



After a two-month break, the third round of the 2009 Le Mans Series approaches and teams and drivers are looking forward to discovering the new circuit of Algarve in Portimão. The Portuguese track is located in the foothills of the coastal town of Portimão. It has been inaugurated last November with a motorbike race and it has been used for testing during the winter.

This event will be a voyage into the unknown for everybody partly because the six-hour race will be mostly run in the dark, even if some teams tested on the track earlier this year. The drivers who know the circuit give praise to the premises and the track, like Tiago Monteiro, the Portuguese driver of the Team Oreca-Matmut AIM LMP1.

## A lap of the circuit of Algarve with Tiago Monteiro

*"The track is really original, different and difficult! It is a great challenge because it winds up and down and includes blind corners. Drivers should find the track difficult, but very interesting. It is a mix of several tracks such as Spa or Laguna Seca. The race should be sunny but may be windy! The circuit is a success on the whole.*

*The pit-straight dives downhill into the first right-handed corner, which is taken in fourth gear and very bumpy, but fortunately, there is a large gravel bed. You accelerate before arriving to the second flat-out turn. Hard on the brakes and you are into turn 3, a very tight right-hander taken in second gear, that you have to sacrifice to the next uphill left-hander, which should be flat till the hairpin. The entrance of this downhill left-handed hairpin is blind and bumpy and it is very important to exit well because of the coming long straight line and left-handed flat-out Turn 6. You then come down the hill into a double-apex right-hander, Turns Seven, where you go over the kerbs, and Eight, in second gear. There is a short but very steep climb before going briefly downhill and uphill again after the long left-hander Turn 9 leading to the fully blind braking area of Turn 10. You need the maximum downforce to take the corner in third gear. It goes up and down again with a flat-out left-hander before you jump on the brakes for an uphill left-hander taken in second gear. A short burst of power down to the long braking for double-apex Turn 13, which is off-camber. This is one of the most important corners on the track because you need to carry your exit speed all the way up the hill towards the last corner, so it's vital that you make a good exit and get onto the power as early as possible. The last corner before the start-finish line is flat-out, but very difficult because there is a small jump in the middle and now it is flat out till Turn 1 for another lap."*

## Tightened strengths

In the LMP1 class, the two team-leaders are separated by only two points with Pescarolo Sport ahead of Aston Martin Racing. After taking an amazing fourth place at the 24 Hours of Le Mans, the Britons should come back even stronger than before and Pescarolo Sport will have a hard time with only one car entering the Portuguese round.

The LMP2 class is even more tightened since three teams are level on points. Speedy Racing Team Sebah will try to repeat the strong performance of last June at Le Mans, while Racing Box can rely on two cars to reach the podium again and Quifel ASM Team will have at heart to shine at its home race.

Even though Team Felbermayr-Proton is a strong leader in the GT2 class, JMW Motorsport and Team Modena's drivers can still be confident in their chances of winning the drivers' title. Ferrari will defend its title till the end of the season and we should enjoy a fierce battle between the Italian car-maker and Porsche, its German counterpart.

## Amazingly varied support races

Everybody should enjoy the weekend! Single-seater fans with the Formula Renault 3.5, those who are nostalgic for the former stars of Le Mans with the Classic Endurance Racing, but also prototypes fans with the Formula Le Mans or the Radical European Masters and at last, touring car fans with the Seat Super Copa Leon and Superstars.

## Follow the Race

The 1000 Km do Algarve gets the green flag at 07:15 pm (local time) or 08:15 pm GMT+1 on Saturday, August 1.

Please visit [www.lemans-series.com](http://www.lemans-series.com) for live-timing

- TV Broadcast times:
- Eurosport International – Live 08:00 pm - 09:30 pm; 12:45 am - 02:15 am (GMT+1)
  - Eurosport International – Replay Tuesday August 4. 12:30 am - 01:00 am
  - Eurosport 2 – VTR Tuesday August 4. 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm

