

Shane Lewis and Autohaus start strong, but end early at the Rolex 24.

Shane Lewis returned to this year's Rolex 24 at Daytona excited to start his 27th career 24-hour race and his 13th at the Speedway. He and his teammates Rich Zahn, Peter Collins and Romian Iannetta trained hard in preparation for this year's grueling event. With Autohaus Motorsports racing's preparation of the #46 Pontiac GT car and some of the best pit crew in the business, everyone had high expectations for the weekend.

The race started at 3:30 pm eastern time. The weather gods were unfortunately, not kind to the packed crowd or the competitors at Daytona International Speedway. Lewis started the annual event from the 9th row in pouring rain conditions. Visibility was so bad and the track was so soaked that the race had to be started under a yellow flag. After a few laps behind the pace car to allow the drivers to see the track conditions, the GRAND-Am officials threw the green flag.

The racing was on, but survival was on everyone's minds. Lewis drove the #46 car for all he could while making his way to the front. Shane stayed in the car for the first pit stop, took on fuel and kept the rain tires for a double stint. At one point he was as high as 6th place. Shane pitting for the second time taking on fuel and a driver's change to Romain. The French driver put in an outstanding run and turned the car over to Rich. The conditions were slowly getting better and the lap time of all the competitors were getting quicker every lap.

Then the worst happened. A Daytona Prototype made a very risky move on the inside of Zahn going through the very high speed kink, turn 4. The DP car clipped the side of him and sent Rich off the track and sliding through the grass. With all the rain and soaked ground, the Autohaus driver was along for the ride and nothing he could do. The #46 car hit the wall hard. Luckily Rich was ok but the car was not.

The crew went to work quickly to see if the car could be fixed. Unfortunately the

damage was too severe and the car was retired after only 6 hours on track.

" It was a very hard hit ' Lewis said. " I am so happy Rich is ok. I feel bad for everyone involved with the program. We worked and prepared very hard for this event and to have it end so early is heartbreaking for us all. I cant thank the Autohaus team enough for preparing such a strong and safe car. It would have been a great car to cross the checkered flag with today, but I guess it just wasn't meant to be. Now it's time to turn the focus on repairing the car and preparing for the rest of the 2010 season."

Shane Lewis and Rich Zahn plan to run the 2010 GRAND-Am Rolex sports car series in 2010. For continued updates on Shane, visit www.shanelewis.com

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