

Team Lost 'N Spaced Racing #24 25 Hours of Thunderhill 2006

Porsche One-Two ... The Old and the New



The tradition continues. Porsche 911s have again taken the top two spots in what some consider the most severe endurance road race, the 25 Hours of Thunderhill. Held annually for the last four years in December, racers and crew must endure long periods of darkness and unstable weather to finish the longest closed-course race in North America. Porsche 911s have dominated the first, second and third place overall positions every year since the inception of the race.

This year, however, two completely different 911s took the top honors in class and podium positions. They were the 996 GT3 cup car of O'Connell Racing on one hand and the 1974 911 of Team Lost 'N Spaced Racing on the other, the same team who took first place overall in this same race in 2005.

O'Connell Racing had a flawless race from start to finish. They took the pole position with the fastest qualifying time and led every lap from thereon. Team Lost 'N Spaced, however, had a different start. They started from the 46th position on grid due to a transponder issue during qualifying and had to battle their way to the podium position from there.

Lost 'N Spaced got its theme and name from the two drivers who started the team, Peter Smith and Masuo Robinson. All you baby boomers out there will remember the series Lost in Space with the Robinson family and Dr. Smith who stowed away with them in their adventures in space. The play on words is definitely tongue-in-cheek as the team has proven itself to be neither lost nor spaced. It is a cohesive and very competitive team with the desire to do the best it can and finish the race, all the while having fun and enjoying each others' company.

Friday's qualifying run proved to be the first challenge to the team. The drivers radio'd to the pits there was a miss at a certain RPM range. By the end of the NASA team meeting, it was still undiagnosed by the crew, who knew that without a fix for this, the car would most likely not start the race as the engine could potentially melt down early on.

By Saturday morning, the crew had tested many things and had come to the conclusion the miss was the result of a bad injector. Not having a spare injector, the team prevailed upon some Porsche Racing Club friends who provided the "donation" needed of an injector, which was installed minutes before the car was due on the starting grid – thanks, Paul and Joe!

After the impressive fly-over by the Air Force, Masuo (Prof. John Robinson) took the green flag. As his stint ended a little over 2 hours later, he had brought the car up to 3rd place overall. At that time, Lost 'N Spaced settled in for the long enduro, punctuated approximately every two hours with pit stops that ranged anywhere from 2 to 6 minutes per stop.



However, during the early Sunday morning stint with Neil Jackson (Will Robinson) behind the wheel, he radio'd in about a chatter-like sound from the rearend of the car, especially noticeable during an extended yellow flag caution period. The crew took note of this and decided to forge ahead.

By 6:45 a.m., where yet another extended caution lap occurred, Masuo called in about a noise coming from constant velocity (CV) joint, the same chattering noise Neil Jackson had noticed earlier. When the crew could hear the same noise from pit lane, they knew the rear axle needed to be changed out or the car would almost certainly not make it to the end.

The team readied itself to make a full pit stop ... change the axle, four tires, fuel and a driver change. A mere 8.5 minutes later, Rich Walton (Mjr. Don West) took to the track – a most awesome display of teamwork between Mat Lowrance and Peter Smith on the axle change!

After that, it was a matter of team strategy to keep ahead of the third place team, which alternated between the Car & Driver BMW diesel and the Alliance Financial Mazda, the team that finished third overall after suffering setback after setback during the race. The Mazda finally caught and passed the BMW diesel during the last hour of the race when the BMW's shock failed and they were unable to return to the track at that point.

The trilogy is now complete. Team Lost 'N Spaced has endured and prevailed with three podium positions for three attempts in the 25 Hours of Thunderhill; 2nd in 2004, 1st in 2005 and 2nd in 2006. This would not have been possible without the help of our sponsors, which include Carlsen Porsche, Jerry Woods Enterprises, Smart Racing, Toyo Tires, Sporthaus, AIM tires and WeVo.



Our team:

Drivers: Masuo Robinson, Peter Smith, Neil Jackson, Rich Walton

Crew: Louise Sousoures, Susan Smith, Patty Stark, Larry Sharp, Mike Lommatzsch, Steve Kuhn, Art Taylor, Skip Rebozzi, Gary Trudeau, Neil Yonk, Tom Palmer, Nan Walton, Jim Stark and Mat Lowrance.

Special help also from Shirley Batchelor for her lasagne, KC Sharp (massage therapist), Robin Conci, Roxy Morgan, Kyle Birnie, Gary Walton and David Leong (team photographer)

GREAT JOB EVERYONE!

