



**LARBRE COMPETITION**



## **LARBRE COMPETITION COMPLETES PROMISING FIA WEC LMP2 DEBUT AT SPA**

**Larbre Competition made an encouraging start to their 2018/19 FIA World Endurance Championship LMP2 campaign, as the 'Super Season' got underway with the 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps (3-5 May).**

Running the sole Ligier JS P217 in the field, drivers Romano Ricci, Erwin Creed and Julien Canal brought home a sixth-place finish in class, earning the Val de Vienne-based squad's first points of the season.

After a positive performance at the Paul Ricard Prologue, the team used the weekend's free practice sessions to allow the crew to acclimatise themselves with the challenging Belgian circuit, as Ricci and Creed made their LMP2 racing debut.

In a disrupted qualifying, Canal and Ricci set the eighth fastest average time in class, as they made the most of the track time in order to best prepare the car for the race.

Canal took the green flag from the seventh row of the grid, before the intervention of an early-race safety car forced the team to alter their strategy, as Ricci took over.

Despite being in his first WEC stint, Ricci settled into a rhythm, running at a consistent pace on par with his more experienced competitors, before passing the Onroak-built prototype back to Canal.

The Frenchman, who has previously taken three Le Mans 24 Hours class victories with Larbre, undertook a double stint, setting the class' tenth fastest lap of the race in the process, despite tyre pressure issues.

After a stellar stint, Canal handed the car to Creed, who consistently improved his lap times throughout, running cleanly, before giving the car back to Canal for the run to the chequered flag, the team finishing sixth in the LMP2 class and 12th overall.

Ahead of the **Le Mans Test Day (3 June)**, Larbre will run their Ligier JS P217 at **Monza** in a low-drag aerodynamic kit (**16 May**), as Thomas Dagoneau joins Ricci and Creed at the Italian venue, and the 24 Hours of Le Mans.



**Jack Leconte:** "The weekend was a learning process for both the team and drivers in the LMP2 class. I am satisfied overall, as we suffered no major incidents, all three drivers stayed out of trouble and both rookies learned a lot from Julien in how to approach these races. After a year out for the team, we received one penalty, a few fines and some remarks which means we must get back into a rhythm, as certain points of the regulations have changed, which can be confusing.

"Spa was a necessary warm-up, especially as we normally have two races prior to Le Mans, so it was very important to compete in a full-scale event. We will be testing at Monza in order to trial the low downforce kit, allowing the drivers to get used to the different behaviour of the car and gain some experience.

"It was very important that we covered the full race distance last weekend, and this objective has been achieved. We were also able to try all of Michelin's tyres, which allowed us to have a consistent and efficient setup, giving us plenty of confidence going forwards.

**Romano Ricci:** "Overall, the weekend went according to plan. We approached the

race as a full-scale test, just alongside all of our competitors. I didn't drive much in the free practice sessions, which meant it was difficult for qualifying and the race.

"My first stint was not easy, but step-by-step I got used to the speed and the car, improving throughout. In terms of performance, it will be difficult to compete at the front, but we're much closer in race conditions.

"I think that if we manage to maintain a good pace, and make fewer errors, we can benefit from the mistakes of our competitors. The main objective is to progress and improve the technical feedback, but we're also here to have fun."

**Erwin Creed:** "As it's the first round of the World Endurance Championship, I arrived with some apprehension, as I didn't want to make mistakes. My pace overall was not too bad, I could have gone quicker, but I chose to stay safe, and it ended well.

"As my stint was towards the end of the race, the track had already degraded, making it more slippery, which surprised me. I adapted to the conditions though, and made no mistakes, which is very tough with a large number of cars on track.

"The most important area was to get used to the performance of the car, which I managed, and now we can work on all the data we've acquired over the weekend. We learned a lot already, so our pace will improve going forwards."

**Julien Canal:** "It was a great weekend for me. We started a bit behind as we only established a basic set-up at the Paul Ricard Prologue, but I was impressed with how my teammates adapted and their pace, given their relative lack of time running in free practice.

"We made good progress with the setup, in my second stint I could match the pace of the cars ahead. Later in the race we were outside the tyre pressure window, making the end tough, but we managed it well.

"I would like to thank the team for the opportunity, they did a very good job with in their first race with a new car and a lot of other new parameters, which is very encouraging going forwards."

## **2018 Le Mans 24 Hours programme**

### **Sunday 3rd June**

09:00-13:00: Official test #1

14:00-18:00: Official test #2

### **Sunday 10th June**

14:30-19:00: Administrative checks & scrutineering

### **Monday 11th June**

10:00-18:00: Administrative checks & scrutineering

### **Tuesday 12th June**

10:30-10:45: Drivers' official photograph

17:00-18:30: Drivers' official autograph session

### Wednesday 13th June

16:00-20:00: Free Practice

22:00-00:00: Qualifying #1

### Thursday 14th June

19:00-21:00: Qualifying #2

22:00-00:00: Qualifying #3

### Friday 15th June

17:30-19:00: Drivers' Parade - downtown Le Mans

### Saturday 16th June

09:00-09:45: Warm-Up

15:00: 2018 Le Mans 24 Hours start

### Sunday 17th June

15:00: 2018 Le Mans 24 Hours finish



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[contact@pole.uk.com](mailto:contact@pole.uk.com)  
+44 (0)20 8605 9797