reliability then there is a lot of potential.”

Stefan Mücke: “It was a very useful practice session although I had a problem early on when our car developed an oil leak. I got the car slowly back to the pits, and luckily I think it turned out to be just a faulty seal. The team got it fixed really quickly and we were back out in less than half an hour. Our car felt very solid even with the different changes in the grip levels, which is always the sign of a well-balanced car.”

008

Anthony Davidson: “I got my obligatory 10 laps of running in, which was a relief, and then I had to complete three laps in the dark – none of which presented us with any problems. Although I haven’t competed at Le Mans since 2003, a lot of it came back to me: I was surprised at how familiar the circuit felt. On the other hand, there was still a lot for me to learn about the car but we’re getting there. Driver changes are one area we still need to work on, but that’s just a question of practice.”

Darren Turner: “The conditions weren’t easy, so we achieved as much as we could under the circumstances: it was just a question of housekeeping really. Anthony got all his laps in, which was very important, and all three of us got more used to working together as a unit, which was vital as well. The car feels good so far, but let’s see what qualifying brings us tomorrow.”

Jos Verstappen: “For me the most useful thing about this practice session was just the opportunity to have more time in the car. A lot of it was about familiarising myself with small but important details, such as where all the switches are on the dashboard and how to adjust the lights. We learnt a lot about how the car is in wet conditions, but I’m not sure how much that is going to help us if it is completely dry tomorrow.”

009

Stuart Hall: “The car has everything I expected of it: the feeling was good and I felt comfortable straight away. I used the practice session just to familiarise myself with my new surroundings and the team, which is outstandingly professional. The conditions were very difficult, but the important thing to bear in mind is that they are the same for everyone.”

Peter Kox: “As I had so little time in the car before coming here, this session was very important for me to increase my experience. The track was very familiar, but there are always new things to learn with a new car and new team mates – particularly when the conditions are as inconsistent as they were tonight. But we achieved everything that we wanted to and had no real problems, which is the main thing.”

Harold Primat: “Everything was fine and we used the session to work on the set-up. For example, on the Mulsanne straight – which is normally a public road – the car kept on bottoming out, so we had to raise the suspension settings slightly. Mixed weather conditions actually seem to reduce the gap we have to the top diesel-powered cars, which could be encouraging for the race.”

Thursday’s qualifying for the 77th Le Mans 24 Hours on the 13–14 June takes place over the course of two sessions, from 7pm until 9pm and 10pm to midnight.

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Practice times for the 2009 Le Mans 24 Hours:

Pos	Class	Drivers	Team	Car	Time	Gap
1.	LMP1	Capello Kristensen McNish	Audi Sport Team Joest	Audi R15 TDI	3m30.708	
2.	LMP1	Rockenfeller Werner Luhr	Audi Sport North America	Audi R15 TDI	3m30.762	0.054
3.	LMP1	Brabham Gene Wurz	Peugeot Sport Total	Peugeot 908 HDi FAP	3m31.102	0.394
4.	LMP1	Boullion Pagnaud Treluyer	Pescarolo Sport	Peugeot 908 HDi FAP	3m33.028	2.320
5.	LMP1	Bourdais Montagny Sarrazin	Team Peugeot Total	Peugeot 908 HDi FAP	3m33.426	2.718
6.	LMP1	Bernhard Premat Dumas	Audi Sport Team Joest	Audi R15 TDI	3m34.716	4.008
7.	LMP1	Tinseau Juoanny Barbosa	Pescarolo Sport	Pescarolo 01-Judd	3m35.868	5.160
<b>8.</b>	<b>LMP1</b>	<b>Davidson Turner Verstappen</b>	<b>Aston Martin Racing</b>	<b>Lola-Aston Martin</b>	<b>3m35.996</b>	<b>5.288</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>LMP1</b>	<b>Charouz Enge Mucke</b>	<b>AMR Eastern Europe</b>	<b>Lola-Aston Martin</b>	<b>3m36.732</b>	<b>6.024</b>
10.	LMP1	Minassian Lamy Klein	Team Peugeot Total	Peugeot 908 HDi FAP	3m37.980	7.272
<b>11.</b>	<b>LMP1</b>	<b>Hall Primat Kox</b>	<b>Aston Martin Racing</b>	<b>Lola-Aston Martin</b>	<b>3m38.490</b>	<b>7.782</b>