



## NÜRBURGRING 24 HOURS

*The #254 Alfa 147 JTD  
shared by Gilles  
Groombridge, Matthew  
McFadden, Steven Griffin  
Steven and David Smith  
finish the race 11th in Class  
S1.*

Alfa Romeo couldn't make quite it four wins in a row in the 'Alternative Fuels' Class S1 at the gruelling Nürburgring 24 Hours last weekend, although four of the six turbodiesel-powered Alfa 147s taking part in the marathon race survived the 'green hell' to reach the chequered flag on Sunday afternoon.

The Italian manufacturer has an enviable record in this toughest of endurance races, which was first run in 1970 and attracts a 220 car grid, in recent years. Last year Herbert Schürg and Stefan Neuberger, were joined for the race by FIA GT Championship Maserati driver's, Michael Bartels Michael and Timo Scheider, in an Alfa Romeo Deutschland-entered and they claimed victory in Class S1 by four clear laps driving a specially-developed 2.4-litre JTD-powered Alfa 147. Backing them up was a second Alfa Romeo Deutschland-entry, a 1.9 JTD 16v turbodiesel powered Alfa GT Coupe, which was piloted by a crew that included the then Alfa Romeo brand CEO Karl-Heinz Kalbfell and popular German TV 'soap opera' actress Eve Scheer, although they dropped out before nightfall while shadowing their team mates.

With burgeoning interest in developing diesel-powered racing cars from major manufacturers, this year's Nürburgring 24 Hours saw the 'Alternative Fuels' category being split into two capacity-sized classes, S1 and S2, with Alfa Romeo's 1.9-litre JTD engine featuring in the smaller S1 category, while the single 2.4-litre JDM-powered entry was bumped up into S2. The #272 Alfa 147 2.4 JTD, the single representative of the Milanese brand in Class S2, featured former leading German lady racer Ellen Lohr (best remembered for her exploits at the wheel of a factory-entered Mercedes-Benz in the DTM series during the 1990s) joined by Dietrich Hueck, Werner Habermehl and Tom Schwister. However the car's chance of repeating its 2005 win evaporated during Sunday morning, and having completed 95 laps of the 23.5 kilometre circuit, it retired from the action after 18 hours and 16 minutes of racing.

Twenty cars were entered in Class S2 with five Alfa 147 JTD racers mixing it up with factory-supported entries from BMW, VW, Renault and SEAT. The two semi-official BMW 120d racers posted their intent to wrest away Alfa Romeo's crown, lining up a clear 1-2 on the grid. Pole time was set by the #263 entry which racked up a best lap of 9 minutes 43.956 seconds.



The #260 Alfa 147 JTD shared by Martin-Hein De Groot, Rüdiger Förster, Uwe Degner Uwe and Uwe Göbel dropped out of the running after 19 hours and 52 minutes

Best finishing Alfa 147 JTD at the Nürburgring was the #253 entry crewed by Paul Hunsperger, Hubert Nacken, Terry Britchford Terry and Roland Mühlbauer which came 5th in Class S1.



Quickest of the Alfa Romeo 147 runners was the #253 entry driven by Paul Hunsperger, Hubert Nacken, Terry Britchford Terry and Roland Mühlbauer in 8th place with a best lap time of 11 minutes 0.038 seconds. The no #265 Alfa 147 Cup of Ralf Zensen, Marcus Bierlein, Victor Smolski and Christopher Peters (11 minutes 11.661 seconds) was next up in 12th place, one ahead of the #256 entry being shared by 'Fred', 'Barney', Tillmann Gante and Stephen Archer (11 minutes 18.001 seconds). Rounding out the Alfa 147 runners was the #254 entry of Gilles Groombridge, Matthew McFadden, Steven Griffin Steven and David Smith (11 minutes 32.453 seconds) in 17th slot, and the #260 car driven by Martin-Hein De Groot, Rüdiger Förster, Uwe Degner Uwe and Uwe Göbel (11 minutes 54.753 seconds) in 20th place.

After mixed conditions in qualifying the weather was warm and sunny as the race got underway last Saturday, conditions that prevailed for the whole 24 hours. Last year the Alfa Romeo Deutschland-entered Alfa 147 JTD finished in a stunning 13th place overall on its way to category victory and this year the BMW 120d raised the bar even higher, finishing 5th overall and covering 138 laps on its way to Class S1 victory. The winning BMW crew was comprised of Claudia Hürtgen (2005 VLN Champion), Marc Hennerici (top privateer in the 2005 FIA World Touring Car Championship), Johannes Stuck (son of famous former racer Hans-Joachim Stuck) and the team's owner, Torsten Schubert. Best of the Alfa 147's was the #253 car which completed 122 laps and was placed 52nd overall. Three other Alfa 147s made it to the chequered flag: the #256 car was 7th in class (75th overall) after covering 116 laps, the #254 11th in class (101st overall) after completing 112 laps and finally the #265 entry was the penultimate finisher in the class down in 14th place (128th overall), having turned in 96 laps. The only Alfa 147 not to finish was the #260 entry which dropped out just minutes before the 20 hour mark. The race was won in a new record (8,832 km in 24 hours) by the Manthey Racing-entered Porsche 911 GT3 crewed by factory contracted drivers' Lucas Luhr, Timo Bernhard, Mike Rockenfeller and Marcel Tiemann.



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