

NEWS CATEGORIES ENTRY LIST REGULATIONS PHOTOS



Saturday 31st October 2009

31 October - 1st November 2009



Time in Okayama 2:25:46

PESCAROLO OPENS THE SCORE !



There were four different leaders in the top category, fantastic battles at every level, sudden twists and suspense! At the end of this grande premiere, the Pescarolo prototypes scored a double, first of all in LM P1 with Christophe Tinseau and Shinji Nakano and also in LM P2 for the Oak Racing team.

Just a few details finally decided the outcome of the race. The Lola-Judd that led initially ran into headlight problems. Slightly overlong pit stops for the Oreca that took up the running spoiled its victory chances. The Lola-Aston Martin had a problem with its front bonnet, and lost first place only 10 minutes from the end. Finally, the win went to the fourth leader, the Pescarolo-Judd entered by Sora Competition. None of the company's top brass was there to see it! Drivers Christophe Tinseau and Shinji Nakano, plus a technical squad made up of French and Japanese personnel bagged the win much to the delight of team principal, Claude Galopin.



The first-ever Asian Le Mans Series race got under way at 12h30 in blazing sunshine in front of a large crowd. Pole setter Johnny Cocker in his Lola-Judd coupe did not make any mistakes, shot into the lead and began to open up a gap helped by his soft tyres. After 5 laps, he was already 4 seconds in front of Nicolas Lapierre in the Oreca-AIM who was followed by Mücke's Lola-Aston Martin, Tinseau's Pescarolo-Judd and the 2 Audi R10s in the hands of Albers and Jarvis. By lap 8, the leaders had already caught the back markers and the gaps closed. The first three were covered by

under a second!

First upset on lap 21 when the Lola-Judd coupe that had led for the first 20 laps ran into a mechanical problem and pitted, as Race Control demanded that the defective lights be changed. This stop ruined the chances of the green car, which rejoined well behind the new leaders. Now in front was Lapierre with Mücke breathing down his neck closely followed by Christophe Tinseau. The race was developing into a real thriller with 3 seconds covering the leading trio followed by Albers and Jarvis in their Audis just in front of the LM P2 leader, Lahaye's Pescarolo-Mazda.

In LM GT1, Tsuchiya in his Aston Martin DBR9, who had started from the back of the grid, was now in first place ahead of the Saleen in the hands of Bervillé and Yogo's Lamborghini. In LM GT2, Marc Lieb's Porsche and Dirk Muller in the BMW M3 were at it hammer and tongs for the lead and rubbed flanks on lap 32!

As the opening salvo of refuelling stops began (lap 40), Harold Primat rejoined in the lead after taking over the Lola-Aston from Mücke. He was just in front of the first leader, Lapierre, who remained at the wheel of the Oreca-AIM and Shinji Nakano in the Pescarolo who fell back a little. Lapierre closed the gap to Primat, but at half distance the Lola-Aston in Gulf colours was still in front – just! The Oreca-AIM seemed to be playing a waiting game. Behind the battle for the overall lead, another one was going on that was just as intense. Dirk Muller had taken first place in the LM GT2 category, which Tom Milner, who relayed him, promptly lost to Henzler who was now in the blue Felbermayr Porsche. The leading Lola-Aston Martin opened the second round of refuelling stops with 63 minutes to go to the finish. Stefan Mücke rejoined a lap down on the Oreca and the Pescarolo. When they stopped in turn, the British car retook the lead. The Pescarolo went back out in second spot ahead of the Oreca, which had lost first then second places during its two stops.

Second major upset on lap 116 (11 minutes to go to the finish). The Lola-Aston Martin, which had opened up a slight gap, came in for a splash & dash. It suddenly pitted again to have the right-hand front louvers replaced losing third place in the process. The Pescarolo then went into the lead under 3 seconds in front of the Oreca, and at the flag the 2 French cars were separated by just over 6 seconds. There were a number of twists in the other categories as well. In LM GT1, Carlo van Dame stuck the Larbre Competition Saleen in a gravel trap handing victory to the JLOC Lamborghini driven by Yogo-Iiri. In LM GT2, the Rahal-Letterman Racing BMW emerged victorious in its no-holds-barred battle with the Felbermayr-Proton Porsche. In LM P2, the Oak Racing Pescarolo-Mazda scored an unchallenged victory leading from start to finish.

Quotes

Christophe Tinseau: "We didn't play a waiting game. I pushed really hard right from the start, but the car was understeering a lot. Halfway through my first stint the car started to run really well. It was very difficult to overtake so I was very careful."

Shinji Nakano: "I'm delighted to have helped the team thanks to my knowledge of the circuit. But I haven't driven since Silverstone last year."

Claude Galopin: (the Sora Competition manager): "Shinji did a great job. His race was an example of consistency. He started his stint three seconds behind and the gap was the same when he handed over. You always feel very emotional when you win a race, even more so when the level's very high. The first thing we did was to call Henri!"



3,703 km / 13 virages

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TEAM RELEASES

CHRONOS

24 HEURES DU MANS

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Pure emotion
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Thierry Guillemot: (Mazda France President who came to the opening round of the Asian Le Mans Series with Jacques Nicolet's Oak Racing team, LM P2 winner): "It's Oak Racing's fifth podium of the season with the Pescarolo-Mazda. We're really delighted with this win despite some problems in the first race."

Atsushi Yogo: (winner of the LM GT1 category in the JLOC Lamborghini): "We won because we've been fine-tuning our strategy for the race since yesterday. But I won't tell you what it is as we've got another race tomorrow!"

Bobby Rahal (co-owner of the GT2 winning team's BMW M3 E92): "We're very satisfied with our first season. The start was difficult, but BMW and Dunlop have done a great job improving the car. I hope that we're going to be able to gain an invitation for the 2010 Le Mans 24 Hours. I've raced in it on several occasions as a driver and I'd like to win it as a team owner."

Aston Martin's race ended on a low note. Stefan Mücke lost first place 10 minutes from the end when he came in for a splash & dash. He then lost third by stopping again to have the louvers replaced on the front bonnet.

The Team Oreca-AIM lost the victory during the final refuelling stop Loïc Duval had a problem restarting that cost him 6 seconds enabling the Pescarolo-Judd to overtake him.

Michelin Green X Challenge and the Motul Trophy

Two trophies are at stake in each of the 2 Okayama races. In today's event, the Michelin Green X Challenge (best thermal efficiency) went to the Ibanez Racing Service team's Courage-AER. It finished second in LM P2 driven by Damien Toulemonde, Frédéric Da Rocha and José Ibanez. The Motul Trophy that goes to the best Japanese team was awarded to the Courage-Oreca YGK entered by Tokai University driven by Shigekazu Wakisaka and Shogo Mitsuyama.

Daniel Poissenot : « The Japanese manufacturers have expressed their very strong interest in endurance »

For the first time, the JAF Commission made up of all the Japanese manufacturers, held a meeting at the Okayama circuit at the inaugural event of the Asian Le Mans Series - and not in Tokyo! The Commission asked Daniel Poissenot, the Asian Le Mans Clerk of the Course and advisor to the ACO President, Jean-Claude Plassart, to outline the technical perspectives and the evolution of the 2011 Le Mans regulations.

« It gave us the opportunity to clarify our intentions and insist on the fact that the reduction in sound and cubic capacity were due purely to the respect of the environment and better energy consumption, » declared Poissenot afterwards. In fact, Daniel was recently nominated president of the Alternative Energies Commission set up by the FSA and Eric Barbaroux, the director of the Federation's sustainable development department.

« The manufacturers' representatives wanted to know how we are going to provide a level playing field for the different sources of energy. Their very strong interest reassured us about their future intentions. We at the ACO feel that endurance is a form of racing that exercises a deep attraction on them, as it is an ideal platform to test and develop new sources of energy. »

Okayama Gazette

The marshal from post 11. - His name is Alain Bernard, but he's not the guy who won the 100 metres freestyle in Peking. He obtained his gold medal by working 36 weekends of the year as a track marshal in rallies, hill climbs and circuits in the west of France. The ACO invited him and his wife, Sylvie, to attend the inaugural event of the Asian Le Mans Series on the Okayama circuit. The marshal from post 11 in the last Le Mans 24 hours was one of the people who helped Benoit Tréluyer after his huge shunt in the Pescarolo-entered Peugeot 908. He is enjoying every minute of his stay, and is paying particular attention to the work of his Japanese colleagues. "They're incredibly adept at waving the flags," he says. So if you see a marshal waving a flag Japanese style in the next Le Mans 24 Hours, it'll be Alain Bernard!

The Rahal-Letterman team's BMW M3 could do no better than fifth in the LM GT2 category even though Dirk Muller showed that the car was as quick as the best Porsches and the Aston Martin Vantage early on in qualifying. Unfortunately, Muller went off into a gravel trap ruining his session, as he only managed to extract himself and get back to his pit just as the chequered flag was hung out.

Concerning the disqualification of the 2 cars that set the quickest times in GT1 and GT2, we would like to point out that they are not works Aston Martins, but cars entered by private teams. Barry Forth, Hong Kong Racing's team manager (Aston Martin Vantage GT2 driven by Tomas Enge), was very unhappy at what he considered was a double punishment as the disqualification concerned the weekend's two races. EN GT1, pole went to the Saleen S7R entered by the Larbre Compétition team, which will start from the fifth row of the grid. The fastest lap was set by Dutchman Carlo Van Dam who is sharing the American car with Belgian Stéphane Lemeret and Roland Bervillé from France.

[Before races](#)

[Practice sessions](#)

[Race 1](#)

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