
Aston Martin at Sebring 2006

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The Works Aston Martin DBR9s took 1st and 2nd places in class for this weekend's main Sebring race, and the Florida circuit will also see action from the first DBRS9 racing cars later today (Friday).

Mobil 1 Twelve Hours of Sebring

Pedro Lamy, who set the team's fastest lap in the number 009 DBR9, qualified in a time of 1min 55.286sec. His record breaking lap was 1.8sec faster than the previous best for the GT1 category which was set in 2004. It also marked the team's best ALMS qualifying result with the DBR9.

"I'm feeling quite pleased, it's my first qualifying pole in this series and it shows that all of the hard work and testing is paying off, said Lamy. "We've had to adapt to new tyres for this race and that's meant a lot of preparation, but I think we've found a good balance with the car now and it felt good on the track. Of course it's nice to be on pole but Sebring's a 12 hour race, it's very long and anything can happen. I hope we will have such a good car in the race."

Tomas Enge secured second place in the number 007 DBR9 with a time of 1min 56.030sec. "To be honest, I don't think we were really expecting this result, but of course we're delighted to be first and second," said Enge. "But the fact is that in these kinds of races qualifying well doesn't guarantee a good result. The most important thing is to drive without making any mistakes on Saturday and fighting for the best position and the victory like we did last year."

Team Principal George Howard-Chappell said: "We're a little surprised to be leading the class and I'm not sure that we've seen the true, ultimate performance of all the cars we're up against, but looking at our own form I'm pleased that we've set some very competitive times. Pedro's lap in particular was outstanding. During this evening's night session we'll work a little more on the set up and the tyre selections, then tomorrow we'll make our final preparations for Saturday's race."

Paul Hembery, Pirelli's Motorsport Director said: "Considering the brief amount of time we've had in preparation, and the fact that the only test we have done this year took place in a temperature of about 5°C, I think getting a 55.2 lap at Sebring is very impressive for Pedro, Aston Martin Racing and Pirelli"

The team is carrying sponsorship from the online tournament card room PokerStars.com, and this year will be running on Pirelli tyres - a change from the Michelins of 2005.

In the main prototype class, the two Audi R10 TDI diesel-powered cars on pole, followed by the two 'works' Porsche RS Spyders. Historic racer, and classic car sales specialist [Gregor Fisken](#), driving the Lola EX257 AER, will start seventh, just ahead of another familiar face from historic racing, Juan Barazi in a Courage.



Autosport Designs DBRS9

With the cars only delivered in the last week it's been a race against time for Aston Martin specialist (and long-term enthusiast for the marque) Tom Papadopoulos and the rest of his Huntington Station, N.Y.-based team.

Running in the SCCA Pro Racing SPEED World Challenge GT series in the USA this year, the cars have had to be modified to suit the series' regulations (front splitter, windows, bonnet, air outlets behind front wheels - and more) and will compete against homegrown rivals from Corvette and Viper as well as traditional European foes Porsche and Ferrari.



The cars will be driven by the very experienced Papadopoulos himself (left) and British professional racer Johnny Mowlem in all rounds in 2006.

Scott Rumbold, Autosport Designs Racing Team Manager says of the project: "Tom has had a passion for cars and racing since a boy. An early encounter with Aston Martins left a lasting impression on him, and as he wanted to race a current car when the DBRS9 was launched last summer, he said 'Let's do it!'

"It will be enhancing our core business of selling, servicing and restoring cars like these, and we expect to be regular competitors in this series".

The SCCA Pro Racing SPEED World Challenge GT race will start today (Friday 17/3) from 4:50 p.m. - 5:40 p.m. local time over 20 laps, 74 miles or 50 minutes.

Classic Driver will be covering the Autosport Designs Racing Team's progress this year and will be giving readers the very latest information as it happens.

Further details of Autosport Designs DBRS9 Racing Team, as well as their complete inventory, can be found on www.autosportdesigns.com.

Text - Classic Driver

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