



RML AD Group Secures a Second Le Mans Series Title

A conservative run to fourth place in yesterday's Silverstone 1000 Kilometres, the final race of this year's Le Mans Series, was more than sufficient to secure an unprecedented second set of LMP2 titles for RML AD Group. With a total of 75 points, the team's regular pairing of Mike Newton and Thomas Erdos reclaim the drivers' title they last won in 2007, while RML also collect the 2010 LMP2 team title. They were helped along the way by significant contributions from both Andy Wallace and Ben Collins, who each shared the team's Lola HPD Coupé for part of the season.



The result confirms RML as one of the most successful teams in the LMP2 category in the current era, having finished as runners-up to the title in both 2005 and 2006, and winning the class at Le Mans those same two years. In June this year RML recorded another podium finish in the 24 Hours, making 2010 one of the team's most rewarding seasons, and it's not over yet.



"This has been a great performance by the whole team," said Ray Mallock, Founder and Chief Executive of RML. "We came into this weekend leading three championships - the Le Mans Series, the World Touring Car Championship and the British Touring Car Championship. Our declared objective at the beginning of this year was to win all three, so today's result ticks off the first of those boxes, and in some style. The Lola HPD has been superbly reliable all season, and the drivers have done a great job of delivering the championship in the best tradition of endurance racing;

by being consistently on the pace yet keeping out of trouble."

With strong results in every round, including a win in the Algarve, RML AD Group required only a finish at Silverstone to take the 2010 title. Instead, a strong start by Brazilian Thomas Erdos, consolidated by a robust middle stint from Mike Newton, and an excellent anchoring run from Ben Collins, saw the #25 Lola through to a comfortable fourth place at the flag.

"I'm delighted to take the title again after two very difficult years," admitted Mike Newton, Founder and Chief Executive of AD Group, the team's principal sponsor. "I think there had been a tendency for people to dismiss us as a force to be reckoned with. The championship has moved on significantly since we last won in 2007, and there was a perception that perhaps we weren't strong enough any more. Regaining the title demonstrates that, given the right package, we can still deliver the goods. The Lola HPD has been utterly reliable all season."





This was a sentiment shared by Thomas Erdos. “Last year we suffered many failures, but none of them could be attributed to RML. The only difference this season has been the fantastic engine that HPD has provided, with its power, driveability and incredible reliability. All the other factors have remained the same, and that illustrates just how excellent RML is at putting the whole package together. Winning the title is exactly what the team’s engineers, mechanics and technicians deserve, and my heartfelt thanks go to them.”

“We’re just very happy to have taken the titles,” said Phil Barker. “This has been an exceptional season, working with HPD, Lola and Dunlop. We’ve had a 100% finishing record, and that reliability has moved us from last position in 2009, with a score of minus twelve points, through to winning LMP2 a year later. It’s simply brilliant, and a credit to the diligence and hard work of all those involved in the preparation of the car. It’s the quality of their work and the skill of our drivers that has delivered this result.”



Ben Collins took the chequered flag on Sunday in a measured and disciplined final stint from the driver better known, until recently, as The Stig. “I was carrying the baton for Mike and Tommy,” he explained. “They’ve done all the hard graft this season, working towards the title. I’ve just come in at the end of the year and been lucky enough to share in their rewards.” Ben drove well within his own and the car’s capabilities to ensure a risk-free run to the flag. “It has been great having Ben with us for the second half of the year,” said Mike. “He’s fitted in so well, but when he joined us we had no expectation that he’d bring quite so much public interest with him.”

Speaking on behalf of AD Group, Pauline Norstrom, the company’s Motorsport & Marketing Director, expressed her delight. “Securing the title is such a relief, we’re ecstatic!” she said. “At last, all the hard work has paid off, and we’re delighted to give our guests a taste of success. Winning the title again is a fantastic reflection on Phil and everyone else in the team and we’re extremely grateful for all their professionalism and dedication. Ours must be one of the longest standing sponsor/team relationships in the Le Mans Series, and this is a great endorsement of our ability to create return on investment (ROI) through our involvement in motorsport. Regaining the title is something that has eluded us for too long, and we hope they will enjoy celebrating this achievement as much as I know we will.”

Next year?

“With some significant details of the 2011 regulations still to be determined it is not yet possible for us to make any firm decisions,” stated Mike Newton, “but we are committed to putting a new package together for next season, and we have every intention of defending our title.” Those regulations are likely to be settled in the coming weeks, and a statement will follow. In the meantime, the team’s title-winning Lola Coupé is now for sale, either as an LMP2 contender or as the basis for an LMP1 package under the modified regulations.

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