

Round 4, Nürburgring (Germany) Qualifying, Saturday August 22, 2009



The Nürburgring has a reputation for being a “complete” circuit in the sense that it includes a wide variety of corners as well as high-speed sectors. Even though the “Ring” does not present an extreme challenge for the engine, the altitude – about 500m above sea level – reduces the engine power.

It means that it is not easy to find the best set-up out. Moreover, the weather is a constant concern and no matter what the season, rain and cool conditions are permanent threats in the Eifel Mountains.

The competitors who will be able to deal with all these factors will have a good chance to win, and Aston Martin Racing took an option on the victory by claiming the overall pole.

Lola, Lola, Lola

Three Lolas-Aston Martin will start from the first and second row tomorrow! The goal is clear for Aston Martin Racing this weekend: the

team is currently second in both Drivers and Team standings, four points behind Pescarolo Sport. Had they not changed the engine after the qualifying session at Spa, the squad would only be short by two points, as the drivers of the # 007 Lola-Aston Martin climbed on the podium three times in a row, but only once on the first step.

The team is up against the wall and will only target the victory as explained polesitter Stefan Mücke: “I chose to spend half of the session in the pits and waited for a clear lap. The car is good and the time could have been better without the yellow flag. It is great to have two Aston Martin Racing cars on the front row. We will try to do our best tomorrow, but it is true that we are in a good position for the race and that we score one point for the pole.”

Lola-Aston Martin fully ruled the qualifying session as Marcel Fässler set the third time at the wheel of the Speedy Racing Team Sebah's car. The Swiss team already showed a strong performance in the first free practice session dealing with a very tricky track because of heavy rain and would like to get rid of the bad luck that descends upon it from the beginning of the season.

Olivier Pla chalked up the best time in the LMP2 class very early in the session. Quifel-ASM Team ruled most of the free practice sessions like at Portimao. The Portuguese team is currently leading the class after its clear victory for its home race and will try to repeat its success and defend its standing. From second place, four cars are within four tenths of a second. G.A.C. Racing would like to continue to forge ahead after its first podium of the year in Portugal, and Speedy Racing Team Sebah still can clinch the title at the end of the season and needs a good result to keep its chances alive. With so many teams able to win, the race should be very tough tomorrow.

Series first in LM GT1 and LM GT2

In the GT1 class, Laurent Groppi, for his very first race in Le Mans Series, surprisingly posted the best time with the Larbre Compétition Saleen, in front of the Luc Alphand Aventures Corvette as there are only two cars on the entry list.

Today is a great day for Hankook! The Korean tire manufacturer took its first pole ever in the GT2 class thanks to Pierre Kaffer. The German driver picks the Nordschleife as his favorite track and chalked up the best time with his Hankook Team Farnbacher Ferrari on the Grand Prix circuit. The team will undoubtedly celebrate the pole but will have a hard time tomorrow to contain Team Modena. Indeed, Antonio Garcia demonstrated again how fast he can be and will try to repeat, and even improve, the second place obtained at Spa. Team Felbermayr-Proton will start from the second row of the grid tomorrow, but this time, Marc Lieb set the time. Hopefully the team will have a flawless race, without any crashes unlike Portugal where the German team lost its chances of victory as early as the first lap and finished far behind the winner, losing the lead of the series.

Many different national anthems in Support races

Unlike the Le Mans Series, today has been dedicated to races in the support races. The ATS Formel-3 Cup competitors were the first ones on the track this morning, and the Belgian national anthem filled the air thanks to Laurens Vanthoor's victory. A few minutes before the Le Mans Series qualifying session, the young Frenchman Tom Dillmann took the checkered flag in first place in the second race.

Daniel Abt imitated him in the first race of the ADAC Formel Masters whereas Gavin Cronje and Nico Verdonck climbed on the first step of the podium in Race 1 of the Formula Le Mans. Lastly, in Radical European Masters, Jeff Collier and Alex Kapadia took another victory in SR8 LM.

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

