

Drivers count cost as 2CV race runs its 24-hour course



MONDELLO PARK, a pretty race track in the rolling fields of Co Kildare, 30 miles from Dublin, is not yet in the same league as Le Mans. But at dawn yesterday it had a passing resemblance, even if was "tin cans on wheels" — Citroën 2CVs — battling out a 24-hour marathon rather than high-performance sports cars.

Teams of mechanics worked frantically to repair the damage wrought by racing through the night. Engines and gearboxes were being changed in tents and under makeshift awnings.

At Spa in Belgium, where a similar event has been held for 10 years, crowds of 30,000 turn up to

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watch. At Mondello few spectators were in evidence. Even spare drivers were more likely to be sent to the all-night garage in nearby Naas for fuel to save having to buy fuel from the course bowser (fuel dispenser). "If we buy from the bowser the race costs us £300. If we fill up in Naas it's £270," Nick Kendall, one of the drivers of "Blackadder", said. Preparing the car and transporting it and the crew from London had cost £3,000.

Astonishingly, 35 of the 39 entrants were still running when the race finished at 4pm — better than at Le Mans. The winner was car 36, entered by a team from the Wingrove Motor Company in Newcastle upon Tyne.

