



LARBRE COMPETITION



LARBRE COMPETITION SCORE FIFTH 2018/19 FIA WEC FINISH IN WET 6 HOURS OF SHANGHAI

Larbre Competition extended their run of finishes in the 2018/19 FIA World Endurance Championship 'Super Season', after navigating through the torrential rain in the 6 Hours of Shanghai (16-18 November) to finish sixth.

For the final FIA WEC race of 2018, Larbre's regular drivers Romano Ricci and Erwin Creed were joined in the #50 Ligier JS P217 by gold-graded French youngster, Enzo Guibbert, who was making his debut in the series.

All three drivers were discovering the Chinese Grand Prix venue for the first time and during the free practice sessions Guibbert's lap time of 1:51.690 was just seven-tenths down on the lead LMP2 car.

Creed and 23-year-old Guibbert were elected to lead Larbre's efforts in dry qualifying, with the duo's combined time seeing the Michelin-shod Ligier go seventh fastest ahead of the all-important race.

The 6 Hours of Shanghai officially started under the safety car due to the heavy rain with Guibbert behind the wheel. However, with several drivers being caught out by the wet weather, including the Frenchman, a red flag was brought out.

The race restarted but the earlier spin put Larbre in amongst the GT runners, who proved difficult to overtake safely due to the conditions. Guibbert then handed the car over to Creed, who established a strong pace and was the fastest LMP2 driver over several laps.

However, during his second stint, the Val de Vienne-based squad soon encountered an issue with the clutch master cylinder, which cost them around 50 minutes in the pits. Creed then rejoined the rain-soaked circuit, handing over to Ricci who was only able to complete a handful of laps often behind the safety car, before the chequered flag dropped in almost complete darkness due to the gloomy weather conditions.

The result means Larbre picked up their fifth consecutive finish of the season, with their points for sixth place seeing them lie sixth in the championship heading into the winter break with three rounds remaining, just one point behind Racing Team Nederland.



Erwin Creed: "This was definitely some good wet weather training! Unfortunately, we had a clutch issue towards the end of the race, which dropped us to the back of the field. The mechanics very quickly identified the issue. We were able to complete the repairs and get back onto the track, allowing us to finish the race. It is a shame that we had the mechanical issue, as we had high hopes before the race thanks to our new team-mate Enzo. I was very satisfied with my stint, I drove well and really enjoyed myself in the wet conditions! I was walking on egg shells, but fortunately I did not break any!"

Romano Ricci: "Lady luck was not on our side this weekend. We were unfortunate in qualifying and had to start at the back of the LMP2 cars. The conditions were very tricky and Enzo spun, dropping amongst the GT runners, which proved very difficult to overtake with a curtain of spray like I had during one of my stints in Fuji. The car's performance was good though and we're pleased to have made the finish."

Enzo Guibbert: "In the beginning it was complicated with a lot of rain and aquaplaning bringing out numerous safety cars and red flags. It was very difficult to drive. In practice I was discovering the circuit, the Ligier JS P217, and Michelin tyres for the first time and had to adapt quickly. For a period of time during the second session I was quickest overall, which shows we had good potential this weekend. My time was just seven-tenths off the fastest in practice, despite me not having driven in dry conditions. In qualifying we had a small issue with the tyre warmers, which meant we did not have the ideal working temperature and so could not fight for the last few

tenths.”

Jack Leconte: “We have had many races like this in Asia, with plenty of rain and long safety car periods. After setting up the car in wet conditions all day on Friday, Saturday was almost pointless as it was dry. In the end our qualifying had little significance, as the race was extremely wet. Enzo was in a difficult position at the start with the GT cars throwing up a lot of spray, but when he was able to run in free air the pace was good. This was confirmed by Erwin, who put in the five fastest laps in LMP2 compared to the other drivers on the track at that moment in time. Then, we had an unfortunate issue with the clutch master cylinder breaking, which our team was able to identify and fix, allowing us to finish the race.

“I have been very pleased with Romano and Erwin’s progression so far this season. Despite the daunting conditions in Shanghai they were competitive on both the wet and dry track. Considering we brought a crew of amateur drivers during 2018, I think we have done a fantastic job.

“Sticking to tradition as we have done throughout the team’s history, Larbre Competition had the pleasure of welcoming a young promising talent, who adapted very quickly to the team with a level of performance close to the top performing LMP2 drivers. Unfortunately he could not express himself during the race, as four safety cars and two red flags disrupted his stints. Nevertheless, this weekend allowed him to show his talents and confirmed his potential.”

Next for Larbre Competition is the **1000 Miles of Sebring** in the United States (**15 March 2019**), which acts as the antepenultimate round of the 2018/19 FIA World Endurance Championship ‘Super Season’.



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