



**"I had one chance and luckily that's all I needed: pole in class for my first Le Mans!...."**

Alex Lynn – Le Mans 24 Hours review

*London, June 19, 2017.* It was absolutely heartbreaking to retire from the Le Mans 24 Hours in just the second hour of the race, before I even got to drive, but still I and the whole G-Drive Racing team have to take a lot of satisfaction from how we performed throughout practice and qualifying, which ended up with me putting the car on pole position in our class.

It was my first ever Le Mans, and our G-Drive ORECA-Gibson was one of 25 cars in the incredibly competitive LMP2 class. I have to say that, from the day I arrived on Sunday before the race, I was enjoying each and every day as it went on because there's so much fanfare and pageantry. But the advice from Alex Wurz, who's one of my managers and has won Le Mans himself, is that you always have to remain mindful, although the occasion is monumental, that it's just another motor race and you can't change your preparation at all. You need to make sure you sit down a lot, walk slowly from place to place, and don't go anywhere in a rush, just to conserve energy.

Right from the word go, when free practice started on Wednesday, the car seemed a step forward from the Le Mans Test Day 10 days earlier. We'd done a lot of work with David Leach our engineer, working on the balance and making sure everything was spot-on. We were a good chunk quicker than most of the other cars at that stage, and I set the quickest time of the four-hour session – a second and a half faster than the rest on a 'race' run.

For Wednesday qualifying, which ran from 10pm until midnight, we wanted to see how many stints we could do on one set of tyres. The temperature that day was outrageously high and we knew Thursday would be cooler, and better for qualifying runs. Our long runs – with me, Pierre Thiriet and Roman Rusinov driving – were really competitive, and we got four stints out of both the medium and the soft Dunlop compound quite easily, which I don't think many of our rivals did.

Sure enough, most of the quick times came on Thursday, which was split into two sessions, from 7pm to 9pm, and then from 10pm until midnight. The first session got interrupted by a crash and delayed for quite a long time, and Vitaly Petrov had gone out early and done a huge lap time. To match that lap, I knew I couldn't do it at night because of the commitment and minimum cornering speeds needed – I needed some daylight, so we'd have to do it right at the start of the final session at 10pm. It was a bit of a risk, but we



timed it perfectly – five minutes later and it would have been too dark. I had one chance and luckily that's all I needed: pole in class for my first Le Mans!

I've been fortunate enough to have a few good pole positions in my career but this one was right up there with my debut Macau Grand Prix in 2012. You're on a lap, and you know it's a good one before it even pops up on the dash. It was really nice, not just for the ego but for my personal development. Being my first Le Mans, it was important for my career to show what I'm capable of – something like that pole can be pivotal, and I'm very proud of it.

We had the driver parade in Le Mans city on Friday – great fun! – and then it was the warm-up at 9am on Saturday. I did two laps and we were two seconds quicker than anyone, on old tyres and high fuel. The car was absolutely perfect. I said to the team, 'Lads, polish it, put a cover over it and leave it until the race at 3pm. It's mint.'

Roman started the race. He did a brilliant job doing the same thing at the Spa 6 Hours last month, but it just started to unravel as soon as it began at Le Mans. He lost some places on the first lap, and then when things start to go wrong it just spirals. Finally our race ended with contact with a GT Porsche in the second hour, before Pierre and I even got behind the wheel.

I was totally stunned, especially when you consider what happened to all the LMP1 cars, which meant an LMP2 very nearly won the race outright. It could have been incredible because we could at least have had an overall podium, and it does make it hard to swallow. We had a fantastic race car, and the G-Drive crew have to be thanked for that. They've worked brilliantly all season and it's up to Roman, Pierre and I to turn it around for them in the remaining races, because I can see a lot more success ahead for us.

**Ends**

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