To all at Studio 397,

RE BOP update 02/07/2019

We write a as concerned group comprised of BMW, Corvette and Porsche drivers and team managers who have qualified for the officially endorsed 24 hours of Le Mans race on the 6th - 7th of July 2019. We come from a position of fully supporting Studio 397 in all their endeavours, including officially hosted events such as Le Mans.

Our concerns are based on the lateness and nature of the BOP.

This situation gives drivers and teams very limited chance to prepare adequately for the quite major changes. We all chose a vehicle based on what was presented at the time of qualifying and it is a simple case of the goal posts being moved. A reasonable schedule for adjusting to changes may allow for two weeks but this is closer to 3 days. Thousands of hours have been put into preparations and this cannot just be squeezed into the last few days before the event.

There were rumours of an incoming BOP before the race, and this might have been manageable. However, the changes to the GTEs do not constitute BOP changes - rather, physics changes.

This is a letter to express our dissatisfaction with the timing of these changes. A lot of commitment goes into racing a 24hour event and it leaves a bad feeling when changes that can be perceived as unfair are implemented in such close proximity to the race.

It is a problem that the majority of GTE class drivers are in agreement which causes unnecessary and inconvenient problems and there are numerous solutions put forward as described below by numerous team managers and team representatives:

The BOP fix obviously made things much worse. It seems a no-brainer to me to revert back to a previous iteration of the BOP to avoid ruining the fun not just for the ones who drew the short straw, but also the ones that drew a long one. I would accept a simple change of weight, power, nozzle on the week of the race, but a core physics change? Most teams have been developing the setups for these cars for a year now and having 2 of them completely change while 1 stays relatively the same is the biggest problem here.

- Alen Terzic, Team Singularity (Porsche)

Making a BOP change before a race is fine, till the point where it affects the overall behaviour of the car, as it does now. In real life they do change some small things, like +5-10kgs, getting away some power, or something, but doing something like what happened now with the GTE cars has never happened anywhere, and it simply can't happen. It has changed the overall behaviour, made the car impossible to drive not just with the old setups, but actually with almost every other setup, and I've tried not one, and not two ways to set it up to our liking. I don't think it will look good in the main event, to see retiring cars either as a protest, or either as a crash due to the lack of practice with the new handling.

- Gergo Baldi, Team Hungary (BMW)

A BoP should make all cars viable and leave all cars with equal chances to be first across the line after 24h. The BoP before our update didn't do that, so a change was needed.

This BoP update was not the change that was needed. Cars should have been made closer together on top speed, they weren't.

A BoP change 4 days before the race is no problem, a physics change is.

Unfortunately, a GTE race is often decided by BoP, and that's unavoidable however I think we could wish for a closer race between the cars. A lot of attention is going to the Vette which is understandable, but the BMW has been hit even harder and having 8 cars line up with no chance to do anything on pace is unacceptable.

- Yuri Kasdorp, Team Singularity (Porsche)

Please fix the Corvette's and BMW's rear end stability issues at high speed. Bring the BMW speed more in line with the Corvette as it is 3KPH down and 2 seconds slower. Balance fuel burn across all 3 cars in all mixes.

- James Johnson, Zansho (Corvette)

Penalizing the Corvette power so much in comparison to the other cars and also so late is difficult to understand. We would be satisfied with changing the coefficients to 0.975 instead of the current 0.95, for both the power and torque.

- SRGP (Corvette)

I will make a brief summary, I understand the bop and I think it is necessary to a certain extent, but in our case (bmw) today we have started working with the new bop, result; the car is less weight, however it is impossible to go with low wing, even with wing 6 we cannot keep the car in sector 3, we will not survive this race today.

- David Serra, Asombik eSports (BMW)

I believe that the C7R my car is worse in driving and behaviour specially in the rear... it is way way on the edge in whatever we do on the setup, it becomes a struggle in for example a double stint.

In my opinion we should go back to the way it was with the corvette C7R at least and then do a proper BOP on the car after 24h Le Mans because changing again something now would be a mistake. People are already struggling to make a completely new setup atm.

- Pedro Ramada, Ramada Motorsport (Corvette)

It's ridiculous making a BOP like this 4 days before the race, after spending 2 weeks and many hours to develop a setup that now is unusable. The car isn't balanced at all aerodynamically and very dangerous to drive. Is not funny to drive a 24h race in these conditions. Also, it's not understandable the sense of the BMW BOP after the fact it was already the slowest of the group.

- Tilen Horvat, DriveGameSeat Racing Team (Corvette)

After the latest update including the Le Mans BoP, we feel the gaps among the cars have been widened instead of shortened. The Corvette has a very clear lift-off oversteer that can prove fatal at any point during a 24h endeavour. Not to mention that the allegedly added downforce seems to be unbalanced all the way to the front. We want close racing. With the recent update, what we've obtained is basically three classes within one single class: we're not asking to have the cars perfectly levelled, but at least somewhat close to each other.

Furthermore, the idea to release this BoP just a few days ahead of the event sounds terribly rushed to us, given how much each car has changed since the previous update.

- Fabio Cangioli, Witchwood (Corvette)

Tried the M8 after the last update with current setup (used in VEC), it is undrivable, especially in high speed corner (no grip at all at the rear). Also, we could not hit more than 293 kph instead of 299, which I don't really understand since it should be lighter/more powerful.

3 days to develop a setup for more or less a new car, plus time for all drivers to be used to it, is quite short.

- Martin Brault, IDM (BMW)

Not only the lateness, but also the scale of the BoP that affected the car handling is appalling to us, as our drivers spent weeks preparing for the 24hour race with intentions of fighting for the win. That the drivers are upset with such a radical change a mere 3-4 days before the big event is definitely understandable I would say, as this isn't the car they signed up with.

- Nicolas Hillebrand, Manager of T3 Motorsport Simracing (Corvette)

We express worry towards the state of the S397 test team, firstly thanks to the state of the GT3 pack cars and now thanks to the rushed and unscientific BOP of the GTE cars.

Our quick fix proposal before the Le Mans 24h race is to keep the new Porsche version, but return to the old version of the BMW and Corvette.

If any performance gaps remain, then they must be closed by using only either power or weight changes, not underlying physics changes, as is done in the real series we aim to simulate.

We also stress that the changes must also be done keeping in mind the different cars fuel usage and strategy possibilities over whole stints.

- Risto Kappet, Team Vires (Corvette)

We at Ajira Racing decided to participate this race so we could experience new laser scanned Le Mans and have fun racing in the GTE field. We tested only Vette which felt fast and nice to drive. We developed a decent setup which took tens of hours testing. After latest BoP update Vette is almost undrivable.

It feels like downforce bias is way too much to the front and coast diff setting is far too small. These two issues cause rear to snap at high speed when throttle is lifted. Especially at Porsche curves car is extremely dangerous and we believe this would cause lots of crashes during the 24h event. It's also a place where LMP2s overtake GTE so it's dangerous for faster class too. Is Max Verstappen participating and there will be tens of thousands viewers to the live feed? What if GTE loses control at Porsche curves and ruins Max's race there?

With higher rear wing it's possible to improve handling to some extent but then top speed is gone and handling problem is still there - just not as pronounced. We have compared Vette against Porsche and even with wing 3 Porsche has still slightly higher top speed (295 km/h) than Vette with wing 1 (294 km/h). Wing 3 is what we had in VEC race (Porsche) and it makes rear stable for the Porsche for whole stint. We also did hotlapping and found out Porsche to be 0.5-0.7 seconds faster than Vette when using default setups. Current handling problems will likely make gap in race even bigger.

One out of three of our drivers is overseas on a business trip and doesn't have time to prepare for this radical last minute handling change. Therefore, if Vette handling is not reverted back to where it was before the last BoP or if he cannot adapt to the new handling in time during Saturday we probably have to abandon from the race.

- Kalle Kouri, Ajira Racing (Corvette)

Our team is racing the BMW M8, and since the last BOP, we have experienced several issues regarding the handling of the car. The most noticeable of this issues is the problems we are having to make the rear of the car work in high speed corners like Indianapolis and the Porsche Curves.

The car feels highly unpredictable, with us losing control of the car in various ways. You could lose it not only in the entry or the exit of the corner, but you could also lose control in the middle of it, making it impossible to pull a safe drive around the track.

Also, another concerning issue is that the car is very inconsistent under braking. No matter how much you move the balance towards the front, or how much you change the brake pressure, you´ll always end with the rear of the car moving or the fronts locked up (if not both at the same time). This becomes even worse when you experience it not only on high braking corners, but also in those you barely use the brake in.

Finally, the straight line speed we have lost is ridiculous, as we went from hitting 297 at the end of the straight to barely making it to 292, which in a track as fast as Le Mans, is almost a death sentence to your pace and overall performance, as you don´t only have to deal with the other GTEs, but also with LMP2 cars that could potentially be 40 km/h quicker on the straights.

Being honest, it´s not only about the pace we are all worried about, but mostly, about our races being ruined by an undrivable and an almost impossible to improve car.

- Tomás García, OSR Endurance (BMW)

These statements are supported by all members of each team represented. As a group, we wish for rFactor 2 to be shown in the best light possible. It is our chosen driving simulator, after all. Unfortunately, we do not believe this is possible with the GTEs in their current form. We hope that you (S397) take this document as it is intended, which is an informed plea to amend the cars so we can all make rFactor 2 look its best on race day.

Best regards,

A significant number of GTE teams.