



Unlike Barcelona, today's qualifying session did not result in a big surprise in the LMP1 class, as Team Peugeot Total snatched pole and second position under overcast weather conditions.

Changing weather conditions, combined with the usual set-up compromises required at Spa, left many teams with mixed thoughts before qualifying but, judging by the timesheets, everyone obviously made good choices.

Spa is a very long circuit, which usually emphasizes the performance gaps between the cars and the drivers, as commitment and precision are required to take on the curves such as the infamous "Eau Rouge". Nonetheless, the gaps between competitors today were very small.

Same LMPs as last year on the front

Spa has been a leap in the dark for Team Peugeot Total because of the brand-new regulations regarding additional weight and reduction of the orifice of the fuel flow limiter for diesel-engined cars, but it seems that the French team was able to deal with it as Simon Pagenaud, in his very first qualifying session with the # 7 prototype set the pole. "This is a very good day for me," said the French driver. "To be honest, I had a clear lap right before the red flag and my lap was fast enough so I could wait for the end of the session in the pits. The car is really enjoyable to drive but it is never easy to be quick on one lap. I can tell you that I drove flat out. The only time I raced here was in 2004 with a single-seater."

With a 100 % 908 HDi FAP front row, petrol-engined cars will have to fight tenaciously to bring home victory. Aston Martin Racing is currently in the best position to battle with the diesel-engined cars for the victory. As Aston Martin Racing also topped the podium at Barcelona, the British squad can be considered as one of the favorites, but the other competitors such as Team Oreca Matmut AIM and Team Pescarolo Sport are also very close, which should create spectacular racing.

Team Essex Porsche RS Spyder ruled in the LMP2 class, as it did last year, but the German car manufacturer won't be able to repeat last year's 1-2-3 result as only one prototype is entered in this year's race. Moreover, the Danish team will have to rely on the proven reliability of its car because its rivals have been working hard during the off-season. They have therefore improved a lot in terms of performance, as Speedy Racing Team Sebah and Team Racing Box demonstrated at Barcelona.

Tough fight for GTs

Despite the small number of entrants, the GT1 class may be the most keenly contested one because each competitor has a good chance to win. With the Jet Alliance Aston Martin DBR9 starting from pole, the two remaining cars may face a brutal struggle to have any hopes of reaching the top step of the podium.

The highly competitive GT2 class made the grade one more time. Although they are fewer in number, the Porsches 997 put the Ferrari 430s in the shade - although the gap between them is amazingly small. Marc Lieb and Team Felbermayr-Proton chalked up the best time, only two tenths of a second ahead of Patrick Pilet and Imsa Matmut. By the way, eight cars are all within two seconds of each other, which is more than promising for tomorrow's event.

Alongside the Le Mans Series

The first support races took place today. For the first race of SRO GT3 & GT4 Series, credit for the victory is due to Jean-François Hemroulle and Tim Verbergt with their Team Phoenix Audi R8 GT3.

Earlier on, in the Radical European Masters, Jeff Collier and Alex Kapadia took the victory in the SR8LM class and Stuart Moseley and Derek Johnston in the SR8 class, while in the first ever qualifying session for the Formula Le Mans Cup, Dimitri Enjalbert and Team Boutsen Energy Racing scored the pole.

The warm-up is scheduled to start at 8:30 a.m. tomorrow.

