



**"It will become more and more special as we go through Le Mans week...."**

Alex Lynn – Le Mans 24 Hours preview

*Le Mans, June 12, 2017.* This is the earliest I've ever done a pre-race blog, because it's the big one coming up during the next week: the Le Mans 24 Hours. I travelled down here on Sunday afternoon to meet up with the G-Drive Racing team because it all kicks off on Monday with scrutineering, and then we hit the track on Wednesday with free practice and the first qualifying session.

Before I talk about Le Mans, I have to say that this year has just been so much fun – without doubt the most fun I've ever had in motor racing. I've raced in the Sebring 12 Hours with Wayne Taylor Racing, in the Nurburgring 24 Hours with BMW, and in the FIA World Endurance Championship – in which Le Mans is a double-points round – with G-Drive. So many different cars, so many different teams, so many different tracks, and so many new challenges. You never even think of that when you're coming up through the single-seater ranks because they never appear on your radar, and then your whole world is opened to a whole host of new experiences. It's been amazing.

We head to Le Mans confident after our performance at the Le Mans Test Day last Sunday. It was my first time driving on the famous eight-mile Circuit de la Sarthe, and my lap put our ORECA-Gibson fourth fastest in class, while my team-mates Roman Rusinov and Pierre Thiriet were very close to my time. It was a very positive day. We did the second highest number of laps of the 25 cars in LMP2, and that came to about 1200 kilometres, which is just over a race distance in an average six-hour WEC race. The three of us drivers all cycled through and got to grips with the track, and we ended up with a lot of data to pore over.

When I say it was my first time driving at Le Mans, that's not strictly true. If you remember, I drove for DAMS – who are based at Le Mans – for two seasons in GP2, so I've been there many times and driven the public roads that make up some of the track. But that was in a road car and it's very different in a racing machine! It's a very cool experience – such a fast track, and it will become more and more special as we go through Le Mans week.

On every straight our car, with the downforce trimmed out to the max, is going at over 330kph, which is about 205mph. It's quite funny because at first, when you're giving feedback to your engineer, you forget about that. Then you realise, when you say it's a bit unstable in the high-speed corners, or braking



stability isn't great, that you've got hardly any downforce. No wonder!

Honestly I think we've got a decent shot at the win, bearing in mind the pace of the car, me, Roman and Pierre, and of course we're coming off the back of winning our class last time out in the Spa 6 Hours. The biggest thing will be the reliability of these new LMP2 cars, because this is the first time they'll have been raced over 24 hours. You'd have to say the ORECA has the edge on pace, because the car wiped out the top 13 positions on the test day! So by the law of averages at least one of them has to hold together to win – I just hope it's ours...

But you never know what will happen in a 24-hour race. I've just had my first 24-hour race, at the Nurburgring with BMW, and that ended in bitter disappointment when we were looking in very good shape for a podium. It's such a long time to race for, and there are so many variables. On the other hand, although it's my first Le Mans, my team-mates have got good experience there and they've always shown good pace. We've just got to keep pushing and if we keep on going round I think we've got a good chance of winning.

**Ends**

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