



## "What a sh\*t show" - Lewis Plato

After a successful entry into the Bathurst 12H at the end of February, which resulted in Benji and Brad finishing a respectable 18th, it was only right that the Esports racing continued with the Sebring 12H.

This time round, the team expanded by 2 drivers, Tom Tennant and Lewis Plato, who were often frontrunners in the Valluga Esports League and added a great level of experience to accompany Brad and Benji.



With new drivers onboard, it was also decided a change in car was needed, so the team swapped the Lamborghini Huracan for a BMW M8 GTE.

Going into the race, many of the team are currently participating in the upcoming racing season, so there were more restrictions on testing opportunities. However, practice went well with most drivers turning laps and designated qualifier, Tom Tennant, getting a few new tyres run in. A solid qualifying performance, left the team starting the race from 6th on the grid.

It was a great start to the race for the boys, with Tom putting in a strong 2-hour stint and overtaking a couple of drivers. Managing to catch up to an LMP2 car in 3rd place, a missed braking point left the BMW crashing off the road. Despite this, Tom managed to keep pushing and pitted in 4th place.

Next to take the virtual wheel was Lewis Plato, who experienced pedal issues with his rig which cost the team some time. It didn't take long for the bad luck to continue, as Lewis shortly got collected by an LMP2 car, and it was decided his stint would be reduced so he could fix his rig issues.

Despite the pre-mentioned chaos, Brad took over from Lewis whilst the team were still in 5th place, however earlier damage to the car meant Brad found it difficult to control. Trying to make-up for lost performance, a small mistake again resulted in contact with another team, and put the Valluga group back in the pits for maintenance pushing them to 25th.



In the final 3 hours, sheer determination got them back up the grid and they managed to maintain 13th in class for the remainder of the race.

Here's what the team had to say for themselves after the mayhem:

Tom Tennant: *"Great to join the Valluga E-Sports team for Sebring - enjoyed racing the Valluga E-Sports league and so it was nice to get the call up from the team. A fairly eventful race with lots of contact from LMP2 cars and wandering GT3 cars. I managed to get caught up in only a few accidents out of my control, which was a good effort all things considered. It was good fun to start the race, we all had a decent pace to run at the front so looking forward to the next one which is an even longer race. Strange Lewis wasn't able to adapt to his pedal issue as a 'real' racing driver."*

Bradley Ellis: *"Had a great race but due to damage sustained by one of my teammates in the opening stint (again), I found the car hard to drive so a small mistake by myself trying to make up for lost performance resulted in contact and a short pitstop for maintenance. After this, I managed to grab a few more places back once returning to the track before handing them over to the others who circulated for the remainder."*

Benji Hetherington: *"Much shorter preparation than Bathurst but we expanded our team by two and drank less red wine the night before. The step up to GTE was a daunting prospect for 12 hours of racing, but with the addition of two E-Sports, pro racers found amongst our Valluga E-Sports league, I was confident of a good showing for the team. Everything was going to plan until Brad had a small off 5 hours in which lost us a bit of time with repairs. From there we had a clean, if not steady run to the flag to finish 13th in class. Learning more and more each time we race, so hopefully things come together in the Nürburgring 24 hours this month. That is unless Brad crashes for the 3rd race in a row."*

I think we can all agree with Lewis Plato, who beautifully summarised the 12 hours at Sebring with "What a sh\*t show."

Safe to say we hope the team have better luck at the Nürburgring 24H later this month, but something tells us we shouldn't hold our breath.

