

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## Aston Martin Racing and the American Le Mans Series



**After a hectic schedule that involved back to back races over following weekends Stateside, the Aston Martin Racing DBR9s have a break until The Big One, the Le Mans 24 Hours.**

### **Lone Star Grand Prix, Houston, Texas - May 12**

Following the Sebring race in March, Aston Martin Racing recorded a podium finish at the second round of the American Le Mans Series in Houston, Texas. On Friday evening. Tomas Enge and Darren Turner, who finished third in the GT1 class at Sebring, brought their Aston Martin Racing DBR9 home third in class and fourth overall after a challenging two-hour, 45-minute race.

Their Aston Martin Racing team-mates Stephane Sarrazin and Pedro Lamy, second in class at Sebring, finished fourth in class, fifth overall in Houston. After a strong race, Sarrazin was building a challenge for the GT1 class win before a spin, and bad luck behind the sole safety car of the race cost the 009 DBR9 a lap to the class leaders. The Frenchman was forced to stop when the pits were closed as he was low on fuel, and the team was unable to work on the car until the pits were declared open.

“We were a little slow at the beginning but Stephane drove exceptionally well,” said Aston Martin Racing Team Principal George Howard-Chappell. “He made a small mistake which was a shame but the biggest story for us was that we were unlucky on the closing of the pits due to the pace car just as we needed to refuel. That is what lost the race for us.



### **American Le Mans at Mid Ohio, Lexington, Ohio - May 21**

Two safety car periods fell unkindly for Aston Martin Racing at the third round of the American Le Mans Series at the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course, yet despite the set-backs, and a puncture while leading the GT1 class, Darren Turner and Tomas Enge finished on the podium for the third successive race in their Aston Martin DBR9.

Pedro Lamy crossed the line in the 009 Aston Martin DBR9 three-tenths of a second behind Enge to take

fourth position at the end of the two-hour, 45-minute race.

The team ran an aggressive strategy which allowed Turner to lead GT1 at the end of his opening stint. The British driver was the last to pit and hand to Enge, but the Czech driver returned to the pits almost immediately when he suffered a puncture. A fantastic pit stop by the team meant that Enge re-joined in third position and set about closing the gap to the leaders with a series of fast laps. Unfortunately a third safety car period dropped the number 007 car to a lap behind the winners at the chequered flag.

In the number 009 Aston Martin DBR9, Lamy's team-mate Sarrazin was struggling during the opening stint with oversteer and had dropped back from the leading three cars when the first safety car period was called. The Frenchman's track position meant that he lost a lap to the class leaders. Lamy took over and benefited from the second safety car period to close on his team-mate Enge.

"We lost the race due to safety car decisions," said Prodrive Chairman, David Richards. "We were not quite on the pace, but the strategy was superb and we lost it because of some rather strange safety car decisions."

"We are very disappointed because the safety car periods messed it up for us," said Sarrazin. "These are only short races and when you are unfortunate like that, the race is finished for you."

Lamy was battling with the handling of his car in the second half of the race, yet was still able to pressure Enge. "The car was suffering from a lot of oversteer, which slowed us down," he said. "The safety car periods were frustrating, and we hope for better days."

*Next stop is **Le Mans** over the weekend of **17 - 18 June** where **Aston Martin Racing** have two DBR9s entered (in addition to the one car each from **BMS Scuderia Italia** and **Russian Age Racing**, all in the LM GT1 Class). The next ALMS race is at the New England Grand Prix at Lime Rock Park, Lakeville, Connecticut on July 1 - it has yet to be decided if the Aston Martin Racing DBR9s will be entered.*

**Aston Martin Racing** produce a regular newsletter in .pdf format describing the marque's 2006 international competition programme called '**Racing Line**'. Please [CLICK HERE](#) to download the latest issue.

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