

JWA's Qualifying Debut Ends Prematurely

Silverstone, Northamptonshire (September 13, 2008) – Qualifying for Round 5 of the 2008 Le Mans Series, Sunday's 'Autosport 1000km of Silverstone', was a mixed affair for James Watt Automotive (JWA) at Silverstone with a brake issue hampering the progress of the #93 Aston Martin Vantage GT2, making its European debut this weekend, while the team's #95 Porsche entry enjoyed a solid run to seventh in class.

Saturday morning again brought varying conditions at the British track following Friday's dry morning, wet afternoon sessions. While the sun was breaking through in the final hour-long practice run, the still-damp, but drying circuit failed to allow the team to commit to a tried and tested set-up for the all-new GT2 challenger heading into its first Le Mans Series qualifying run.

Keeping the 'home' theme going in the sole stop in the UK for the Le Mans Series, Bradford-based Tim Sugden was charged with qualifying around Silverstone's sweeping Grand Prix circuit – the British sports car veteran sharing the Aston Martin race seat with South Africa's Alan van der Merwe and Denmark's Michael Outzen. Unfortunately JWA's hopes of a strong qualifying debut were thwarted as a brake 'grab' issue sidelined the car in the pits with five minutes of the 20-minute session remaining – leaving it 13th in the GT2 class.

"We're massively disappointed with where we ended up in qualifying with the Aston Martin," said James Watt, JWA Team Principal. "We've struggled a bit with set-up all weekend so we elected to treat qualifying as an extended set-up time. Unfortunately while Tim was out there we had a brake 'grab' issue on the car and he radioed in that there was soon to be a shortage of power and that the car was over-turning on the right-hand corners. The front-left wheel was locking up causing huge handling issues. The time we ended up setting in qualifying is far from reflective of what will be our race pace tomorrow."

Watt continued; "We said at the beginning of the weekend that if we came away with a race finish we'd be quite content. We've obviously tried to be as competitive as possible and we'll continue to work on a set-up for the race. Looking at the bigger picture we're pretty pleased with the reliability of the Aston Martin despite a few 'new car' blues encountered along the way. I'm confident in our driver line-up for the #93 car, it's really strong and I've been very impressed with the way Tim, Alan and Michael have all worked together."

Tim Sugden was pragmatic after his run ended early; "The brake issue really came from nowhere which is a real shame as the car was handling really well, probably the best it had been so-far this weekend. I thought we might have initially had an engine problem as the car was slowing in a straight line but it turned out to be an issue with one of the brakes sticking. It's frustrating! We knew we weren't likely to be candidates for the class pole on our first weekend running the car but we were hoping to be competitive. We've got to focus on the race now and we've already proved that if it rains tomorrow we should be strong."

Matt Griffin qualified JWA's #95 Porsche 997 RSR seventh in class, its highest grid slot of the season courtesy of a flying lap of 1m52.364s. Griffin will share the car tomorrow with Peter Bamford and series regular, Paul Daniels.

Sunday's six-hour endurance race, the 'Autosport 1000km of Silverstone', kicks off at 11:20am GMT – www.lemans-series.com The race will be broadcast live on TV across Europe by Motors TV – www.motors.tv

JWA's #93 Aston Martin Vantage GT2 is partnered at Silverstone this weekend by **One York** – www.oneyorkny.com, and **TW Steel** – www.twsteel.com

ENDS – www.jwaracing.com

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