



Minassian on front row for ALMS debut

Nicolas Minassian qualified in a fantastic second position for his first competitive outing at the Road Atlanta circuit and was the pace setter from the off in the 20 minute qualifying session this afternoon for Petit Le Mans, laying down the gauntlet to the rest of the prototypes on his first lap.

Off to a flying start the Frenchman set an impressive lap straight out of the pits of 1:13.831, but was unhappy with the revs the DBA was pulling and pitted for some adjustments. **"It was a great start to my session, but I knew the car had more," said Minassian, who finished third quickest in final practice this morning. "The team made some changes and I was eager to get back out there again."**

While the engineers worked on the car, an accident involving the number 12 car of Autocon Motorsports brought out the red flag, and before the stricken car could be cleared Minassian was already waiting in the queue to return to the on-track action.

There were only nine minutes remaining of the session when the green flag was shown, a true shoot out to the chequered flag and at this point the Creation car had only done one lap and tension was high.

Lap times began to tumble, but for each time put in by Kaffer in the Audi, Minassian bettered it, setting what looked sure to be the pole position time of 1:12.421 only for James Weaver in the Dyson entry to knock him back a spot on the grid on the very last lap of the session, by just two tenths of a second.

"Nic did a fabulous job as always, we'd like to have pole, but that was the last lap, there's nothing we could do about it and there's a long way to go tomorrow," said Mike Jankowski, Creation Autosportif Team Owner. "Congratulations to Weaver."

"It was a good lap," commented Minassian. "But not good enough because we are not on pole. It's a long race though and that wasn't everything this car had to give, there is more yet... you'll see tomorrow."

No endurance race can be won at the first corner though, as was proved in Spa, and ten hours or 1000 miles is a long way to the chequered flag, but two British cars start on the front row, with Kaffer/Herbert and Werner/Lehto in third and fourth respectively in the two Audi R8 entries.

Minassian has undoubtedly proven his speed once again in front of the American crowds, now he will demonstrate his staying power when the race goes green at 12 noon ET.





Editorial Notes

Nicolas Minassian, 31, 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 is a front-runner in the inaugural four-round LMES Championship and will contest the final two rounds of the ALMS Championship at Road Atlanta (Petit Le Mans) and Laguna Seca

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