



Le Mans, Tuesday 13th October 2009

Asian **LE MANS**[®] series[™]

- ▷ ASTON-MARTIN RACING: **George HOWARD-CHAPELL**
- ▷ AUDI TEAM KOLLES: **Joachim MATHEIS**
- ▷ ORECA-AIM: **Hugues de CHAUNAC**
- ▷ SORA RACING (PESCAROLO SPORT): **Philippe LEBLANC**

“We don't want to miss it!”

The reaction of the four team bosses who spoke to the Automobile Club de l'Ouest was unanimous: they could not miss THE big event. Lola-Aston Martin, Audi R10 TDI, Oreca-AIM and Pescarolo-Judd will be among the favourites for the Asian Le Mans Series, which kicks off on 31st October-1st November on the Okayama circuit in Japan.

What do you think of this new Le Mans Series?

George Howard-Chappell (Aston Martin Racing): “It's a great initiative on the part of the ACO to organise races in this part of the world. I'd like to add that the perspectives it'll open in a year or two are an extra motivation for us.”

Joachim Matheis (Audi Team Kolles): “The series is a new and crucial step in motor sport. After the United States and Europe, it's very important to see the cars that epitomise endurance racing in Asia.”

Hugues de Chaunac (ORECA): “The ACO's initiative is an excellent one. The Japanese adore and respect the Le Mans 24 Hours. One of their manufacturers – Mazda – won the race once, and I know the value that this success has as ORECA was with them in 1991!”

Philippe Leblanc (SORA RACING-Pescarolo Sport): It's an important, indeed I would say, historic step. We owe it to ourselves to be present in a country where the motorcar plays a very important role, and which also has a large number of major manufacturers.”

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In what state of mind are you tackling this event?

G. Howard-Chappell: "As always we're aiming for the best possible result and there's no reason why we can't win both races. We also feel that this grande première in Asia has great added value for Aston Martin, its sponsors and drivers."

J. Matheis: "This race wasn't part of our initial programme; it was only after the Le Mans 24 Hours that we began thinking about it. From an economic point of view it's a pity that Shanghai isn't taking place, but we're sure it's only a question of time. As for our aims, the team would be very happy with a podium finish, which we almost achieved at the Nürburgring (4th).

H. de Chaunac: "We're tackling the races in the state of mind we've had since the Le Mans 24 Hours: namely, to continue to develop our car, which won the Silverstone 1000kms, and enabled us to be the best-placed petrol-engined car in the Petit Le Mans ahead of the Honda-Acura. We're going to Japan to fight at the front, and we're well aware that the races are going to be hotly contested as we're up against three top-level teams."

Ph Leblanc: "We hope to have a good result and satisfy the spectators. We're also curious to see how the two 3-hour race format will work out. It's an interesting test that may have further ramifications."

Have you finalised your driver line-ups?

G. Howard-Chappell: "After the Silverstone 1000kms we announced Stéphane Mücke, one of our three 2009 Le Mans Series winners, and Harold Primat who came fourth. An innovate line-up for innovative races!"

J. Matheis: "We've named Oliver Jarvis and Christian Bakkerud in one of our cars and we'll announce the second line-up in the very near future."

H de Chaunac: "We spent a long time thinking about Nicolas Lapierre's team-mate. We finally decided that Loïc Duval had the best profile. He raced in the 24 Hours with us in 2008, and he knows the Okayama circuit well as he's won the 2009 Formula Nippon Champion."

Ph. Leblanc: "We can confirm Christophe Tinseau but our agreements with a Japanese driver who could be Shinji Nakano* have yet to be finalised."

**He was a Prost Grand Prix and Minardi F1 driver.*

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A grande premiere

For the first time, an FIA meeting will host two World Touring Car Championship races (WTCC), and two races of an international series running under the Asian Le Mans label.



On 29th September when the Okayama meeting was officially presented in the French Ambassador's salons in Tokyo, Mr. Marcello Lotti, the WTCC promoter recalled the popular success enjoyed by the WTCC on its last visit to Japan in 2008.

"The interest of the media, which arrived en masse at this presentation, as well as the numerous questions asked about the Le Mans 24 Hours and the various Le Mans Series, leads us to think that the 2009

meeting will also be a big success," foresees Daniel Poissenot who represented the ACO President in Tokyo.

Yojiro Terada (29 participations in the Le Mans 24 Hours), "Mr. Le Mans," and the ACO's ambassador in Japan took advantage of the occasion to answer questions about the history of the 24 Hours, what's at stake and the perspectives for the new Asian Le Mans Series.

AIM, the ACO's title sponsor at Okayama is a Japanese sub-contracting company with over 600 engineers specialised in the motorcar. It is managed by Messrs Suzuki (President) and Sakurai (President's advisor) who is the former boss of Honda F1 in the era when the company supplied engines to Williams (1983-1987), Lotus (1987 and 1988) and McLaren (1988-1992). The AIM engine powering the ORECA 01, winner of the Silverstone 1000kms, has been developed in partnership with Judd.

Japanese driver, **Seiji Ara**, will be the perfect link between Le Mans and the WTCC. The 2004 Le Mans 24-Hours winner with Tom Kristensen and Dindo Capello in the Team Goh Audi, will compete in the WTCC meeting in a team Wiechers-Sport BMW 320 si.

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The entries*

N°	LM P1	NAT		VOITURE / CAR	PILOTES - DRIVERS					
007	ASTON MARTIN RACING	GBR	MICHELIN	LOLA ASTON MARTIN	H.PRIMAT	CHE	S.MUCKE	DEU		
10	TEAM ORECA MATMUT AIM	FRA	MICHELIN	ORECA AIM	N.LAPIERRE	FRA	L.DUVAL	FRA		
11	TOKAI UNIV.YGK POWER	JPN	YOKOHAMA	COURAGE ORECA - YGK	S.WAKISAKA	JPN	S.MITSUYAMA	JPN		
14	KOLLES	DEU	MICHELIN	AUDI R 10	CH.BAKKERUD	DNK	O.JARVIS	GBR		
15	KOLLES	DEU	MICHELIN	AUDI R 10						
17	SORA RACING	FRA	MICHELIN	PESCAROLO JUDD	C.TINSEAU	FRA	S. NAKANO (?)	JAP		
87	DRAYSON RACING	GBR	MICHELIN	LOLA COUPE JUDD	P.DRAYSON	GBR	J.COCKER	GBR		
N°	LM P2	NAT		VOITURE / CAR	PILOTES / DRIVERS					
24	OAK RACING	FRA	DUNLOP	PESCAROLO MAZDA	J.NICOLET	FRA	R.HEIN	MCO	M.LAHAYE	FRA
28	JOSE IBANEZ	FRA	DUNLOP	COURAGE AER	J.IBANEZ	FRA	W.CAVAILHES	FRA	F.DA ROCHA	FRA
N°	LM GT1	NAT		VOITURE / CAR	PILOTES / DRIVERS					
50	LARBRE COMPETITION	FRA	MICHELIN	SALEEN S7R	P.LAMY	PRT	P.BORHNAUSER	FRA		
61	HITOTSUYAMA TEAM NOVA	JPN	YOKOHAMA	ASTON MARTIN DBR9	A.TSUZUKI	JPN	T.TSUCHIYA	JPN		
68	JLOC	JPN	YOKOHAMA	LAMBORGHINI	K.YAMANISHI	JPN	A.YOGO	JPN		
69	JLOC	JPN	YOKOHAMA	LAMBORGHINI						
N°	LM GT2	NAT		VOITURE / CAR	PILOTES / DRIVERS					
40	ROBERTSON RACING, LLC	USA	DUNLOP	FORD GT MK7	D.ROBERTSON	USA	A.ROBERTSON	USA	D.MURRY	USA
71	TEAM DAISHIN	JPN	YOKOHAMA	FERRARI F 430 GT	T.AOKI	JPN	T.FUJII	JPN		
77	TEAM FELBERMAYR-PROTON	DEU	MICHELIN	PORSCHE 911 GT3 RSR (997)	M.LIEB	DEU	H.WOLF	DEU		
88	TEAM FELBERMAYR-PROTON	DEU	MICHELIN	PORSCHE 911 GT3 RSR (997)	CH. RIED	DEU				
81	SCUDERIA FORME	JPN	YOKOHAMA	PORSCHE 911 GT3 RSR (996)	T.KOJIMA	JPN	K.R.HORI	JPN		
85	JIMGAINER	JPN	YOKOHAMA	FERRARI F 430 GT	T.TANAKA	JPN	K.HIRANAKA	JPN		
89	HANKOOK - TEAM FARNBACHER	DEU	HANKOOK	FERRARI F 430 GT	D.FARNBACHER	DEU	A.SIMONSEN	AUS		
98	HANKOOK - KTR	JPN	HANKOOK	PORSCHE 911 GT3 RSR (997)	M.KINOSHITA	JPN	M.KAGEYAMA	JPN		
91	TEAM HONG KONG RACING	CHN	YOKOHAMA	ASTON MARTIN VANTAGE	Ph.MA	CHN	M.KIM	JPN	K.SASAKI	JPN
92	RAHAL LETTERMAN RACING TEAM	USA	DUNLOP	BMW E92 M3	D.MULLER	DEU	T.MILNER	USA		

*List on 12th October 2009



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