



ASTON MARTIN

PressRelease

Aston Martin claims sixth place at 2010 Le Mans 24 Hours

Le Mans, 13 June 2010. Despite proving to be the fastest petrol-powered car at the Le Mans 24 Hours this year, Aston Martin's hopes of claiming the accolade of top petrol competitor were cruelly dashed by scenes of barely believable drama in the closing hour.

Nonetheless, the Aston Martin Racing team salvaged sixth place overall in the world's toughest endurance race thanks to the 007 line-up of Adrian Fernandez (MEX), Stefan Mücke (D) and Harold Primat (CH).

Aston Martin also claimed a podium in the GT1 class with Official Partner team Young Driver AMR, courtesy of Tomas Enge (CZ), Peter Kox (NL) and Christoffer Nygaard (DK). The team qualified on pole thanks to Enge – who claimed his sixth Le Mans pole in GT1 – and finished 22nd overall, equating to third in class.

Up until the final hour the 009 car crew of Juan Barazi (DK), Sam Hancock (GB) and Darren Turner (GB), who had never raced together until Le Mans this year, seemed set to repeat Aston Martin Racing's fourth place result of 2009.

But with just 55 minutes of the 24 hours to go, the car slowed dramatically with smoke coming from the rear, finally stopping on its 368th lap near Arnage corner.

The 007 car set the pace among the petrol runners from the very beginning of the race and was at the forefront of the action until Sunday morning, when a gearbox bearing failure caused an unscheduled trip to the pit garage. Despite never having undertaken a gearbox repair of this complexity under race conditions before, the Aston Martin Racing pit crew completed the task in under an hour.

Having fought their way back up from 14th after the bearing problem to sixth, there was a further last-minute drama for the intrepid 007 crew when the Gulf-liveried car picked up a puncture with only 25 minutes to go.

Mücke was able to limp the car back to the pits in order to get the tyres changed, and he finally crossed the line at 3pm on Sunday to seal a bittersweet success for Aston Martin.

The 007 car proved its pace and reliability over 365 laps and more than 5000 kilometres of flat-out competition. Despite the varying weather in the build-up to the race, the Le Mans 24 Hours remained dry.

As well as the dramatic retirement of the 009 car, Aston Martin lost the 008 car run by French team Signature Plus at 10:00 on Sunday morning when Vanina Ickx crashed.

Unfortunately, the JMW Motor sport Vantage GT2 retired on Saturday night after Bryce Miller (USA) crashed on the exit of the Porsche Curves, breaking his car's radiator and suspension uprights. Previously, the experienced Rob Bell (GB) – who started the race – was setting some extremely competitive times.

David Richards, Chairman of Aston Martin said: "All in all this weekend was a success; we set out to prove that we were the fastest petrol entry here and whilst the result wasn't quite what we were looking for, we certainly proved the performance of the Aston Martins.

"We received such an extraordinary amount of enthusiasm and support from customers and fans alike. The team performed to their usual immaculate standards and I am especially pleased with our Official Partner Team Young Driver AMR who secured a podium. We hope and look forward to the opportunity to challenge for an outright victory in the future."

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