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LARBRE COMPETITION SURVIVES EXTREME CONDITIONS IN 6 HOURS OF SPA TO KEEP FIA WEC TOP-FIVE HOPES ALIVE

Larbre Competition remains in the fight for fifth in the 2018/19 FIA World Endurance Championship LMP2 teams' standings, after surviving the extreme weather at the 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps to score points ahead of the Super Season Le Mans finale.

Mixed conditions in the build-up to the seventh round of the 2018/19 FIA WEC campaign hampered the Val de Vienne-based squad's preparations, with debutant Nicholas Boulle having an incident while acclimatising to the Belgian Grand Prix venue on Thursday.

In qualifying Boulle remained cautious, with the American and team-mate Romano Ricci combining to give the #50 Ligier JS P217 eighth in class.

Frenchman Ricci took the start, with the weather quickly changing from dry, to rain, to snow, bringing out the first safety car, before the skies cleared once more at the one-hour mark. An incident brought out the second safety car period, with Ricci handing over the Michelin-shod

#50 Ligier to team-mate Erwin Creed two hours into the race.

Creed completed a short error-free stint, before Boule climbed on board for his first race with the French squad. The 2017 Daytona 24 Hours Prototype Challenge winner continued to progress during his stint, before the rain returned and Creed took over driving duties.

Hail brought out another safety car in the final 90 minutes and despite the poor visibility, the race was resumed with Creed focussing on bringing the car home safely.

Heavy rain returned and, with Ricci now on board, the race was prematurely drawn to a close after a red flag. Larbre finished eighth in class and 14th overall, meaning they head into the last round sixth in the standings, just three points adrift of fifth.

Now the team is focused on preparing for the 2019 Le Mans 24 Hours, and will return to action for the Le Mans Test Day on 2 June, two weeks prior to the FIA WEC Super Season finale.



Jack Leconte, Team Manager: “We would have preferred more consistent weather conditions to prepare better for Le Mans. The rain on Thursday and Nick’s incident meant we lost time. Friday went well and we remained cautious in qualifying. In the race, the drivers were solid and the team’s strategy was good. Now the focus turns to Le Mans, where 62 cars and 20 LMP2 entries will be in action. Our goal is to be fighting in the middle of the pack straight away. Since the beginning of the Super Season, we have helped Erwin and Romano progress significantly. In the dry and in qualifying the gap towards the professional drivers has halved and they are now under two second off them.”

Erwin Creed: “We have introduced Nicholas into the team and it went well - he had good pace, which is positive. I prepared well for this weekend, but overall it wasn’t the best performance for us. The pace was good in the dry but it wasn’t easy at all in the deluge as I didn’t do any running in those conditions. The visibility during my second stint made it even more difficult, I was told the safety car would come in and I didn’t think it was possible with the spray. I made sure not to damage the car and didn’t take any unnecessary risks. We now have to ensure we start on the right foot for Le Mans.”

Romano Ricci: “In terms of performance, we weren’t quite at the level of Shanghai or Sebring. Nevertheless, compared to our visit to Spa last year, which was our first LMP2 race, we have made a big step forwards despite the conditions. We’re disappointed to finish eighth, it can be difficult for gentlemen drivers like myself and Erwin when the other teams don’t have problems. We will need to attack a bit more going forwards.”

Nicholas Boule: “We accomplished a lot despite the mistake I made on Thursday. I’m looking forward to Le Mans, we’ve got the rhythm in the team with everything including driver changes and pit stops. Hopefully we’ll have a bit more to show at the big race. We actually had good pace in the wet, which I like driving in. Now if it pours with rain or snow at Le Mans we should know what to do.”

2019 Le Mans 24 Hours programme*

Sunday 2nd June

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

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

Sunday 9th June

15:50: Administrative checks

16:20: Scrutineering

Tuesday 11th June

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

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

Wednesday 12th June

16:00-20:00: Free Practice

22:00-00:00: Qualifying #1

Thursday 13th June

19:00-21:30: Qualifying #2

22:00-00:00: Qualifying #3

Friday 14th June

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

Saturday 15th June

09:00-09:45: Warm-Up

15:00: 2018 Le Mans 24 Hours start

Sunday 16th June

15:00: 2018 Le Mans 24 Hours finish

**All times local*



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