



## LARBRE COMPETITION BOUNCE BACK WITH FIA WEC PODIUM IN AUSTIN

### French squad secures fourth LMGTE Am top-three finish of the season

Larbre Competition were quickly back in business in the FIA World Endurance Championship, as they clinched their fourth LMGTE class podium in six rounds this season, after finishing third at the 6 Hours of the Circuit Of The Americas, which took place under very high temperatures in Austin last weekend (15-17 September).

Lead once again by Ricky Taylor - who was making his second appearance on board of the #50 Corvette C7.R in his and the American manufacturer's homeland - Larbre demonstrated their strength in character by immediately brushing aside their frustrating race in Mexico.

At the venue for the Formula 1 US Grand Prix, the Le Vigeant-based squad made the decision to change their driver line-up. Yutaka Yamagishi was replaced by Lars Viljoen, a Bronze driver who has shone in various endurance championships over the years and was making his debut in the FIA WEC in Texas.

The new Larbre trio didn't waste any time to get themselves organised as Taylor, Viljoen, and Pierre Ragues climbed to the top of the time sheets in the first free

practice on Thursday. Taylor then went on to post the fastest time in qualifying on Friday, but the format of the session – which combines several lap times – saw the Val de Vienne organisation line up sixth on the grid.

Only a few hours after winning the Lone Star Le Mans event - organised as the curtain raiser of the 6 Hours of COTA on Saturday - Ricky was at the wheel for the start of the sixth round of the 2016 World Endurance Championship. The official Corvette Racing driver gained two positions during the first 30 minutes of the race, following a composed start.

Pierre took over and delivered a fast and faultless stint to keep the car in the fight for the LMGTE Am podium. The Frenchman handed the #50 machine to Lars in ideal circumstances as he took to the track for his first experience in WEC with night falling over the 3.4-mile circuit.

The Brit put the advice from Jack Leconte and the team he had received during his rapid one-week training course into practice, perfectly managing multiple restarts, after the race had been neutralised three times under full course yellows.

Ricky and Pierre both continued to operate at their usual high standards to help Larbre achieve a fourth podium of the season in a very competitive LMGTE Am class. After claiming 15 points in Austin, the French team remains in a good position for the championship battle.

From the Far West to the Far East, Larbre Competition will now leave the North American continent in order to start their tour of Asia. Japan will be their first destination for the 6 Hours of Fuji (**14-16 October**), a place that has often been good to the Le Vigeant squad in the past.

**Ricky Taylor:** “The entire Larbre Competition team have enjoyed a fantastic weekend in Austin. The mechanics put in an extraordinary effort, sometimes working on our Corvette C7.R until three in the morning.

“It was a very special feeling to take part in two races over the same day and I leave COTA with a double positive result. The Larbre strategy was really spot on and the car was running like clockwork, what else can you ask for? I am convinced we can improve further in Fuji.”

**Pierre Ragues:** “It has been a super weekend, especially as we welcomed a new team-mate who did not know the car nor the championship. We have been able to lay a solid foundation during the practice sessions.

“For my side, I am satisfied with my stints. Taking into account the lead we had over the fourth-placed car as we started the last hour of the race, the instructions from Jack were very clear: maintain our position as it is vital to get the championship points. I then made sure to keep our Corvette C7.R on the black stuff.

ÒThe mechanics have done a great job since Mexico and their efforts have been rewarded with a podium.Ó

**Lars Viljoen:** ÒIt has been a superb experience to be in a great team and at the wheel of a very competitive car. I did not know really what to expect before the weekend and it was an intense learning curve for me.

ÒI made a few mistakes in free practice and in qualifying but I am happy to have managed error-free stints during the race.

ÒA big thank you to the entire Larbre Competition team for this opportunity, especially as it ended with an excellent podium!Ó

**Jack Leconte, Team Manager:** ÒFollowing the disappointment of Mexico, Larbre Competition brilliantly reacted by producing a solid display in Austin. For CorvetteÕs home race, we decided to call up Lars Viljoen.

ÒTo adapt to the FIA WEC over a week is not easy. So we made sure we trained our new recruit in the best possible way, and he was able to learn quickly all the regulations and fine details linked to the championship in order to deliver a faultless performance.

ÒHats off to the mechanics, who achieved their best pit stops of the year, looks like the Texas heat suits them! All these ingredients put together meant that we were able to clinch a great podium for what is a bit like our second home race after Le Mans.Ó

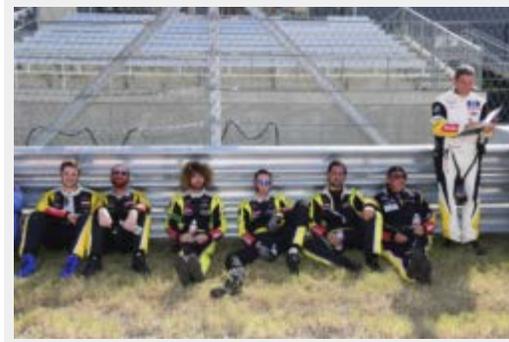
### **6 Hours of COTA Ð LMGTE Am results:**

1. Aston Martin Racing/Aston Martin V8 Vantage/Dalla Lana-Lamy-Lauda: 158 laps
2. KCMG/Porsche 911 RSR/Ried-Henzler-Camathias: 1min2.838s
3. **Larbre Competition/Corvette C7.R/Taylor-Ragues-Viljoen: 1 lap**
4. Gulf Racing/Porsche 911 RSR/Wainwright-Carroll-Barker: 5 laps
5. Abu Dhabi-Proton Racing/Porsche 911 RSR/AI Qubaisi-Heinemeier Hansson-Long: 5 laps
6. AF Corse/Ferrari F458 Italia/Perrodo-Collard-Aguas: 11 laps

### **FIA World Endurance Championship Ð LMGTE Am class (after round 6/9):**

1. AF Corse/Ferrari F458 Italia: 137 pts
2. Abu Dhabi-Proton Racing/Porsche 911 RSR: 104 pts
3. Aston Martin Racing/Aston Martin V8 Vantage: 96 pts
4. **Larbre Competition/Corvette C7.R: 84 pts**
5. KCMG/Porsche 911 RSR: 77 pts
6. Gulf Racing/Porsche 911 RSR: 74 pts

## ENDS



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All media enquiries should be directed to Pole Ltd:

[contact@pole.uk.com](mailto:contact@pole.uk.com)

+44 (0)20 8605 9797