



Provisional third on the grid for Minassian at Le Mans 2005

Darkness had descended for the second qualifying session of day one at Le Mans and the rain that plagued the drivers earlier had dissipated allowing Nicolas Minassian to turn his first wheel in anger on a drying track.

With the improving conditions the talented Frenchman set a benchmark time of 4:14.299 more than a second quicker than Wallace had set earlier in the day, handing the car over to his veteran team-mate.

"The track is drying but it is still damp out there and we are about 40 seconds slower than we can do in the dry," explained Minassian. "We cannot set the car up for these conditions, it [the DBA Judd] is being run with a dry set up as we believe this is what we'll need for the race. You drive to the conditions, if they change in the race you can't change set up, you just have to drive so that is what we do. I don't have any handling problems though and the car feels good, but the times will continue to come down as the circuit gets more grip so we'll see where we are at the end - tomorrow is another day."

The times indeed did continue to tumble and as Minassian climbed back in the car for the final 20 minutes of the session, his last flying lap [4:02.992] vaulted the team into third position just 1.795 seconds off the provisional pole sitters Ayari, Helary and Loeb.

"I knew we could be up around fourth or fifth and we are provisionally third, what more can I say," declared Minassian. "Despite the issues this afternoon, we have once again proved we are there when it matters and we will be there again tomorrow."

"Let's hope it rains," joked Minassian.

Editorial Notes

Nicolas Minassian, 32, lives in England with his wife Jayne. Minassian was runner up in the French F3 Championship in 1995, British F3 in 1997 and the FIA F3000 Championship in 2000. He has tested with both Williams and Honda in Formula One and competed in the Champ Car World Series with Ganassi Racing before taking the 2002 ASCAR title with RML. With Creation Autosportif, Minassian took the LMES Championship by storm in the inaugural four-round series in 2004 and stays with the team for 2005.

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