



30 October, 2009

Drayson Racing Earns First Career Pole in Inaugural Asian Le Mans



OKAYAMA, JAPAN - In only its third event since switching to the premier Le Mans Prototype 1 (LMP1) category, Drayson Racing earned its first-ever career pole position today in qualifying for this weekend's Asian Le Mans Series' inaugural event at the Okayama (Japan) International Circuit. In four laps Jonny Cocker (Guisborough, Yorks, UK) piloted the No. 87 Drayson Racing Lola with Judd Power to a grid-setting lap of one minute, 19.143 seconds around the 3.7 Km/2.3 mile, 13-turn race course. Cocker and teammate/owner Paul Drayson (London/Gloucestershire, UK) will share the Michelin tyre-shod, closed-cockpit racer in a pair of three hour events 31 October and 1 November which will decide the champion of the 2009 Asian Le Mans Series season.

Whilst the historic ramifications of being in the record book as the first pole winner in the Asian Le Mans Series are momentous, the importance for this weekend is also significant. The double-event weekend held this single, 20-minute qualifying session to set the grid for both of the 136-lap (503.6 Km/312.9 mile)/three hour events. Therefore, by qualifying quickest today, the Dale White (Bozeman, MT, USA)-managed team has actually earned the top starting spot for both Saturday and Sunday's events. The first race will start at 12:30 (GMT+9) tomorrow while the second will take the green flag at 09:00 Sunday. In the balance is the championship as well as an automatic invitation to the 24 Hours of Le Mans in June, 2010.

Against a field full of factory efforts and much more experienced prototype drivers/teams, the pole position was a significant event for the family-owned, private racing venture of Drayson Racing. Not only did it show the speed and commitment of the team but also its ability to overcome adversity. Two weeks ago, at the Monterey Sports Car Championships in Monterey, Calif., USA, it was questionable if the Anglo-American team would even be able to make the trip to Asia. A massive incident when Paul Drayson was struck and pushed off course on the race's third lap caused extensive damage to the Lola Coupé. However, the team drew deep and pulled from all corners of its technical partners including Lola Cars International and Judd Engines to prepare the car for shipment in two days. With the arrival of the car and needed parts in Japan, the crew was able to repair the No. 87 not only to survive but flourish on today's first day of practice and qualifying.

Eurosport will broadcast both events live from Okayama with live timing and scoring available at www.asian-lemans-series.com.

Quotes

Elsbeth Drayson, Owner/CEO: "I am absolutely delighted with the result and cannot describe the exhilaration of seeing our car at the top of the time charts. I'd like to thank the team, Lola and Judd for their hard work in overcoming this enormous disadvantage of the crash at Laguna and repairing the car in the very short time available before this Series. It shows the huge effort that everybody has made to prove the capability of both car and drivers."

Paul Drayson, Driver/Owner: "I was watching the timing screens in the pit when Jonny set fastest time with just a few minutes left in the session. We all held our breath and time just seemed to stand still but when the session ended the relief and emotion was overwhelming. Such a great feeling. Everyone has worked so hard for this and to bounce back from the shunt at Laguna with pole in the first ever Asian Le Mans Series race is just so sweet. Great job Jonny!"

Jonny Cocker, Driver: "Fantastic! Basically unbelievable. With the nature of the circuit and the big steps we made with the car at Laguna we knew that we had a good chance this weekend to be quick. It's just an unbelievable feeling for me as a driver to get the pole but everybody deserves this so much. Everybody that has been involved in the programme has worked so hard under what has been a very trying year at times. It shows that hard work, dedication and a good team will come through in the end."

Dale White, Team Manager: "It feels so good to show the ability of this team. We knew we had the drivers and with the Lola-Judd we knew we had the car. It was just a matter of time before we were able to prove it. Jonny ran a great lap and the whole team from crew to engineers have put in an overwhelming amount of effort to get us this pole position. A year's worth of work and two months of nothing but focusing on this switch to the P1 car all came together in one minute, 19.143 seconds here in Japan today!"

To visit the official web site of Drayson Racing, please go to www.draysonracing.com .

For more on the Asian Le Mans Series visit www.asian-lemans-series.com. Drayson racing supports the Science: So What? So Everything! campaign aimed at raising the profile of science and the part it plays in our day-to-day lives. To find out more visit sciencesowhat.direct.gov.uk.

To see up-to-the-minute notes on Drayson Racing, please follow "**DraysonRacing**" on Twitter.

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Release Images by Regis Lefebure.

Digital images and complete team and driver bios available upon request. Please do not publish contact information other than web sites. Thank you.

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