

**18 September, 2009**

**Drayson Racing to Make Le Mans Prototype 1 Debut at Petit Le Mans**



**BRASELTON, GA, USA** – In its short 12 year existence, the Petit Le Mans has quickly become one of sportscar racing's great events. In a similar fashion, Drayson Racing has swiftly established itself as a major player in the world of professional motor sport. The two entities will come together for the 12th Annual Petit Le Mans at Road Atlanta on 26 September as Drayson Racing makes its debut in the American Le Mans Series Le Mans Prototype One (LMP1) category. The 1000 mile/10 hour endurance classic marks the first time that the Anglo-American team will campaign the new No. 88 Drayson Racing Lola with Judd Power for drivers Paul Drayson (London/Gloucestershire, UK), two-time British GT Champion Jonny Cocker (Guisborough, Yorks, UK) and two-time Le Mans Series GT2 Champion Rob Bell (St Helens, UK).

The 2.54-mile Road Atlanta facility has played host to the Petit Le Mans since the race's inception, which pre-dates the American Le Mans Series by one season. The 12-turn circuit is one of the quickest courses in North America and will prove an exceptional challenge as well as rewarding experience for Drayson Racing as it begins to chart the new course as a P1 team. The track is noted for several "signature" turns including the dauntingly, and deceptively fast, first corner which leads from a blind right, up a hill through the "esses" and eventually to the track's "hairpin". The long backstraight will allow the normally aspirated Judd GV5 V10 to come to full song before the 10A/10B chicane. The greatest g-forces sustained by the car will come at Turn 12; the bottom of the hill entering the mainstraight. This ultra-quick right-hander combines lateral "Gs" from acceleration through the turn as well as compression from the downhill drop; all being done at full throttle in the high-downforce Lola Coupé.

Not only is Petit Le Mans the first opportunity for Drayson, Cocker and Bell to drive the No. 88 Drayson Lola-Judd at speed, none has ever raced a prototype of any kind. While Drayson and Cocker each lapped the small Stowe Course at Silverstone with the car on 10 September, the true nature of a prototype will not be known until they rollout at Road Atlanta. Bell is yet to drive the No. 88.

To help the team establish a working baseline for the P1 car, noted prototype driver Jamie Campbell-Walter (London) has been brought in for the pre-event testing at Road Atlanta. Campbell-Walter, who has six years of LMP1 experience including stints running the Judd V10, assisted in the car's initial shakedown run last week. Ian Smith (Waterlooville, UK) has also been brought in to assist team engineer Graham Moore (Oxfordshire, UK) at Petit Le Mans. Smith has extensive experience with the P1 cars and the Lola Coupé specifically.

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The 2009 Petit Le Mans will be the second for both Paul Drayson and Jonny Cocker. The team had a strong showing in the GT2 class at last year's event before a driveshaft failure ended the team's day. Bell will be making his Petit Le Mans debut. Team manager Dale White (Bozeman, MT, USA) is the most experienced of the team having earned GT2 victories in 2005 and 2006 as well as a host of other class podiums here. Whilst not scheduled to drive in the event, Campbell-Walter has five Petit Le Mans P1 starts, with two pole positions and three podium finishes.

Befitting a race of this magnitude, there is an extensive lead-in to the event. Official testing begins on Wednesday, 23 September with one hour of track time for the two prototype classes. Thursday brings two official practice sessions and the mandatory night practice in which all three drivers must turn three, race-speed laps in the darkness to qualify to race. Friday will have one practice and qualifying before Saturday's final warm-up and 11:15 (ET) start. The team will spend two days of private testing at Road Atlanta on the 19-20 September.

Following its Petit Le Mans premiere, the Drayson Racing will take part in the American Le Mans Series finale at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca (10 October) and the Asian Le Mans Series events at Okayama, Japan (31 October and 1 November).

### Quotes

**Elsbeth Drayson, Owner:** "The Team and its technical partners have done an exceptional job to get everything ready in time for Petit Le Mans, given that we only decided to run the Lola-Judd last month. I am delighted that the team is racing back in the United States in the American Le Mans Series. Road Atlanta is a wonderful circuit and the fans are so great. I am sure its going to be a really special weekend and the perfect place for Drayson Racing's first race for its brand new car."

**Paul Drayson, Driver/Owner:** "After our successful shakedown at Silverstone I have some sense of the feel of the car. I have also done a full day at Wirth Research on their LMP1 simulator driving the Road Atlanta course. So I am as prepared as I can be going into testing this weekend. Of course, I'm fully aware of the scale of the challenge the Team and I are taking on. This is racing at a whole new level. We will be up against the absolute cream of sportscar drivers and teams come race day. Having driven Road Atlanta last year I know what a fast and exciting circuit it is – particularly the last and first turns. I loved racing in the ALMS last year and I'm really looking forward to being back and meeting the enthusiastic and knowledgeable US sportscar fans again. We got a great welcome at Petit last year and I am sure the fans will be keen to see the green Drayson Racing Lola-Judd Coupé roll out for its race debut. I've got a smile on my face just thinking about it!"

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**Paul Drayson, About Green Racing:** “Global average temperature has risen by more than 0.7°C over the past 100 years and are expected to increase by 2 to 3°C this century [Editor: Mid-range estimate from Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change]. That would mean Earth experiencing greater climate change than for at least 10,000 years.

The American Le Mans Series leads the world in promoting green motor racing and showing how motor sport can contribute to reducing climate change through innovation. As last year, we will be aiming to compete for the MICHELIN® Green X® Challenge. Having narrowly missed winning the inaugural Challenge last year, it would be lovely to do well this time out. Green racing is central to Drayson Racing’s ethos. But first we have to finish and before that we have to learn how to drive this car well and fast. It is going to be a busy and memorable few days.”

**Jonny Cocker, Driver:** “I think it’s important that I treat this as any other weekend’s racing. I’ll be approaching the test with an open mind and prepared to learn lots over the first couple of days driving the car. After the shakedown at Silverstone I’m feeling confident and more certain of the areas that will need work. It’s going to be a huge challenge to adapt to the P1 car in such a short space of time but I feel ready. I think that with good preparation and a good test the weekend should go very well. My aim will be to bring the car home and finish the race first of all, but of course I want to challenge the established teams and drivers on the track too. We will know lots more come the first day of testing!”

**About using what he learned in '08:** “Returning to Atlanta with experience of last year is invaluable and should really help us get up to speed. I have driven the P1 car round Atlanta plenty of times already in my head, and have an idea as to what is going to be the biggest challenge. For sure the fast corners are going to take some building up to but now I’m just looking forward to driving the car.”

**About the corner he is most looking forward to driving in the Lola-Judd:** “I have been reliably informed by a few drivers that the last turn is flat 'easy'. So, I guess 12 is going to be the corner that is flat 'just' that it is going to be the real challenge!

**About his concerns for the weekend:** “I’m not concerned by driving the car round Atlanta. The plan is to build up slowly and take our time. We have plenty of testing time and I’m not going to rush into it.”

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**Rob Bell, Driver:** “For sure it will be a steep learning curve having not driven the Drayson Racing Lola-Judd or having seen the Road Atlanta circuit. The important thing will be to get there early and get the preparation right. I'll spend time making sure I'm comfortable in the car and learning the controls. My first run will be about learning how the car feels so I will not be looking for lap times. I want to make sure I get good quality laps. Then after that: full speed ahead!”

**About his expectations:** “My expectations need to be realistic. I think the team will see it as an opportunity to learn for the future. Yes, it's a big race but this is the start of the journey and the best way to test is in race conditions. Though I will be there to enjoy competing against some of the best factory teams in the world, being a highly competitive person, I will want to be as close to the sharp end as possible.”

**About the corner he is most looking forward to driving in the Lola-Judd:** “I've heard a lot about the last corner being very quick and also remember from watching on TV last year Turn One looks daunting. This is the sort of challenge any racing driver relishes and I can't wait to start.”

**Dale White, Team Manager:** “Petit Le Mans is one of those races that draws the best out of everyone. We will certainly have to bring the best of Drayson Racing. We have complete confidence in the Lola-Judd and Michelin tyres but this is a major challenge for everyone involved. We are going-up against the best manufacturers in the world and a host of very experienced privateers. We want to approach this one step at a time and be smart in what we do. We don't have any expectations other than to bring our best game to the table.”

Live television coverage available on SPEED; live radio coverage at [www.radiolemans.com](http://www.radiolemans.com).

To visit the official web site of Drayson Racing, please go to [www.draysonracing.com](http://www.draysonracing.com).

For more on the American Le Mans Series visit [www.americanlemans.com](http://www.americanlemans.com). Drayson racing supports the Science: So What? So Everything! campaign aimed at raising the profile of science and the part it plays in our day-to-day lives. To find out more visit [sciencesowhat.direct.gov.uk](http://sciencesowhat.direct.gov.uk).

To see up-to-the-minute notes on Drayson Racing, please follow “[DraysonRacing](#)” on Twitter.

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Digital images and complete team and driver bios available upon request. Please do not publish contact information other than web sites. Thank you.

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