



REVIEW LES MANS 25-27 APRIL 2014

Dramatic but promising start for Gaidai

The Ukrainian pilot lacked pace on the wet but showed great potential on dry tarmac and missed a class win only after a 30" penalty for off-piste driving.



The first racing weekend for 2014 had several ups and downs for Tsunami RT and Oleksandr Gaidai. Unpredictable weather conditions resulted to last minute tyre decisions more than once. Gaidai had bad luck on Qualifying 2 with gearbox problems but had a great Race 2 on Sunday.

On Friday, **Free Practice 1** was wet and **FP2** was dry. Alex was off pace on the wet practice: *"I didn't feel confident and tried to avoid any damage to the car"*, the Tsunami RT pilot said. But he proved aggressive on the second session and in the end he was featured 2nd overall on the timesheet. The Ukrainian was sincere though, admitting that his lap time was done thanks to an irregular cut off of the kerb on the first corner. Besides Alex, 15 more pilots did the same and the matter was discussed extensively during the drivers' briefing that followed. Anybody who would exceed the track limits, purposely or by mistake, would be penalised after a second warning. Alex seemed to understand that very well.

Gaidai impressed with his speed at Race 2. He overtook several competitors to 6th place overall and 1st in his class. The Ukrainian received 30" penalty for driving over track lines that were not specified during the Friday drivers' meeting.

Race 1, Saturday 26/4

During **Qualifying 1**, Gaidai didn't put together a perfect lap on wet tarmac under winter conditions. In the end of the session he was only 19th fastest overall and 5th among gentlemen drivers. Alex was not satisfied at all by his performance. The first race of the season in Porsche Carrera Cup France started in dramatic way: during the formation lap a sudden rain obliged the organisers to direct the cars back to the pit lane for tyre change. On the new start, Alex was 19th and had hard time with the spray

Alex was very fast but should consider his position in class B, not his overall standing.

IRINA KOLOMEITSEVA, TSUNAMI RT PRINCIPAL

from the cars in front. He overtook three competitors during the race but his 16th place overall didn't reflect hi potential in Le Mans. "My lack of testing here and zero visibility ruined my race", said Alex right after.

Race 2, Sunday 27/4

In the **Qualifying for Race 2** Alex had a gearbox problem, after his pit stop for tyre change. "On my first fast lap the gearbox locked up in third gear", said Alex disappointed. "It is clear that we can't talk about a good race result now", the Ukrainian admitted as he should start from the penultimate place on the grid.

The mechanics inspected the problem and found out that the gearbox compressor had failed. They replaced the part and the gearbox was OK again. The weather got better but before the race, the clouds were black around the historic circuit, so most teams had to decide at the very last moment what tyres to use: slick or rain?

Starting from the end of the grid Oleksandr drove hard from the first lap. He overtook several competitors, he had only a slight mistake when he lost his line on the entry of a right corner and he got to 6th overall and 1st in class B, keeping a magnificent pace throughout the race. The wipers of the Porsche were on for the drops of rain.

The race direction though had a different opinion. Alex was penalised with a drive through for driving over the track limits after he had two warnings. Given that the penalty was given during the final lap Alex took the flag and was penalised with 30" aftermath.

The result of the race was bittersweet for the team. The driver showed great determination and speed but he missed his first podium in Class B of the season. Alex was 16th (5th at Class B) in the end.

The Ukrainian was disappointed and with a good reason: "Sincerely I don't know exactly what I was punished for", said Alex. "The only mistake I did during the race was to hit the protection panels at the first corner once".

Tsunami RT heads back to Italy for the first weekend of the Porsche Carrera Cup Italia 2014, in Misano, May 10-11th. Gaidai has worked a lot in the specific circuit during winter and is expected to show his potential in the race, among the best Italian competitors.



"I looked for the race director to protest but he was having lunch, right after the race. My penalty was too much if we consider that a pilot was penalised with 1" in Mugello for the same reason"

PCCF RACE 1 & 2 RESULTS

Session	Overall	Cat. B	Best Lap	1st Lap	Remarks
Free Practice 1	20th	6th	1:58.778	1:55.014	Wet tarmac
Free Practice 2	2nd	1st	1:40.531	1:40.515	Dry, times influenced by off-piste driving
Qualifying 1	19th	5th	1:56.900	1:53.882	Wet tarmac
Race 1	16th	6th	2:00.534	1:58.733	Wet tarmac
Qualifying 2	25th	8th	2:07.836	1:54.556	Wet, after tyre change had gearbox problems
Race 2	16th	5th	1:42.850	1:41.632	Finished 7th - 30" penalty for off-limits driving