



Okayama

1st November 2009

Two podiums to close the season on a high note...

Nicolas Lapierre and Loïc Duval were on the pace in both rounds of the Asian Le Mans Series finishing in the first three on both occasions.



The ORECA 01 was one of the front-runners on its engine supplier's home turf in the first Asian Le Mans Series. Nicolas Lapierre and Loïc Duval fought for victory in both rounds. On Saturday, they finished second and today they were again among the quickest drivers on the track, and had a better strategy. The team decided to make one less stop than its rivals. Unfortunately, bad luck

struck the French outfit when a lump of rubber from a tyre blocked the air intake causing the engine to cut out. Without this bizarre incident, the Team ORECA-Matmut-AIM would have been in a position to fight for the topmost step of the podium, and first place overall in the Asian Le Mans Series final classification.

Race 1. Nicolas made an excellent start from third place on the grid and got past the Pescarolo. After fighting off the Lola-Aston Martin, he pulled in the Lola/Drayson, which he passed into the lead on lap 19. He stayed in front until the end of the first hour. He was second after the refuelling stops and caught the Lola-Aston Martin, which he immediately began to harass. But the power of the Aston Martin engine prevented him from finding a way past, and he was only a few tenths behind at the end of his double stint. Loïc stalled the engine as he rejoined to start his first stint. He pulled in the leaders and got up to second place with less than fifteen minutes to go to the finish after the Lola-Aston Martin's final splash & dash.

Race 2. The ORECA 01 started from third place and was hemmed in by the Pescarolo, which the Lola-Aston Martin took advantage of pushing Nicolas back to fourth. He maintained the same pace as the leaders while nursing his fuel consumption. After a very quick first pit stop, Loïc rejoined in second place neck and neck with the Pescarolo. He was unable to keep it despite his evident fighting spirit. A lump of rubber got stuck in the air intake and caused the engine to cut out, so he had to pit. He rejoined in sixth place with the bit between his teeth, and overtook the no.14 Audi and the no.87 Lola-Judd followed by the second of the Audis putting him back in the top three. He stayed in the car for a second stint and tried to close the gap. He brought down the gap from 1 minute to 2 seconds after a splash & dash by his rival a few minutes before the flag.



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QUOTES :

Hugues de Chaunac, ORECA Group President : « Two podiums in two races is a positive result. The ORECA 01 again showed its competitiveness and the progress we've made during the 2009 season. Nicolas and Loïc fought for victory in both races, and we could have won had it not been for a lump of rubber that got stuck in the air intake. We had a great strategy, but this problem forced the car to do a slow lap and then pit. Despite everything, the team's made another step forward and we're now looking to 2010. »

Nicolas Lapierre, 2nd et 3rd (ORECA 01) :

« We've finished the season with two podiums. We were on the pace in both races and we could have won. We lost out on small details. In the first round we lost time in the pits; in the second we had a problem with a lump of rubber. It's just bad luck but it prevented us from fighting for first place in the race and in the Asian Le Mans Series. It's very annoying, as we had the speed, and the team had the best strategy. »



Loïc Duval, 2nd et 3rd (ORECA 01) : « I'm happy to have been on the podium twice, but as a driver you always want to go for victory, and we could have won both races. In the second round, it was just sheer bad luck. Without that stop we were ideally placed. It's frustrating. Personally, it was a good experience. I really enjoyed my stint with the team and at the wheel of the ORECA 01. »



David Flourey, Technical Director Team ORECA-Matmut-AIM :

« We lost victory twice in the pits. During the first race we lost a few seconds restarting, and during the second a lump of rubber upset our strategy, as it caused engine cutouts. It was a random incident that you can't foresee. We had the potential to win both races and the team's work was excellent, especially during the second round. We were the quickest in the pits, fast on the track and our fuel consumption gamble was the right one. »



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