



LARBRE COMPETITION



LARBRE COMPETITION BATTLES TO PODIUM AT 2016 FIA WEC OPENING ROUND

- Larbre crew secures podium finish at FIA WEC opening race
 - Jack Leconte: "We start on the right foot"

Larbre Competition launched its 2016 FIA WEC campaign in impressive fashion with a third place finish in the LMGTE Am class at the 6 Hours of Silverstone (15-17 April).

Having shown encouraging pace throughout the opening weekend, the three-man crew of the #50 Corvette C7.R overcame a number of obstacles during the opening round of the FIA World Endurance Championship to lay the groundwork for a solid season of competition.

Following a promising performance during the 'Prologue' at Paul Ricard circuit, the French team approached the first round of the year with confidence and ambition. At the 'home of British motorsport', Paolo Ruberti, Pierre Ragues and Yutaka Yamagishi shone on the opening day by setting the third fastest time of the second free practice session.

The following day brought untypical weather – even for England – with snowfall leading to the abandonment of final practice and putting the crew in an uncertain mood ahead of qualifying. Paolo and Yutaka, neither of whom had driven the Corvette in the wet,

belied their lack of experience in the conditions to deliver a superb collective effort and take third place on the grid with a time faster than several crews contesting the LMGTE Pro class.

The return of the sunshine on race day encouraged the Le Vigeant-based team to start Ragues on medium-compound Michelin tyres, leading the Frenchman to deal with an oversteering car initially. Quick thinking from the pit wall led to a switch to soft rubber when Pierre pitted to hand over to Paolo at the #50's first pit-stop, allowing the Italian to immediately set a storming pace and climb back up to second place.

Larbre were hugely unlucky when a 'full-course yellow' was declared just moments after Yutaka had taken over the car. With the #50's rivals able to take advantage of stopping while the Japanese was forced to lap at a slow pace, rather than at racing speeds, a full lap was lost and with it, any chance of victory.

The time loss was made even worse when the safety car appeared and prevented Yutaka from generating much-needed temperature in his tyres while lapping at a reduced pace.

The experienced and multiple Le Mans-winning team reacted to the misfortune with composure. In a race littered with incidents, the driving trio completed their second stints without incident while the #50 showed perfect reliability.

Third place and a spot on the class podium was the result, giving Paolo, Pierre and Yutaka 15 points each in the FIA World Endurance Trophy for LMGTE Am drivers and Larbre the same in the teams' championship.

Larbre Competition next head toward Belgium for the 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps, second round of the WEC (5-7 May), the last event in the 2016 championship before the world-famous Le Mans 24 Hours (15-18 June).

Paolo Ruberti: "To start the season with a podium is a very positive result. It rewards the work of all the team and the drivers, while also making things look very promising for the rest of the year. Our Corvette C7.R is very competitive and will allow us to fight at the front. I think that we can do even better than this, we just need to fine-tune some details and continue to log mileage."

Pierre Ragues: "Jack asked us just to bring back points and we ended up on the podium, so we are more than satisfied! We have also gained a lot of experience at the wheel of the Corvette C7.R during this first race weekend, especially how to manage the Michelin tyres. The car worked really well and the reliability was there. I can't wait for the next races!"

Yutaka Yamagishi: "I'm very happy to have a fantastic third place finish at the first WEC race of the season at Silverstone. This is my first podium in an international race.

"I'd like to thank my co-drivers, Paolo and Pierre, who set some very good lap times. I'd also like to thank Jack Leconte, who believed in me and gave me the chance to join a team as professional as Larbre Competition, and all the mechanics and engineers who

prepared the car perfectly.

“I still have many things to learn, such as the WEC regulations, the Corvette, Michelin tyres and the circuits, but with a team like Larbre, I’m confident and will try to progress. The preparations are already well underway for the next race at Spa-Francorchamps and I can’t wait.”

Jack Leconte, Team Manager: “We have started the season on the right foot with a podium at the opening round – our first for more than a year in the WEC. As usual, the team and the Corvette C7.R were perfectly prepared.

“Our drivers were very impressive to set the third fastest time in wet qualifying and outpace several LMGTE Pro cars. Unfortunately, we overestimated the track temperatures at the start and sent Pierre out on tyres that weren’t ideal for the conditions. His excellent analysis of the situation enabled us to adapt our strategy when Paolo took over the car, and he quickly moved back towards the front of the pack.

“The various interruptions afterwards complicated our task but Yutaka was very solid and made no mistakes in the tricky conditions. We benefited from issues faced by some of our rivals, but the old saying that ‘the race is not over until the chequered flag’ is still very true and we saw this again at Silverstone.”

6 Hours of Silverstone – LMGTE Am results:

1. AF Corse/Ferrari F458 Italia/Perrodo-Collard-Aguas: 163 laps
2. Aston Martin Racing/Aston Martin V8 Vantage/Dalla Lana-Lamy-Lauda: 1 lap
- 3. Larbre Competition/Corvette C7.R/Ruberti-Ragues-Yamagishi: 2 laps**
4. KCMG/Porsche 911 RSR/Ried-Henzler-Camathias: 9 laps
5. Abu Dhabi-Proton Racing/Porsche 911 RSR/AI Qubaisi-Heinemeier Hansson-Bachler: 10 laps
6. Gulf Racing/Porsche 911 RSR/Wainwright-Carroll-Barker: DNF

FIA World Endurance Championship – LMGTE Am class (after round 1/9):

1. AF Corse/Ferrari F458 Italia: 25 pts
2. Aston Martin Racing/Aston Martin V8 Vantage: 18 pts
- 3. Larbre Competition/Corvette C7.R: 15 pts**
4. KCMG/Porsche 911 RSR: 12 pts
5. Abu Dhabi-Proton Racing/Porsche 911 RSR: 11 pts
6. Gulf Racing/Porsche 911 RSR: 0 pts



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