



ASTON MARTIN RACING

BEHIND THE WHEEL AT BARCELONA...WITH DARREN TURNER

Gaydon, 1 April, 2009. "Barcelona is a really challenging circuit, I've completed some Formula 1 testing there in the past and I also took part in one GT race there in 2004, but that's it, I don't have too much experience of the track. The last couple of corners have been modified since my last visit, so I will have those to learn when I arrive.

The start-finish straight heads downhill and the first two corners that you get to are a quick right and left. You arrive at them really quickly but there's plenty of grip so you can brake late and really use the kerbs.

It's important to get that sequence right, because it sets you up for the long turn three: a right-hander that seems to go on for ages, where you generate quite a lot of G-force; probably up to 3.5G in the Aston Martin LMP1 car.

After a short straight you have another quite long right-hander then you plunge downhill into turn five. The braking here is really tricky, but if you get it right then there's a good opportunity to overtake.

Back on the throttle as quick as you can, going uphill through turn six – which is more of a flat-out left-hand kink, you keep climbing through turns seven and eight, just carrying the speed, taking loads of momentum into turn nine: a right-hander before the back straight.

This is probably the most tricky corner of the lap, as it is on the brow of the hill so you cannot see the apex at all. You don't actually even brake there, it's just a lift, but it's still a leap of faith. This is also a very important corner strategically, as you need to launch yourself properly into the back straight.

By the time you get to turn 10, you're really moving and it's another extremely difficult braking area as it's downhill. You can line someone up to overtake here, but it's obviously important not to outbrake yourself and get it wrong. That's easily done.

With a nice clean exit you can blast through turn 11 – which is just another kink in the LMP1 car – and then you're into turn 12: another longish right that can be deceptive. It's a short squirt downhill to turn 13, where you go right, and you're finally into the last part of the lap, which is completely new to me. Looking at the map it looks like we've got a tight left immediately followed by a right, but that's just something I'm going to have to learn.

The final long right-hand corner has also been re-profiled but it's still quick and a big challenge, it spits you out onto the start-finish straight and off you go again. Repeat that 200 times or so and you have a Le Mans Series race...

For us at Aston Martin Racing it's all about learning. I'm looking at this race as more of an extension to our testing programme. Hopefully we can pick up a few points at the end of it, but most importantly of all, I think we'll be able to use this experience to develop the car further."

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