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Drayson Racing Earns Best Le Mans Series Finish, 7th at Spa



FRANCORCHAMPS, BELGIUM – The Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps seldom disappoints and Sunday's 1000Km de Spa was no exception. Drayson Racing came to the legendary track for the final Le Mans Series race prior to the 24 Heures du Mans with the focus to perform well at the Belgium facility and learn for Le Mans. They did both! Drivers Paul Drayson (London/Gloucestershire, UK) and Jonny Cocker (Guisborough, Yorks, UK) earned the team its best career Le Mans Series finish. The result bettered their first Le Mans Series outing, held at the Circuit de Catalunya in Barcelona, by one position taking seventh in GT2 class, 29th overall.

The race, scheduled for 1000Km/621.3 mile or six hours, never saw the clock expire. Unlike the first event of the season in Spain, the Belgium round finished just under the six hour time limit as the overall leaders took the chequered flag on lap 143, nearly ten minutes ahead of the maximum time allowed.

The finish was not without its trials. Cocker got off to a dramatic start jumping from the team's seventh-place grid position to fifth before the conclusion of lap one. The Official Partner Team of Aston Martin Racing (AMR) held the position through its first of seven pit stops. They would drop a lap to the class leaders on the second stop. While they made ground up impressively, they were not able to overcome the lap deficit but never gave a position away to those near them either.

As challenging as the 7.003 Km/4.35 mile Spa course is, the weather is often more so. The rain, forecasted to come as soon as hour two, never materialized. Instead, warm and sunny conditions prevailed which proved another obstacle. The air conditioning unit in the car - used to lower the cockpit temperatures generated by the front-engine V8 - weakened towards the end of the race. Drayson, who had driven a long, two hours and 19 minutes during his first stint, had to race for nearly an hour in the growing temperatures of the cockpit of the closed sports car. All combined, Drayson's performance at the end of the nearly six hours of racing impressed and showed the programmes readiness for the gruelling 24 hours around the longer and faster French circuit. Marino Franchitti (Edinburgh/London UK) will join Drayson and Cocker at Le Mans for the team's first visit to Le Mans, 13-14 June.

The team will now return to its Banbury, UK headquarters to make final preparations for France. The race will mark not only the team's 24 Hour but also the first Le Mans visit for Drayson and Cocker. Franchitti has one LM GT2 class start, coming in 2005, in the greatest sports car race in the world.

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Lady Drayson, Owner: “We are delighted with the result on our first appearance at the Spa circuit. The experience gained from this race we hope to use in preparation for the big challenge of the Le Mans 24 Hours.”

Paul Drayson, Driver/Owner: “Very pleased with the weekend. We were on the pace. Jonny was running fourth in the early stages. Personally, I feel ready for Le Mans having done more than half the driving this time. It was an endurance test for me. I was pleased with my two hour and 20 minute first stint. Having no AC in the last stint was a good fitness test too. A front engine sports car is very hot without proper cooling and it is good to know you can do it if you have to. The result shows that we are on track towards Le Mans. The reliability of the car was great. Except for the minor issue with the AC on my last stint the car was perfect. The Michelin tyres and brakes were excellent. I can't wait to get back in the car again. The next four weeks waiting on Le Mans are going to drag.”

Jonny Cocker, Driver: “First stint was really good. We started on the soft Michelin tyre option and the track was a bit warmer than we expected. We needed to pit at our first opportunity. We were running fourth at that point. That was great. It was the highest we have run with this car. It was fantastic to show that we are really making progress now. I feel that we made another big step since the testing. It is nice to come to a race after so much testing and see where we are. The second stint; the car was nice and consistent. The car is running really strong but also pretty flawlessly as well. Paul had a problem with the AC at the end but that was the only issue. I am really looking forward to Le Mans.”

Dale White, Team Manager: “This was the next step in the process. We are gaining every week. What we learned here will serve us well at Le Mans. We always like to finish higher but we accomplished what we had hoped to this weekend and more. This was a very successful weekend as it relates to us being ready for Le Mans.”

To visit the official web site of Drayson Racing, please go to

www.draysonstracing.com.

To learn more about Aston Martin Racing, please proceed to

www.astonmartinracing.com.

For Live Timing and Scoring as well as more on the Le Mans Series visit

www.lemans-series.com.

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Digital images and complete team and driver bios available upon request. Please do not publish contact information other than web sites. Thank you.

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