



### **Spa 24hrs cut short for Minassian**

Nicolas Minassian's debut in the FIA GT Championship for Russian Age Racing was cut short today when a Porsche backmarker made a mistake, collecting team-mate Jamie Campbell-Walter at Blanchimont, one of the quicker corners on the circuit.

**"There was nothing he could do," explained Minassian. "It was not his fault, it's just racing."**

The Ferrari 550 Marengo had front end damage, including radiator, airbox and restrictor, too much to continue and the team sadly had to retire from the race after just over four hours running.

The race had started promisingly, with Alexei Valiliev taking the green flag, from eighth on the grid, in wet conditions and running on the pace before handing over to Minassian.

The Frenchman took a double stint behind the wheel, pitting only to change tyres as the weather predictably dictated the team's choice of Michelin rubber.

**"The car felt good in all conditions," said Minassian. "I could push even in the wet and when it started drying we were one of the quickest cars on track. The Maseratis were definitely the quickest, but we were running really well in fifth place and had the pace to stay there. I'm not used to the heat though, it was tough out there, but lots of fun."**

It was a baptism of fire for Minassian in his debut race for the team, with no real time in the Ferrari before going into race conditions, but his experience and talent shone through and he will walk away from Spa Francorchamps happy with his first encounter with the 'prancing horse'.

**"This has been a great experience," Minassian stated. "I got the opportunity to run a double stint and there was no doubt we were competitive. I will take this gladly and hope that I will get a chance to do it again next year and win this thing. We now have to concentrate on taking victory at Silverstone with Creation [Autosportif]."**

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#### **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 was a front-runner in the inaugural four-round LMES Championship and will contest the series once again in 2005 for the team as well as driving in their Le Mans 24 hrs debut.

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