

BECOME PART OF THE MYTH OF ENDURANCE RACING!

# Formula LE MANS



## Final countdown to the Formula Le Mans Cup

The second weekend in May will forever remain an historic date for the Formula Le Mans Cup. It will see the first round of this new championship in the world of motor sport, the brainchild of the ACO and Oreca. It will kick off in an idyllic setting with what will be more than just testing the waters, as the drivers in the first Formula Le Mans Cup will compete in two races this weekend.

**Twenty-four drivers from eight different nations will race in the inaugural round.** Twelve out of the fifteen entries expected have been confirmed. It is a promising figure given the current unfavourable economic climate. *"The birth of the Formula Le Mans is unusual. It was thought up before the crisis, and then launched just when the crisis was expanding. It's going to start when the majority of the other branches of the sport have seen their numbers fall with the exception of endurance, which, more than ever, is a sure investment in motor racing. This new series, which is in keeping with the Le Mans spirit, has already attracted twelve driver line-ups willing to begin a fabulous adventure. Taking an objective view, having these twelve cars is already a success in itself, even if we hope to see this figure increase in the coming races. We've got good reason to believe that there'll be more cars at the next event,"* says Alain Marguet, the Formula Le Mans general coordinator.

The field for the first event of the season will be made up of six teams. Among them, **DAMS** will be there in force with three cars. The Sarthe squad that gave Eric Comas, Jean-Christophe Boullion and Olivier Panis the opportunity to win the Formula 3000 International Championship title has six drivers from five different nations. Very experienced endurance racer Wolfgang Kaufmann from Germany will team up with Italian Luca Moro, while South African Gavin Cronje will partner promising young Belgian Nico Verdonk. A third car is entered for driver/journalist Stéphane Lemeret and Vincent Vosse, the 2006 Le Mans Series GT1 champion who has also won the Spa 24 Hours.

Like its French rival, the Belgian team **Boutsen Energy Racing** has also entered three cars for the first round with just as talented drivers. In the first two are Pascal Ballay and Gary Chalendon who will be backed up by Joan-Boris Scheier and Dimitri Enjalbert, winners of last week's opening two rounds of the FIA GT3 Championship on the Silverstone circuit. And to add more spice to the proceedings Maxime Martin, winner of the 2008 French Clio Cup, will also be racing with his dad Jean-Michel. The Belgian team should burn up the track this weekend!



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Swiss squad, **Hope PoleVision Racing**, the first to order two cars will make its debut with a mix of Swiss and Scandinavian drivers combining youth and experience. Christophe Pillon will team up with Thor-Christian Ebbesvik from Norway and Matthias Beche with Valle Mäkela from Finland.

The **LD Autosport Applewood** team, well known in the world of Formula 3 as it helped the talents of Romain Dumas and Stéphane Sarrazin to blossom, will race in the Formula Le Mans Cup with a driver line-up that doesn't lack ambition. David Zollinger and Damien Toulemonde who have shone in the V de V races these past two seasons, will now team up in the Formula Le Mans Cup in a car bearing the colours of what could soon become a symbol – Coyotte!

The **Exagon Engineering** squad, which stood out in the WTCC in Marrakech last weekend, will also be out to make its mark in the Formula Le Mans Cup in its first season. At Spa, ex-Formula 1 driver Franck Lagorce will be one of its stalwarts, and the Eurosport consultant will join up with Thomas Duchêne while Mehdi Bennani, who was one of the stars in the WTCC event on his home soil, will have Michael Rossi, winner of the Mégane Trophy as team-mate.

The **Ibanez Racing** squad that is competing in the LM P2 category in the Le Mans Series has also opted for the Formula Le Mans Cup and has entered two French drivers, Richard Mori and François Desprez.

The field is a truly cosmopolitan one and it promises an opening Formula Le Mans Cup race full of intensity. With just a few hours to go to the first real confrontation, everybody is champing at the bit and the outcome of the first skirmish in the Ardennes will be known in the very near future.

## Week-end Timetable

### Thursday 7th May

15h30 – 16h30	Admin checks
15h30 – 19h00	Scrutineering
17h00 – 18h00	Free practice

### Friday 8th May

09h00 – 12h00	Scrutineering and admin checks
09h30	Briefing
12h50 – 13h40	Qualifying for the Formula Le Mans Cup (2x20 mns)
14h00- 17h00	Scrutineering

### Saturday 9th May

15h55 – 16h55	Race 1 (60 mns)
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### Sunday 10th May

10h20 – 11h20	Race 2 (60mns)
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## Liste des engagés Spa-Francorchamps

#	Team	Driver 1	Nat	Driver 2	Nat
3	Applewood - LD Autosport	Damien Toulemonde		David Zollinger	
5	Boutsen Energy Racing	Pascal Ballay		Joan-Boris Scheier	
6		Gary Chalendon		Dimitri Enjalbert	
15		Jean-Michel Martin		Maxime Martin	
7	DAMS	Luca Moro		Wolfgang Kaufmann	
8		Gavin Cronje		Nico Verdonck	
16		Stéphane Lemeret		Vincent Vosse	
9	Ibanez Racing Service	Richard Mori		François Desprez	
11	Exagon Engineering	Thomas Duchêne		Franck Lagorce	
12		Michael Rossi		Mehdi Bennani	
17	Hope Polevision Racing	Valle Mäkela		Mathias Beche	
18		Christophe Pillon		Thor-Christian Ebbesvik	

provisional list, May 6th 2009



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