

CLASSIC DRIVER

Monterey: Fifth win of the year for Aston Martin in ALMS



21 October 2006: Eighth overall and a win in the GT1 class at Monterey meant Aston Martin Racing finishing second in the 2006 teams and manufacturers championships, and Stephane Sarrazin also taking second spot in the 2006 drivers championship.

The British team started the tenth and final round of the American Le Mans Series at Laguna Seca Raceway on Saturday 21 October from first and fourth positions in the GT1 class. Sarrazin qualified the number 009 DBR9 in first place with a time of 1:21.012s, his third pole of the season and the team's seventh pole this year. Tomas Enge qualified the number 007 DBR9 in fourth place with a time of 1:21.515s.

Raceday was bright and sunny at the historic Monterey track, and at the start Pedro Lamy in the 009 DBR9 maintained the lead secured by teammate Stephane Sarrazin in qualifying. Darren Turner in the 007 DBR9 storming up to second in class by the end of the first lap.

The first safety car period came on lap three of the four hour race and the second ensued shortly afterwards on lap 14. The 007 car took advantage of the second safety car period and pitted for fuel and tyres, Darren Turner staying behind the wheel and rejoining the race behind the safety car in fourth place. The No 3 Corvette also followed the same strategy and came into the pits. Pedro Lamy in the 009 DBR9 remained out on the track retaining the GT1 lead. Track conditions are slippery with sand covering large areas of the track.

On lap 42 the No 3 Corvette overtook Pedro Lamy in the 009 DBR9 and Darren Turner passed the No 4 Corvette to take third in class. All 4 GT1 cars still on the same lap at this point. Lamy pitted to hand the 009 car over to Stephane Sarrazin and the 009 car dropped down to fourth in class, one lap down on the 007 DBR9 and the No 3 Corvette who pitted under the safety car.

Shortly before the two hour point of the race Darren Turner came in to the pits to hand the 007 DBR9 to Tomas Enge who rejoins in the lead.

Seconds after this, Stephane Sarrazin was forced to take evasive action as a prototype crashed just in front of him. Sarrazin went to the left of the accident across the gravel, narrowly missing a large piece of the prototype's bodywork. The 009 car did not sustain any damage and continued to race.

The safety car picked up the race leader and Sarrazin received a wave by, pitting on lap 88 for fuel and tyres and rejoining in fourth position. The safety car was deployed for 14 laps to enable track officials to clear debris and oil from the track. A fourth safety car period on lap 101 allowed Sarrazin to pit for fuel without losing track position.

After three hours the 007 DBR9 lead the race and the 009 DBR9 was in second place. Enge in the 007 DBR9 suffered a left front puncture on lap 119 and was forced to pit for tyres and fuel rejoining in fourth place. Sarrazin took the lead following Enge's pit stop and began a titanic battle with the one of the Corvettes who was just a fraction of a second behind.

Sarrazin lost the battle for first place to the Corvette with 30 minutes of the race remaining, but he regained the class lead moments later as the pair reached the corner at the end of the straight.

The battle for first place continued right until the end of the race with Sarrazin coming out on top.

George Howard-Chappell, Team Principal, Aston Martin Racing:

"A fantastic drive and an amazing manoeuvre from Stephane when it looked like we were going to lose the lead. Clearly we didn't have the fastest car but the race strategy from both camps won us the race.

"I would like to say a big thank you to the whole team, to Aston Martin, to Pirelli and all of our sponsors.

"I am happy that we have managed to win five of the ten races in this challenging year."

Pedro Lamy 009 DBR9:

"It was very close and Stephane did a great job at the end. We were unlucky a couple of times during the season and maybe we deserved to win more races but it is great to win the final race of the season. "

Stephane Sarrazin 009 DBR9:

"It was a really exciting race for me, maybe my best race of the season because it was really difficult, I spent almost three hours in the car and sometimes it was very bad in the traffic and I was losing too much time, I was off the line so my tyres were getting lots of pick up.

"The second part of the race was much better and I pushed 100%. For me it was not an option to lose the race, I was determined to win.

"It is great to come second in the drivers championship. We have been unlucky a few times, for example at the last race when we had a puncture when we were in the lead, but overall it has been good. I have been very happy to drive with Pedro, he is a good friend and I have enjoyed driving with him. It has been a great season for me, one of my best."

Results:

1. McNish/Capello (GB/I), Audi R10 (LMP1), 159 laps
2. Biela/Pirro (D/I), Audi R10 (LMP1), 159
3. Minassian/Primat (GB/CH), Creation CA06 Judd (LMP1), 159
4. Luhr/Dumas (MC/F), Porsche RS Spyder (LMP2), 158
5. Maassen/Bernhard (B/D), Porsche RS Spyder (LMP2), 158
6. Dyson/Weaver (USA/GB), Lola B06 AER (LMP1), 157
7. Johansson/Mowlem (S/GB), Zytek 06S (LMP1), 157
8. Sarrazin/Lamy (F/P), Aston Martin DBR9 (GT1), 153
9. Beretta/Gavin (MC/GB), Chevrolet Corvette (GT1), 153
10. O'Connell/Fellows (USA/CAN), Chevrolet Corvette (GT1), 153

Text: *Classic Driver*

Photos: *Aston Martin Racing*

ClassicInside - The Classic Driver Newsletter

[Free Subscription!](#)

Gallery

Hide gallery

Hide gallery

Source URL: <https://www.classicdriver.com/en/article/monterey-fifth-win-year-aston-martin-alm>

© Classic Driver. All rights reserved.