

Corporate Challenge at Goodwood 2009

The competitors taking part in the 2009 Corporate Challenge lined up on the grid ready for the start at 1.00pm on Sunday 26th April. It was an impressive line up with 12 corporate teams taking up the challenge building cars to race against the top 15 cars from the 2008 Formula 24 Season.

After the first half hour the team from Jaguar Land Rover were starting to realise some of the problems involved with electric car racing as they worked hard on their car in the paddock to get it back on the track. However, they were in good company as the 2008 champions Sandbach High School were experiencing technical problems as well and Zebedee had to be brought back to the garages.

After two hours most of the teams had pitted to put fresh batteries on and change drivers. The top three cars remained the same however with the Simple Trug Kit Car holding on to its early lead and gradually breaking away from the rest of the pack. R-PodS from Chipping Sodbury School did not have quite such a comfortable lead with the Fordingbridge Flyer EB6 chasing them for second place.

There was a great mix of corporate and school cars battling for positions in the middle of the field. Passivent's car along with the car from Prodrive were maintaining a steady pace keeping them centrally placed and ahead of some veteran school teams with several years experience.

All the cars showed tremendous reliability with very few breaking down and needing to be recovered. The work in the pits was quick and efficient suggesting several teams had remembered the importance of practicing these vital procedures. Of all the teams, however, the pit marshals felt the team from St Paul's Catholic College really excelled and awarded them the prize for the best pit stop which was a Scalextric digital race set kindly donated by Scalextric.

As the final flag fell at five o'clock it emerged that the top three cars had held onto their positions with the Simple Trug Kit Car winning followed by R-PodS in second position and the Fordingbridge Flyer EB6 taking third place this year.

Our two cars had mixed fortunes in the race itself. The new iWac Aero entered as a Passivent Car in the Corporate Challenge was driven by Matt and Leonie Rideout from St Paul's and Neal England, Lorna Kerrigan and Siobhan Mc Vicker from Passivent. The car came in 15th place having completed 93.6 miles in the four hours. Considering the Passivent staff only drove the car for the first time on the Friday before the race having had a practice session at Lingfield Park racecourse, they did really well and what a team building exercise! They haven't stopped talking about it since Sunday! Driver and battery changeovers as well as push offs are critical to keep the average speed of the car up during the race. Passivent had the benefit of James Hammick and James Percy to do the honours which included some excellent negotiation skills on behalf of JP to reduce a "sin bin" pit lane violation from 5 minutes to 1.5 minutes!

The other car Zytac Aero driven entirely by school children from St Paul's did not do as well coming 23rd having completed 76.8 miles compared to the 103.2 miles in last years final. The main reason for this we are pretty sure was battery performance. The batteries in the car should last two hours but after 1 hour 15 minutes they were really suffering. This lost us a good deal of distance that could not then be made up. It is one of our major problems as each car needs 4 batteries for a race and to be honest with the amount of discharge they take in a race, we do well to keep them going for more than one season. Two of the four batteries are three years old and we need to pension them off but costs always come back to haunt us as they are £55 each. We are trying to do more fundraising to get a new set of four for the important heat in July. Anyone who would be interested to sponsor a battery, let us know!

For more information see www.greenpower.co.uk



