



# LARBRE COMPETITION



## LARBRE COMPETITION SECURES SOLID TOP-FIVE FIA WEC FINISH AT NÜRBURGRING

- *French squad overcomes hurdles en route to season-best result*

Larbre Competition made a strong return to the FIA World Endurance Championship at last weekend's 6 Hours of Nürburgring (August 28-30) where the French squad finished fifth in the GTE Am class.

Paolo Ruberti, Gianluca Roda and Kristian Poulsen overcame several obstacles during round four of this year's campaign to achieve Larbre's best result of the season.

Whilst recent Balance of Performance adjustments increased the car's fuel capacity by five litres, they also introduced a larger refuelling restrictor, which had yet to be fully optimised come Sunday's race. As a result, the #50 Corvette lost approximately five seconds each time it was refuelled.

What's more, the Vigeant-based squad's C7.R was used by Corvette's US factory team for the United SportsCar Championship's summer races, resulting in Larbre having to miss the preliminary Nürburgring test in late July.

Ruberti, Roda and Poulsen thus made the most of free practice to find the car's ideal set-up. Three highly productive sessions meant that Larbre was competitive during Saturday's qualifying shootout, with the #50 machine logging the sixth fastest time in class.

Ruberti started Sunday's race strongly, roaring away from the lights and putting in an impressive performance over the opening hour to run fourth by the time Roda took the wheel. With local temperatures soaring, Larbre logically elected to rule out double stints for its drivers.

The car remained in podium contention for the majority of the race, before a 35-second stop-and-go penalty incurred by Roda during his second stint for speeding in the pit-lane put the Corvette a lap behind the leaders. Despite the setback, reigning GTE Am champion Poulsen capitalised on the group effort and drove a strong stint in the final hour to finish fifth.

**Paolo Ruberti:** "It was a difficult weekend as we didn't test at the Nürburgring in late July. This meant we had to find the right set-up during free practice. Nevertheless, our level of performance remained fairly close to our rivals.

"We tried our best during the race but the issue with the fuel system cost us several seconds each time we

refuelled the car. We also had to serve the drive-through penalty, which left us an extra minute adrift of the leaders. In those circumstances it was pretty hard to fight for the podium.

“I had a good start and managed to move up to fourth. I was even faster than the third-placed car and tried to overtake it several times, but it was too dangerous so I decided to play it safe by consolidating my position.”

**Gianluca Roda:** “Finishing a race for the first time this year was the most important thing.

“We only used Michelin’s medium tyres, which led to a bit of understeer on the car.

“Our rivals were extremely fast here, which surprised me a little bit. Unfortunately I made a mistake in the pit-lane and took a penalty as a result.

“Of course I’m not satisfied with finishing fifth, so am already looking forward to the next WEC event at Austin.”

**Kristian Poulsen:** “We finished the race, so that was nice. The car felt fine but we still have a lot of work to do before we can fight for victories. That said we’re heading in the right direction.

“Everybody did single stints because of the heat. It was extremely hot during my first spell in the cockpit, but the second time was OK.

“I hope things work out better at Austin; it’s a night race, so anything can happen.”

**Jack Leconte, Team Manager:** “After such a lengthy summer break I was glad to see the whole team getting back in the groove pretty quickly at the Nürburgring.

“We did a good job of fine-tuning the Corvette’s set-up, the performance of which keeps on improving. We actually set the fastest time of the race: a 1m56.440s, which was two tenths quicker than the next best.

“However, I was quite surprised to see how small the gap between professional racers and amateurs was on this circuit.

“Unfortunately we encountered a number of obstacles during the race, starting with another on-track tussle between Kristian and Julien Canal in the #26 Ligier. It’s actually started to get frustrating.

“We also made a mistake during one of our stops by going too fast in the pit-lane. Until then we had managed to remain on the same lap as the leaders. After serving the penalty, however, it was impossible to recover.

“Finally, the revised BoP gave our Corvette a bigger fuel tank but we also found out that the new restrictor needed to be adjusted. Such is the competitiveness of the WEC that it’s a tall order for the drivers to make up lost ground in the pits. We’re definitely going to look into the issue before the next race at Austin.

“Our C7.R is well suited to all kinds of circuits but we could benefit from some extra help in Texas where Corvette will also enter sister cars in that weekend’s United SportsCar Championship round held at the same venue.

“For our part, we need to do a bit of tidying up and stop making costly errors. That is the only way for us to get back into podium contention.”

Larbre Competition will look to build on its strong result at the next round of the FIA WEC season – the 6 Hours of COTA – in two weeks time (September 17-19).

#### **6 Hours of Nürburgring LMGTE Am results:**

1. SMP Racing / Ferrari F458 Italia / Shaytar/Bertolini/Basov / 173 laps
2. Aston Martin Racing / Aston Martin V8 Vantage / Dalla Lana/Lamy/Lauda / +1 lap
3. AF Corse / Ferrari F458 Italia / Perrodo/Collard/Aguiar / +1 lap
4. Dempsey Racing - Proton / Porsche 911 RSR / Dempsey/Long/Seefried / +1 lap
- 5. Larbre Competition / Corvette C7.R / Roda/Ruberti/Poulsen / +2 laps**
6. Abu Dhabi-Proton Racing / Porsche 911 RSR / Ried/AI Qubaisi/Bamber / +3 laps
7. Aston Martin Racing / Aston Martin V8 Vantage / Castellacci/Goethe/Hall / +4 laps

#### **FIA Endurance Trophy for LMGTE Am Teams:**

1. SMP Racing / Ferrari F458 Italia / Shaytar/Bertolini/Basov / 106 pts
2. AF Corse / Ferrari F458 Italia / Perrodo/Collard/Aguiar / 81 pts
3. Aston Martin Racing / Aston Martin V8 Vantage / Dalla Lana/Lamy/Lauda / 71 pts
4. Dempsey Racing - Proton / Porsche 911 RSR / Dempsey/Long/Seefried / 66 pts
5. Abu Dhabi-Proton Racing / Porsche 911 RSR / Ried/AI Qubaisi / 30 pts

6. Aston Martin Racing / Aston Martin V8 Vantage / Castellacci/Goethe/Hall / 26 pts  
7. Larbre Competition / Corvette C7.R / Roda/Ruberti/Poulsen / 16 pts

## ENDS



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