



After all the anticipation of the opening round of the Le Mans Series in Le Castellet one month ago, this weekend's second round is as eagerly awaited with many factory teams on the entry list.

Unlike the first two practice sessions, the qualifying session for the 1000Km of Spa was dry, and Team Peugeot Total's Sébastien Bourdais made the most of the conditions to take a well-deserved pole position.

The #3 908 HDi FAP put in a stunning performance at Spa being the quickest car in the second practice session yesterday and qualifying on pole position today from a field of 50 cars for tomorrow's second round of the Le Mans Series.

SÉBASTIEN BOURDAIS AND DANNY WATTS BRING THE HOUSE DOWN

Rain and cold in Friday's two practice sessions, allied to the usual set-up compromises required at Spa left many teams with mixed thoughts doing into qualifying. The drivers have been hampered by very difficult weather conditions in their quest of the best set-up, but fortunately, the last practice session stayed dry till the end this morning.

Will Audi continue their triumphal progress at Spa, or will Peugeot put an end to it? We now have a better idea of the answer as Sébastien Bourdais posted the best lap today, and the best time ever for a LMP1 car. The French driver was satisfied with the balance of the car: "I am very happy for Peugeot. I had a clear lap and the car was well-balanced. The qualifying session has been difficult because we didn't have the opportunity to prepare the session as we didn't have too many laps in the car before the qualifying. I cross the fingers for tomorrow and hopefully this is a taste of what the race will be tomorrow."

All the drivers stressed that a markedly cool and/or rainy weather could have a significant result on the outcome, as Timo Bernhard said: "We didn't have a lot of time to adapt to the car because of yesterday's weather. I am quite happy with my lap time and front row is very positive for the Audi R15 Plus. But the weather will be a key player tomorrow."

During qualifying Strakka Racing's advantage continued unabated in the LMP2 class, with Danny Watts pulling a stellar lap out of the bag to steal pole from RML's Tommy Erdos and OAK Racing's Mathieu Lahaye and give the British team their second pole start of the season with an amazing 2.5 second gap. The British driver explained: "In my first lap I was hit by Tom Kristensen at La Source corner, but my second lap was clear. The Michelin tires marry the car perfectly and the set-up was very good. The other cars will probably come back tomorrow so we have to stay focused. One point can make the difference at the end of the season."

In the Formula Le Mans class, Nico Verdonck was delighted to chalk up the best time for Team Hope Pole Vision. The reigning champion is on pole for his home race: "One month ago I even didn't know that I would be here, so I am very happy. The car is fantastic and the qualifying session was great."

MATECH AND AF CORSE SET THE WORLD ALIGHT

Following yesterday's good news of their second invitation for the 24 Hours of Le Mans, Bas Leinders and Thomas Mutsch wrapped up the front row of the grid for the first time for Team Matech in the GT1 class. This result confirmed that the Ford GTs Matech are on top form and that the Luc Alphand Aventures Corvette will be a strong contender.

If you were to look at the times from the qualifying session, you might form the view that virtually everyone in the GT2 class has a chance, with eight cars in less than one second. So who will scoop the jackpot at Spa tomorrow? Will Ferrari be better than Porsche in Belgium, or vice versa? As things stand after the eight-hour race at Paul Ricard circuit, Porsche starts the favorite in Spa from Ferrari, but today, AF Corse's Jaime Melo was the quickest in the Hautes Fagnes region to his biggest surprise: "It is great to be ahead of Porsche because they are very strong on this track. We are only two drivers, and with Gimmi (Bruni), our driving styles are getting closer and closer so we can have the same set-up."

The warm-up is scheduled to start at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow.

