



LARBRE COMPETITION



LARBRE COMPETITION SCORES TOP-FIVE LMP2 FINISH AND 10TH OVERALL IN FIA WEC'S VISIT TO FUJI

Larbre Competition marked the first overseas race of the 2018/19 FIA World Endurance Championship with an impressive top-five finish in the LMP2 class, as the mixed conditions made for an eventful 6 Hours of Fuji (12-14 October).

Ahead of the Japanese round of the 'Super Season', Larbre Competition's regular drivers Erwin Creed and Romano Ricci were joined in the #50 Ligier JS P217 by Keiko Ihara, who raced for Jack Leconte's team at the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 2014.

Both Creed and Ricci were experiencing the Fuji Speedway for the first time and quickly got to grips with the 4.563 km circuit, despite the red flags during the first and second free practice sessions.

In the car for the qualifying session was Ricci and Ihara, who continued to reacquaint herself with the track and LMP2 machinery, with their combined time seeing them line up in seventh place.

With rain falling around the former Japanese Grand Prix venue, Ricci took the start of the six-hour race, carefully navigating the Michelin-shod #50 Ligier through the difficult conditions to run as high as second as the first hour went by.

The 2017 European Le Mans Series LMP3 vice-champion handed the car over to fellow

Frenchman Creed in sixth place, with the track now completely dry just before the two-hour mark.

Creed continued to run strongly and showed good race pace during his double stint, before Ihara took the wheel for her first race at Fuji since 2014.

The Japanese driver made no mistake during her run and as the final hour approached the Onroak-built prototype was sitting in fifth place. Ricci then took over and completed a faultless single 45-minute stint, with Creed returning to the cockpit on the run to the line, as Larbre achieved its best result of the season in fifth.

Larbre has now finished all four races so far in the FIA WEC 'Super Season', with its latest points haul seeing the French squad move into fifth place in the LMP2 Teams' Championship.



Jack Leconte: "The team continues to gain experience and the drivers have perfectly understood our goal, which is to finish all races. The difficult conditions at the beginning meant we had to make some strategic decisions and to see us running second after an hour was fantastic, especially as we have no pro in the car. We found a good set-up, the team made no mistakes, and the drivers didn't put a wheel wrong. I am very satisfied.

"We welcomed Keiko to the team and she announced it would be her last one on an international level. She achieved her best result at Le Mans with us in 2014 and we are delighted she chose Larbre to end her career. The championship's next race is in Shanghai, where we will try to be even better prepared and hope for another great weekend. We also have the pleasure of welcoming Enzo Guibbert during this event, which will conclude the 2018 part of the Super Season."

Erwin Creed: "I am very happy with this result, our best of the year. This was my

first race at Fuji and it was good fun. The circuit is great but very technical which I enjoy and we managed to go all the way to the end, without making a single mistake. The pace was strong, but it was physically challenging so I will be sure to train more for Shanghai. The team did an excellent job, the car was well prepared and balanced and I'm already looking forward to racing again."

Romano Ricci: "I am satisfied with this weekend. I think we had the pace and Erwin drove really well. I made sure to be cautious and not make any mistakes, particularly at the start with the rain. My first stint was very long but the objective was to bring the car back in a good condition. Keiko's stint was a little bit shorter than mine so I returned to the #50 Ligier later in the race. This time I could push more and we weren't too far off those ahead in terms of pace. I was also driving more consistently, which shows that we are continuing to learn the car. Our level of performance is still below the professional drivers', nevertheless the gap is reducing and we will continue to work hard."

Keiko Ihara: "I was very happy to join Larbre Competition here at Fuji. I haven't raced for a year, the last time was in the Asian Le Mans Series in 2017. I've also driven for Larbre at Le Mans, so it was good to be back. This was the last international race weekend of my career and I am very happy with fifth in class. I would like to thank all of the team, mechanics, and engineers, most of who were here back in 2014. Good luck to everyone for the remaining races."

Next for Larbre Competition will be the **6 Hours of Shanghai** in China on **18 November** before the FIA WEC 'Super Season' enters its mid-season winter break.



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