PROSPEED COMPETITION

FIA GT - REVIEW 2009 - PREVIEW 2010
Rudi Penders looks back on 2009 and looks ahead to 2010

A few weeks after the end of the season, how do you now look back on the 2009 motorsport year?

Rudi Penders: "In response to your question all I can say is that for ProSpeed Competition it was a brilliant season. This season we came away with winning the FIA GT2 title, the 24 Hours of Zolder and the Porsche Manufacturers Cup in FIA GT3, in fact a well balanced outcome. Personally I'm somewhat distancing myself from the races in order to concentrate on analysing matters and drawing conclusions. I'm fully aware that we now have to start working in order to repeat these performances in 2010 in order to carry on through this positive line of achievements. One of my foremost observations is that as a team we have grown enormously, especially in depth, and for me that is a great satisfaction. Everything we did improved; we hoisted ourselves up to a higher level, where in fact in previous years we had developed in the breadth. In FIA GT2 we needed to beat teams such as AF Corse, BMS and CRS in order to clinch the title with Richard and in no way can you achieve this if you are not competing at top level.

But taking that small step back also allowed me to get a better insight into other factors. Now that the season has come to an end I ask myself questions regarding the internal relationships amongst the FIA, the manufacturers and the teams. The disqualification of the Porsche teams in Spa, as a result of the problem around the alloy of the cylinder sleeves, set me thinking. This triangular relationship- FIA, manufacturers and teams -, which is irrefutably essential for our sport, is today in fact not fully balanced. Not only our own experience, but also more recently that of the PK Carsport Corvette, was the initial result of an (administrative) problem between the manufacturers and the FIA, whilst it is the teams which carry the full sporting and financial bill. Surely this is not right? The competent authorities need to readjust this lopsided situation and adapt to the present conditions, which in concrete terms implies a championship where the manufacturers no longer have an active part. FIA GT2 is a championship for private teams, with or without that support of a manufacturer.

For ProSpeed Competition what were the high and low points of last season?

Rudi Penders: "The high point was undeniably the drivers' title for Collard-Westbrook in FIA GT2, whereas for me the low point was the 24 Hours of Spa, our legendary race on home ground. We really experienced our fair share of bad luck and weren't probably good enough to go for victory that weekend, and this is something we definitely intend to put right in 2010."

At this present moment, and with all these radical changes at both national and international level, how do foresee the 2010 season?

Rudi Penders: "Indeed, but let's start with the international level where the FIA GT2 becomes the European GT Championship. Presently FIA GT2 revolves around a duel between Ferrari and Porsche and this will probably change in 2010. We're expecting various makes to come to measure themselves up against the present players which is a good thing, as long as these new makes play to the rules of the game and conform to the technical regulations.

Regarding the FIA GT3 we have the arrival of the new Porsche 911 GT3 R, and we will be entering two in this championship. The Porsche 911 GT3 R will be the new reference in GT3, believe me. I truly hope that together with a few of our Belgian top teams we can compete up front at a European level. Both cars will also be entered a local level, namely the new Belcar Endurance, the championship which sees the light of day in 2010. It is an excellent evolution that the regulations in our country are showing a wider scope, as the economic climate proved that the GT3 thorough-bred was not suited to Belgium. GT3 must remain the top class, but the field must be bigger, that is a fact. I'm hoping for a well balanced regulation and more specifically I truly hope that the promoters as also the RACB follow the European GT3 regulations when it come to the top cars, without too much consideration, and without own interpretations. Should that be the case, ProSpeed Competition will be back in action on the Belgian circuits.

With this almost all our plans for 2010 are now known, namely FIA GT2, FIA GT3 and Belcar Endurance. But we're also working hard on reappearing at the start in Le Mans, ten years after I competed there together with Kurt Dujardyn and the late Philip Verellen, finishing fifth in our class.

I would like to end by wishing all our partners and collaborators a brilliant 2010 sporting season.