

WESTBROOK SUPERB IN LE MANS SERIES OPENER



Richard Westbrook made a flying start to his European career as a Porsche works driver in the opening round of the Le Mans Series at Barcelona on Sunday.

Westbrook took the lead early in the 1000-kilometre race, but his hopes for victory ended when his co-driver was eliminated in a clash with another car.

The Londoner, winner of the Porsche Supercup title in 2006 and '07, was racing a GT2-spec Porsche 911 GT3-RSR for only the second time. He did a superb job to top the times in the last free-practice session, and qualified the Farnbacher Racing-run car third.

After free practice we made a few changes on the car that we thought would make it better, and they made it terrible!" said Westbrook. "We have to hold our hands up to that.

"But it was a great performance by the team. We were in a 2007 car, and they only put the '08 update kit on it one hour before free practice started, so we were really playing catch-up on the others. You could immediately see the improvements Porsche have made over the winter."

Richard started the car and drove the first two stints, and was able to emerge from the first pitstop with the lead ahead of renowned Porsche star Marc Lieb. Unfortunately, Westbrook's co-driver Allan Simonsen collected another car in the following stint and the Farnbacher car was retired. "I don't think it was Allan's fault it was unlucky," said Westbrook.

Even so, Richard was pleased to be able to show his speed. "It was good to put in such a good performance, even though on the bad side we walked away with no points, and with the LMS being only a five-round championship we've got our work cut out. But we're confident we can regroup, especially now that we've got a grip on the car and the Michelin tyres.

"Farnbacher are a very good team. I've competed against them for the last few years in the Supercup, and they're probably one of the best Porsche teams in the world. It's nice to race for them rather than against them!"

Westbrook now has two weeks before the first round of the FIA GT Championship at Silverstone, where he will race a similar Porsche 911 GT3-RSR for Prospeed Competition.