



ALMS Lime Rock Northeast Grand Prix

Team Race Reports Compilation

It was a hot day in the Berkshires and David Brabham made sure he hot-footed around Timo Bernhard right when it counted the most, on the last lap. Bravo to David for a stellar comeback and win! And kudos galore to Skip Barber and the entire LRP team for creating a more beautiful race circuit!

Farnbacher Loles Racing Report

Farnbacher Loles Racing earned its second American Le Mans Series podium on Saturday, despite two major setbacks during the annual series race at Lime Rock Park in Lakeville, Conn. Dirk Werner of Kissenbrück, Germany, and Richard Westbrook of London, England, combined for a second-place GT2 class finish, taking the position in the last minute of the two-hour 45-minute race.

Westbrook started the No. 87 Porsche 911 GT3 RSR from the GT2 pole position. He led the class for the first 30 minutes of the race, then dropped to fourth with a flat-spotted left-front tire. The soft tire compound selected by the team helped Werner win the class pole position on Friday, but it was not ideal for the 127-degree track temperature of the Saturday race. Westbrook pitted for fresh tires and a driver change at 47 minutes, sending Werner back on track fifth in class, one lap behind the class leader.

Werner was fourth in class and had just regained the lost lap when he tangled with the class-leading Porsche. Officials judged the contact to be avoidable and assessed Werner a stop/go penalty. After serving the late-race penalty, he worked back up to take second at the checkered flag.

Gregory Loles, team owner: "A podium is always a welcome result. We got a little unlucky with the timing of the first yellow and that put us a lap down. From there on, Dirk and Richard did a tremendous job to deliver our second podium of the season. It was an all-around excellent effort and we are now going to [the next race at] Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course with the momentum to challenge for our first win."

Dirk Werner: "I'm really happy for the team that we finally managed to get on the podium again, after a few good runs. The car was really, really fast – I think the car had a win in it today. In the beginning, we had a little issue with the tires, but it was a great day for the team, for Richard and me. I'm looking forward to the next races and I think if the performance stays like this, the win will come sooner or later."

Richard Westbrook: "After all the problems we had in the race, it's amazing that we came second. I'm a little bit disappointed because without the problems, I think we were good enough to win today. We had a big problem with our front left tire in the first stint. I just had to try to bring it home because after three laps, the tire was absolutely gone. If we'd had a safety car [caution] that first 45 minutes, it would have been fine, but luck didn't play on our side, so we had to pit under green and

lose a lap. Then Dirk did a great job and we pulled our way up to second – with a stop-and-go, so it can't be bad."

Acura Teams Report

David Brabham's last-lap pole run on Friday at Lime Rock Park was trumped by his performance Saturday in the Northeast Grand Prix.

The No. 9 Patrón Highcroft Acura ARX-01b driver put in one of the best maneuvers in American Le Mans Series history with a first-turn outside pass of Timo Bernhard to score Acura's first overall victory in two seasons of ALMS competition in front of massive crowd encircling the 1.53-mile road course.

Brabham, who co-drove to his second 24 Hours of Le Mans title last month, came from a 5.5-second deficit with eight minutes remaining in the two-hour, 45-minute feature to move around Bernhard's Penske Porsche on the next to last lap. The native Australian took over the driving chores from Scott Sharp with 90 minutes to go and worked his way from fourth to second on Lap 126. The final 40 laps proved to be an all-out sprint to the checkered flag, as Brabham and Bernhard diced their way through the backmarkers in a thrilling down-to-the-wire finish.

The Patrón Highcroft victory was its second of the 2008 ALMS campaign, following a previous last-lap thriller with Brabham passing the No. 7 Penske Porsche on the streets of Long Beach last April.

The win did not come easily for the nearby Danbury, Conn., organization after Sharp collided with a couple of other cars early in the race. The Patrón crew had to replace the No. 9 car's rear wing in quick fashion and Sharp was able to remain on the lead lap as the leaders barreled down on Sharp's mount.

It was then Brabham's spectacular drive to the front capped a dream weekend for the Patrón Highcroft team that included Friday pole position and Acura's first overall American Le Mans Series triumph.

The Mexican driving duo of Adrian Fernandez and Luis Diaz piloted its No. 15 Lowe's Fernandez Acura ARX-01b to fifth overall Saturday and a fourth-place finish in the LMP2 division. The Lowe's car ran as high as third during the fifth stop on the 11-race ALMS tour, before settling for fifth due to a fuel economy strategy.

The new combination of IndyCar Series star Marco Andretti and Le Mans veteran Franck Montagny drove a solid come-from-behind race in the No. 26 XM Satellite Radio Andretti Green Racing Acura ARX-01b machine to finish sixth, overall after starting last in the 27-car field. Andretti, who later drove the Nashville IndyCar Series race Saturday night, started from the back of the grid and drove to eighth before handing the Acura over to Montagny.

The No. 66 Panasonic ELS Sound de Ferran Motorsports Acura ARX-01b had a rough outing Saturday from a front starting spot. Drivers Simon Pagenaud and Gil de Ferran were able to finish the race after several pit stops due to electrical problems. The No. 66 car finished 14th overall, seventh in the LMP2 class.

DAVID BRABHAM (#9 Patrón Highcroft Racing Acura ARX-01b): "This race was a tough one. With the sand coming up on the racing surface, it was very easy to make mistakes. I am massively relieved we were able to pull off this win. It was a hard charge to catch the Penske car at the end. To go around the outside of Turn One and make that pass on Timo [Bernhard] was a driver's dream move. I knew the Patrón Acura was really good today. I had a lot of confidence in the car

to make that type of move with only a lap or two left. I knew our car had the grip and I had to go for it. This is huge win for our team, being that it is a home race. It is very exciting to get Acura its first overall win in the American Le Mans Series. Everyone at Acura and HPD has worked hard for this win. It is amazing to think where the Highcroft team has come from starting last year with an all-new operation. Now, this overall win at Lime Rock is just a fitting climax for us. ”

SCOTT SHARP (#9 Patrón Highcroft Racing Acura ARX-01b): “This is an unbelievable win. We felt this would be a good track for us, as will Mid-Ohio next week. On the first lap, one of the Penske Porsches tried to slide under me in the first turn. I didn’t want to get into the marbles but the car shot up the track. Then I was wide, and the Penskes and the Audis got by me. That got me mad, so I kept my head down and drove as hard as possible. We knew we would be loose [oversteer] with the car early on. I don’t know what happened with [Simon] Pagenaud during an early-race incident. I was going into the chicane and he hit me and I spun. I got back going and just tried to stay out of trouble. I wanted to give David [Brabham] a good car for the end. Duncan [Dayton] and the crew did a great job with strategy today.”

DUNCAN DAYTON (#9 Patrón Highcroft Racing Acura ARX-01b team owner): “Long Beach was a huge win for us. The first one is always the hardest. We came back from adversity and after getting hit from behind with Scott. We had to pit and then go back out and change a floor on the car. It is great that [chassis specialist] Nick Wirth and his guys have this new quick-change rear and floor for us. It is tough to change things here and not lose a lap. To see David drive the Patrón Highcroft Acura that way again was sensational. Just like he did from behind at Long Beach. Scotty did a good job at the start of race with some of aero [dynamic] stuff hanging off the car. That makes it hard to drive. The competition level is so high here in the ALMS, and to win overall is an honor. I am so proud of everyone on our team. Now, we move to Mid-Ohio next week and look to win at the Acura Sports Car Challenge.”

ROB HILL (#9 Patrón Highcroft Racing Acura ARX-01b team manager): “We definitely rolled the dice with the fuel meter today. I had my fingers crossed with two minutes to go in the race. We were going for it and, if it ran out of fuel, those were the breaks. That was David being David at the end. He is one awesome driver! When you need it from him, he just delivers. It was a tremendous win for the team.”

ERIK BERKMAN (President, Honda Performance Development): “Wow! You couldn’t have written a better story for our group at Acura and HPD. It was a wild weekend with the front row for Acura and then we are bumping into each other. We looked out of contention in the middle of the race. The Patrón Highcroft team did some heroic work in the pits to stay on the lead lap. It was an amazing race. I followed Robert Clarke in this position, and Robert did a massive amount of work to help make this win possible. I am proud of all of the Acura teams and I am sure he is, too. Winning overall is a new milestone for this young Acura program. But we have to continue to work hard and keep pushing. I want to congratulate Duncan [Dayton] and the whole Patrón Highcroft Racing organization for a superb effort in this Lime Rock victory.”

Tafel Racing Report

It was billed as a road racer's bullring and today's American Le Mans Northeast Grand Prix lived up to the billing. The newly reconfigured and repaved Lime Rock (Conn.) Park resembled a cage-match as the GT2 class competitors fought tooth and nail for a victory in the fifth round of the 11-race championship. At the checkered flag the No. 71 Tafel/Bell Micro Racing Ferrari F430 GTC was fourth after nearly taking a second-place until a late-race fuel stop dropped the car of Dirk Müller (a native of Germany living in Monaco) and Dominik Farnbacher (Ansbach, Germany) from the podium. The No. 73 Tafel Racing Ferrari F430 GTC co-driven by Alex Figge (Denver, Col.) and

Jim Tafel (Alpharetta, Ga.) suffered early race run-ins that put them deep in the pack ultimately crossing the finish line ninth in class.

No. 73 Tafel Racing Ferrari F430 GTC on track at Lime Rock. Image by Rick Dole.

No. 71 Tafel/Bell Micro Racing Ferrari F430 GTC

Drivers: Dominik Farnbacher (Ansbach, Germany), Dirk Müller (a native of Germany now living in Monaco)

Dominik Farnbacher took the green flag from third on the GT2 class grid. The young German phenom slipped to fourth at the start but kept his composure working the No. 71 Tafel/Bell Micro Racing Ferrari F430 GTC back into third-place by lap 15. Composure was hard to find outside of the cockpit of the Tafel Racing machine at the 1.51-mile track. The narrow, twisting course took made duels into brawls throughout the race and Farnbacher found himself entangled with a lapped car during the first half of the event. While attempting a pass around the outside of a fellow GT2 car, Farnbacher treaded onto the dirty portion of the track. While correcting the car from spinning he made contact with the backmarker. The incident would come back to haunt the team three times; first as a drive through penalty for preventable contact and secondly when the driver side door refused to open due to damage resulting from the contact. During the Tony Dowe (Cumming, Ga.) directed team's first pit stop, the door - crushed near the latching mechanism - failed to open for Dirk Müller who was taking over the car for the second half of the race on lap 76, one hour and 23 minutes into the race. The team quickly adapted doing the driver change through the passenger-side door. However, the delay dropped the Bell Micro Ferrari to fifth, one lap down. Müller began his attack and through strategy and driving the worked the two-time 2008 winner through the field and as high as second as others pitted for fuel. The third-time the door resurfaced came in the closing stages. Knowing that race officials would force the team to repair the door if the team stopped, Dowe and engineers Scott Besst and Mike Menapace worked to stretch the fuel. However, on the race's final lap, Müller called in that the car was out of fuel. Müller made it back to pit lane and received a splash of fuel and re-entered the track to take the checkered flag in fourth.

No. 73 Tafel Racing Ferrari F430 GTC

Drivers: Alex Figge (Denver, Col.), Jim Tafel (Alpharetta, Ga.)

The No. 73 Tafel Ferrari F430 GTC made its third start of the 2008 season as a provisional starter, 12th, after failing to take a qualifying time on Friday. The No. 73 had been involved in a significant incident that damaged the nose, driver side headlight assembly and passenger door in the weekend's second practice. Prior to the No. 73's first of three pit stops, Jim Tafel had gone off course while attempting to make way for the overtaking leaders. The car sustained cosmetic damage to the driver's side including the side-view mirror in the excursion. The mirror would need to be replaced before co-driver Alex Figge could take to the course. The team fell from ninth to tenth in the stop. David Fullerton would call for two stops for fuel in an effort to work the No. 73 towards the front of the field. Figge, who was sore from the accident the day before, drove a strong race to place the No. 73 ninth in the final standings; its second-best showing of the year.

Jim Tafel, Driver, No. 73: "It was a brutal race. I was trying to let the leaders come around me and I went off track just before the end of my stint. I handed the car over to Alex and he did a great job. My thanks to the whole team for their effort. I feel sick about the No. 71, having to stop for fuel on the last lap. It isn't the result that we hoped for but we'll take it and move on to Mid-Ohio."

Dominik Farnbacher, Driver, No. 71: "Five or six times I got in a very bad situation with prototypes so I would gain a position and then I would loss one. I got hit so many times; I said before this race was all about surviving. I had the [No. 61] Risi car in front of me; I was lapping him for maybe the third time. He was going very slowly into turn two and I thought he was having a problem so I was going to overtake him on the outside. I went on the outside but there was a lot of sand. As soon as I went into the turn the car slipped away from me and we hit each other. Maybe from the outside it

looked like I was angry at him but I was just correcting the car. I was very surprised when they called me in for a penalty. All-in-all I was very happy with the car. Thank you to the team for the great car and maybe this time we didn't have luck but we didn't lose the contact with the front car in the championship. We are still second and the gap is only 11 points. Let them have one mistake and we are right back there."

Dirk Müller, Driver, No. 71: "I came here for the first time in my life and, to be fair, I liked it. I never had any on-track situations. Everyone behaved very professionally around me. I thought it was great racing. The car was like a rocket. From the middle of my stint on I was trying to save fuel; looking towards the end of the race. We worked our way up to third and then got lucky and moved into second. Then we got very unlucky and ran out of fuel at the end. We finished fourth and that is better than a DNF. We lost big momentum in the points but we are still second in the championship. It shows that everything needs to go right. We win together, we lose together. We need to look forward and just take it as it is. We nearly finished second and now we are fourth. That's OK."

Alex Figge, Driver, No. 73: "When we were in a rhythm we were in the same pace as Dirk and Dom. To me that is really encouraging because I am still getting the pace a little bit. I still need to work on the prototype situation. What is working in my mind is causing some hairy moments out on track. We'll practice that some more on a bigger track at Mid-O. All-in-all, I am excited. I really want to thank Jim and the team. It is really a first-class effort, great stops."

Porsche Motorsports Report

Patrick Long, Sascha Maassen, Timo Bernhard, Romain Dumas, Butch Leitzinger, Marino Franchitti, Chris Dyson and Guy Smith all had something in common as the checkered flag dropped at the finish of the Northeast Grand Prix at Lime Rock Park on Saturday afternoon. All are Porsche RS Spyder drivers; all drove cars that either led or ran in the top three; and all had a day that ended in various degrees of disappointment. But, for the Flying Lizard Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3 RSR drivers Wolf Henzler and Joerg Bergmeister, it was all good for round five of the American Le Mans Series in northwest Connecticut.

The #7 Penske Porsche RS Spyder of Timo Bernhard/Romain Dumas, who now lead the LMP2 drivers championship by 24 points, took the lead at the one-hour mark just before a 25-minute yellow flag, and led for an hour and 43 minutes before being overhauled by the Brabham/Sharp Acura and settling for second place.

Both the Porsche and the Acura spent the last 30 minutes trying to stay out of trouble created by slower traffic, a marginal fuel supply, and a track littered with dirt and rocks from previous mishaps during the race. Bernhard, who held the lead for most of that time, would build a 10 – 15-second lead, only to get stuck behind a gaggle of GT cars and have the margin shrink to one – three seconds. Both cars had made only one fuel stop, but thought they could make it to the end with all the yellow flags that had ensued, and the leanest fuel mode they could muster.

Two laps from the end – only 90 seconds from the finish -- after Timo lost a bout with traffic, Brabham attempted to pass him on the outside, and Timo stuck the nose of the car on the inside line, but the Acura cut him off, and Timo had to slam on the brakes, locking up the rear end and spinning onto the grass.

"I thought I could go faster than him, but I had bad luck in traffic, and he caught up to me. When he cut in front of me, I ran out of room on the inside line, and would have crashed into the barrier if I held that line. I decided it was better to spin and avoid contact, thus making sure I finished second, than it was to crash and put our season points in danger," said Bernhard, who now has three victories and two second-place LMP2 finishes with Dumas to his credit.

Porsche leads Acura in the LMP2 manufacturers title chase by 13 points after five races. The #6 Penske Porsche RS Spyder of Sascha Maassen/Patrick Long got off to an even better start, with Long getting a great start and taking the overall lead on the first lap – a lead he held until lap seven, and holding the LMP2 class lead for the first hour of the race. Just before that 25-minute yellow flag, teammate Dumas got by Long, and then a miscue of the Penske pit caused the team to pit without a planned driver change, so Patrick had to bring the car back in for his driver change, costing track position and solidifying the lead for the number seven car.

But Maassen made good progress once the yellow was over, staying on the lead lap and running fourth behind the two Dyson Racing Porsche RS Spyders, the Acura, and of course, his team car.

But then, after #16 Dyson Racing Porsche RS Spyder came into the pits for its driver change, Chris Dyson, who was running second, gave the car to Guy Smith, and Smith came together with the #44 Flying Lizard Porsche, crashing heavily and putting the Dyson car out of the race. That left the #20 Dyson Racing Porsche RS Spyder of Butch Leitzinger, who was running third after starting driver Marino Franchitti had run as high as second during his opening stint. Leitzinger drove a magnificent stint, and was in line for a podium finish when Maassen's RS Spyder lost grip and hit the rear end of his car with only three minutes to go, pushing Butch into the tire wall and ending his day. Maassen received a one-minute penalty for the incident, but he and Patrick still managed to finish third in LMP2. Leitzinger/Franchitti had enough laps to collect sixth-place points as the incident happened so late in the race.

For the more than 200 Porsche owners who packed the Porscheplatz to watch the race, the GT2 class finish provided a happier ending to the day's festivities, as Joerg Bergmeister/Wolf Henzler extended their class points lead to 11 over the Farnbacher/Mueller Ferrari with a victory in the #45 Flying Lizard Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3 RSR.

"We didn't qualify where we wanted to because of set-up problems, but once we got the lead – thanks to quick work by our crew – we tried to control the race, and led by as many as two laps near the end. Wolf did a good job of keeping the car out of trouble during the last part of the race, and bringing home the victory. We had too much lock on the differential, but once we corrected that problem, we had a good car," said Bergmeister.

The #46 Patrick Pilet/Johannes van Overbeek Flying Lizard Porsche, which led the class several times during the first hour, came together with the #87 Farnbacher Loles Racing Porsche of Dirk Werner/Richard Westbrook, causing cooling system damage requiring multiple stops for water and a seventh place finish. The Darren Law/Seth Neiman Flying Lizard finished 11th after its crash with the Guy Smith LMP2 Porsche (see above).

But all was not lost for the #87 Porsche, which finished second when the Dirk Mueller/Dominik Farnbacher (son of Farnbacher Loles Racing partner Horst Farnbacher) Ferrari ran out of fuel on the last lap.

After all the problems we had in the race, it's amazing that we came second. I'm a little bit disappointed because without the problems, I think we were good enough to win today. We had a big problem with our front left tire in the first stint – I just had to try to bring it home because after three laps, the tire was absolutely gone. If we'd had a safety car that first 45 minutes, it would have been fine, but luck didn't play on our side, so we had to pit under green and lose a lap. Then Dirk did a great job and we pulled our way up to second – with a stop-and-go, so it can't be bad," said Richard Westbrook, defending Porsche Mobil 1 Supercup champion.

Porsche now leads Ferrari by 13 points in the GT2 manufacturers points battle. Despite the fact that Porsche and Acura had a terrific battle for the LMP2 class – and overall – pole positions, the story of Friday's Northeast Grand Prix qualifying session for Saturday's American Le Mans Series race at Lime Rock Park was the condition of the newly-paved and rebuilt racing circuit.

The Penske Porsche RS Spyders qualified third (Sascha Maassen/Patrick Long) and fourth (Romain Dumas/Timo Bernhard) overall, and third and fourth in the LMP2 class behind the Brabham/Sharp and the de Ferran/Pagenaud Acuras, but the talk of the town was the new track, which had a role to play in the seven red flags that plagued practice and qualifying. Track management had overseen a complete repaving of the circuit between its Memorial Day event and this weekend, including the building of two new corners which completely change the characteristics of this classic road-racing venue. After two practice sessions and qualifying, the consensus was that, although the smooth surface was a welcome change from Lime Rock events of the past, the new corners were too narrow for multi-class racing, and both the slow cars and the fast cars have trouble finding track space to get out of the way and overtake respectively.

Still, when it's all said and done, everyone has to race on the same circuit, and Hartmut Kristen, head of Porsche Motorsport, expects the Porsche-Acura battle to continue to be close. “

After some rear wing adjustments this morning, the Porsche RS Spyders qualified very well, as two Acuras, two Penske Porsches, another Acura, and a Dyson Porsche RS Spyder took the top six positions, all a little more than a half-second apart,” said Kristen, who noted the Audi LMP1 cars were eighth and ninth overall. “We have known since Sebring that the Acuras are much improved this year, and we expect another close finish at Lime Rock.

AUDI Motorsports Report

Small errors, big impact. That is the bottom line for Audi after the fifth round of the American Le Mans Series at Lime Rock (U.S. state of Connecticut). In front of an impressive crowd, Audi's diesel sports car was the fastest car of the field. However, Team Audi Sport North America had to settle for fourth place overall and a victory in the LM P1 class after a thrilling race.

On the shortest track of the American Le Mans Series' schedule, the two Audi R10 TDI prototypes started from the fourth row of the grid. It took Emanuele Pirro and Lucas Luhr just ten minutes to overtake the Acura/Hondas and Porsches in front of them and take a 1-2 lead for Audi. Particularly

impressive was the performance of Emanuele Pirro, who opened a commanding 20-second lead before he handed the R10 TDI over to Dindo Capello just before the end of the first hour.

At his comeback in the ALMS, the defending champion and Le Mans winner, however, enjoyed just eight laps before colliding with a slower GT1 car and crashing into the barrier in spectacular style. The strength of the R10 TDI allowed Capello to continue the race after a 40-minute repair and even setting the fastest race-lap in 48.007 seconds. However, even with a quick repair and good driving the best finish possible was 21st overall and 3rd in class.

Lucas Luhr needed just twelve laps to move from eighth to second place after a careful start with the "sister car". The German dropped back to position five temporarily after a spin. Despite the nose of the car being damaged, Luhr was already back in third position before handing the car over to Marco Werner.

A small mistake of the crew at the pit-stop resulted in a penalty: Because a mechanic had his goggles not properly fitted as requested by the regulations, a 25-second time penalty was imposed against the team which cost Luhr/Werner a lap and dropped them to position eight. Werner fought his way back to fourth place with fast lap times despite changing the nose during a caution period and having to pit for fuel just ten laps from the finish.

With their fourth class victory of the season, the two Audi drivers extended their lead in the LM P1 class of the American Le Mans Series. The next race is taking place as early as next weekend at Mid-Ohio.

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): "The performance of the Audi R10 TDI was great, but unfortunately both the team and the drivers made mistakes that prevented us from scoring an adequately good result. Such errors simply may not happen because the competition in the American Le Mans Series is so strong. I hope that next week at Mid-Ohio everybody will concentrate on making an absolutely flawless job. Only then we can win."

Lucas Luhr (Audi R10 TDI #2): "This was a very exciting race. We had the speed to achieve much more today because we had the fastest car in the field. But if you don't have the necessary luck than you cannot win. This happened to us today. We lost a lap due to the penalty in the pits. The team did a great job afterwards and Marco (Werner) was really flying so we were able to get the lap back. Unfortunately there was no caution period at the right time. At least we've scored another class victory and we were stronger than expected on this track. However, I'm disappointed because there was more in the car. We simply have to make up for this next week at Mid-Ohio."

Marco Werner (Audi R10 TDI #2): "This race belonged to Audi. In two respects: The number-1-car was well in front at the beginning, and we would also have had it in our hands, if ... we would not have got the 25-second penalty and not to refuel again shortly before the end of the race. We really had a good chance to win this race. Now it's a class victory and we have to be content with this. Virtually we came back from nowhere. But it's clear we had more in our hands."

Dindo Capello (Audi R10 TDI #1): "I'm very disappointed because we had a car to win the race. Emanuele (Pirro) did a very good and fast first stint. When I got into the car I tried not to take any risks because I knew the car was fast. Regarding the accident I have to say that this year – apart from Le Mans – something is going wrong. I always seem to be in the wrong place at the wrong moment. I tried to be very careful and to stay away from any kind of contact. But suddenly I got a hit from behind. To be honest, I still don't know what happened. But I'm very confident for Mid-Ohio because our car was really fast."

Emanuele Pirro (Audi R10 TDI #1): "It is unfortunate. We had the superior car. Everything was looking great. Personally after a disappointing Le Mans I really enjoyed every single corner of this race. It was really looking good without taking any risks. Then the accident happened. This is racing. At this circuit normally we were not expecting to be that good. With this car we could easily win. Let's look at the positive side: We had a competitive race and I was very satisfied. "

Dave Maraj (Team Director Audi Sport North America): "The performance of the cars was extremely well. Unfortunately there were a couple of little errors by the drivers and one little error by the crew. That's why we lost the race. On such a short race track and with such a short race you cannot afford making any mistakes."

The results at Lime Rock:

- 1 Brabham/Sharp (Acura/Honda) 168 laps in 2h 45m 57.790s
- 2 Dumas/Bernhard (Porsche) + 18.872s
- 3 Maassen/Long (Porsche) + 1m 01.641s
- 4 Luhr/Werner (Audi R10 TDI) - 1 lap (1st in LM P1)
- 5 Fernandez/Diaz (Acura/Honda) - 2 laps
- 6 Andretti/Montagny (Acura/Honda) - 3 laps
- 7 Franchitti/Leitzinger (Porsche) - 4 laps
- 8 O'Connell/Magnussen (Chevrolet) - 11 laps
- 9 Bergmeister/Henzler (Porsche) - 14 laps
- 10 Field/Field/Berry (Lola) - 14 laps (2nd in LM P1)

Dirk Werner's Race Report

We saw the new track for the first time on Thursday. It was clear that it would be very slippery and that it had changed a lot. The experience I had from a few previous races didn't mean anything, because the character changed from the old track to the new one.

We didn't have a lot of free practice, so we had to find a way to set up the car really quickly. I think the experience our technical director, Horst Farnbacher, has in racing made it easier to find a good setup right from the beginning. We were fast in both practice sessions and could improve the car.

For qualifying, we were pretty confident that we had a good shot at the pole. I qualified the car and had some good laps – really on the edge, sometimes a little bit over the limit, probably! I was very happy that I could get my first pole in the series and the first pole for the team. Friday was a great day for us.

We were confident we could do well in the race. My co-driver Richard Westbrook used all his experience to stay up front and save the tires, but we made a wrong decision on tires for the first stint, so they went away quickly. But still, Richard managed not to fall back too much. We had to pit early – unfortunately, four laps before a caution – so we lost a little bit of time there. We did the driver change at 47 minutes and I drove nearly two hours, but the car was set up well, so it was not hard to drive.

After the stop, we were one lap down, so I was just giving my best, not destroying tires, but still doing fast lap times to catch up with the guys in front. Then what I feared started – there were a lot of incidents and yellows came out. They didn't really play into our hands; we didn't get the luck that we were looking for to get the lap back.

We could have been third with our own speed and strategy, but unfortunately, there was an incident with the 46 Flying Lizard car. Johannes van Overbeek was leading at that point, trying to give me the lap back and get out of my way for the chase on the 71 Ferrari, but it was a very close situation in the first turn and we touched. He went off track and I lost some bodywork. I'm very sorry for Johannes and the Lizard guys – I didn't mean to take him out or gain a position with a bad move. We got penalized for it. Then in the end, the Ferrari guys ran out of fuel and gave us second position.

It shows what the car was capable of this weekend. A podium was in the car, for sure, and with a little bit more luck, we could have had our first win in the American Le Mans Series. But it's only the fifth race this season and I'm pretty confident that we will have another chance to win a race. The team is really motivated to improve the car and it has been good at every race so far. They want the success as much as Richard and I want it. I want to thank Richard for supporting us this weekend. We'll be back strong at Mid-Ohio next week.

Dyson Team Racing Report

Golf, baseball, football, basketball – you can name almost any sport and few compare with racing's ability to so quickly and dramatically change fortunes. At the half-way point of the two hour forty-five minute American Le Mans Northeast Grand Prix, Butch Leitzinger was second in the #20 Thetford/Norcold Porsche RS Spyder, followed closely in third by Guy Smith in the sister #16 car. Smith's race ended ten minutes past the halfway point after contact while passing sent him into the Armco barrier. The nature of the Lime Rock track has faster cars behind slower cars for longer periods of time and puts more of a premium on getting ahead of them.

That left Butch Leitzinger to carry the Dyson Racing flag to the end. Marino Franchitti handed Leitzinger a well-fought third place car during the first pit stop an hour into the race. Franchitti had moved from sixth to third at the start. "It was an aggressive, crazy start, but a hole opened up in front of me and I took advantage of it," recounted Franchitti.

While most of the field was going off the track at one time or another as the track got progressively dirtier, Butch drove a clean race of concentration and was running third with three minutes to go when he was tapped from behind into a spin. Leitzinger got going again, but the left rear tire deflated from the spin debris and the car hit the barriers by the starter's stand on the front straight, causing extensive damage.

"This was the second time this year that Butch was taken out by the same car late in the race," said Chris Dyson. "It was not a racing incident, but a hopeless and amateurish attempt to get Butch out of the way. It smacked of pure desperation and is a real shame.

Butch really had the measure of him and it is disappointing to have it come down to being shoved off the road with less than three minutes left in the race. It will be a busy week. We have five days to turn around two badly damaged race cars in time for Mid- Ohio next week.

"It would have been nice to finish off our 25th anniversary weekend with a strong finish for our home fans, but we do want to thank everyone who made this weekend so uniquely memorable for Dyson Racing. The recognition we have received from the series, our partners, and fans has been a profoundly emotional experience all of us on the team."

Lime Rock Park Weekend Recap

While the technology of the American Le Mans Series is breathtaking, at the end of the day, what will bring the fans back to the track is a good show.

And the debut event for the new configuration and new track surface at Lime Rock Park did exactly that, an absolute stunner for a tremendous crowd, as the pole-winning car of Danbury-based Patrón Highcroft Racing scored a thrilling victory after David Brabham took the lead in the final laps of the two hour and forty five minute Northeast Grand Prix on Saturday.

Brabham, who qualified the Patrón Acura on pole for the race, put an exclamation point on the drama, running out of fuel as he came through the Downhill corner on the final lap.

The race victory is the second LMP2 win of the season for the Highcroft organization, and marked the first overall race victory for Acura in 2008. Lime Rock Park favored son Scott Sharp co-drove the Patrón machine to make a dramatic return to Lime Rock Park after a long career of open-wheel racing.

“Great pit work and hats off to the guys, it’s really fun to do it for Acura here in our back yard at Lime Rock Park,” said Patrón Highcroft principal Duncan Dayton. “The competition here in the American Le Mans Series is so intense, just to be here competing in this field is an honor, and to be first overall is a great feeling.”

The race didn’t open up as planned for the team, falling a far down to tenth after early-race contact before recovering to take the win with just minutes remaining.

“What a race!” exclaimed Brabham. “Fantastic strategy by the Highcroft team, no question. The car was really good, and it is just fantastic to come here for the team’s home race and take the pole and then win like this. I was pushing as hard as I could and I am so happy to be a part of this effort.”

On top of that, a storybook podium appearance for Dyson Racing’s Butch Leitzinger was denied just minutes before the checkered flag fell as contact from a Penske Porsche broke the rear wing assembly, coming apart at speed on Lime Rock Park’s Front Stretch and sending another favored son of Lime Rock spinning into the barriers to end their day. The Dyson disappointment started earlier in the race as the sister car carrying a crowd-favorite paint scheme reminiscent of the Poughkeepsie-based organizations Porsche 962 was involved in a race-ending crash before the mid-point of the race.

New England Grand Prix American Le Mans Series Race Results - July 12, 2008

Overall Results:

- 1- Brabham/Sharp (LMP2)
- 2- Dumas/Bernard (LMP2)
- 3- Maasen/Long (LMP2)

LMP1 Winner: Luhr/Werner (Audi)

GT1 Winner: O’Connell/Magnussen (Chevrolet)

GT2 Winner: Bergmeister/Henzler (Porsche)



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