



NEW ASTON MARTIN VANTAGE GTE CLINCHES FIRST POLE IN FUJI

- **Aston Martin Racing to start first and third in 6 Hours of Fuji GTE Pro class**
- **Vantage GTE shows step forward ahead of Japanese round of FIA WEC**
- **Reigning GTE Am champions take second on grid after strong qualifying**

Saturday 13 October, Fuji Speedway: The new Aston Martin Racing Vantage GTE recorded its first pole position at the Fuji International Speedway during qualifying for the fourth round of the FIA World Endurance Championship in Japan on Saturday.

The 2016 world champions, Nicki Thiim and Marco Sørensen, delivered a combined qualifying time of 1m36.093s which was good enough to secure the pole by 0.182s. The Danish pair had shown strong pace during free practice on the 4.563-mile circuit, and after Thiim set the fastest time in the first part of the session he then had to nervously watch on as Sørensen calmly produced a lap that put the #95 'DaneTrain' beyond reach of the opposition.

"This is an amazing feeling," said Thiim. "It's a long time since I have been this excited. When Marco was out there I just wanted it so badly. This is only the car's fourth race and it's still brand new so this is tremendous progress, especially since Spa. It's a great joy to drive around here, which is a high-speed track, and really use the potential of the new car. I'm so proud of the team and it is fantastic to give them something back."

The new Vantage GTE made its race debut at Spa-Francorchamps in May, replacing the old V8 Vantage GTE. Sørensen explained that the new car's wider performance window had allowed Aston Martin Racing to make great progress at Fuji.

“It is an honour to have the first pole position for the new Vantage and it’s just nice to see everyone so happy,” said Sørensen. “I think we have never enjoyed this kind of pace advantage in Fuji like that which we are showing this year. It will be interesting to see tomorrow if we can maintain it through the race. If we can, we should be able to fight for the win. We have improved the car in every area, and we have just kept on moving forward. Now we can fight.”

Alex Lynn (GB) and Maxime Martin (BEL) in the sister #97 Aston Martin Vantage qualified third, emphasising the pace of the car in Japan. “Big congratulations to our sister car in the #95 in pole position,” said Lynn. “I think honestly this is a great place for both cars to be starting. It’s looking like we could get some rain and then it will dry out and that will make for a great race.”

Completing the 1-2-3 set with second position, the reigning GTE AM world champions, Paul Dalla Lana (CDN), Pedro Lamy (POR) and Mathias Lauda (A) just missed out on the class pole by 0.064s. “I thought we had it there and it is super-frustrating to miss out by that tight a margin, but kudos to our team. We spent a lot of time between Silverstone and here improving the car and getting the set-up right and I think we have got a great race car.”

Aston Martin Racing Managing Director John Gaw said: “To see the car deliver on its potential is hugely satisfying as is the impact this result has had on the team. We knew from the numbers that it was always possible, but until you do it they are just numbers. It just takes the team on now to another level. What was really pleasing was to see the execution by the team. Not one of the drivers received a track limits penalty and that level of execution is really important because you have to get everything perfect to be on pole position.”

The 6 Hours of Fuji begins at 11:00 local time on Sunday, 14 October.

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