



The brand-new circuit of Algarve was only completed late last year. Blind corner entries and abrupt changes of elevation are key elements of this track so drivers who could adapt quickly were at an advantage early on.

The qualifying session took place in a bright sunshine and despite a late timetable slot, the temperatures were still high, the weather conditions were, however, equal for all.

Obviously, the Oreca-Matmut AIM likes hot weather since Nicolas Lapierre set the world alight and took the pole in LMP1 with a very small gap. This result clearly shows that the race should be very tough and exciting throughout the four classes, not least because of it being run as a night race.

Oreca-Matmut AIM and Quifel ASM Team shine

Unlike Spa, the qualifying result was much harder to predict in the LMP1 class. Nevertheless, it is not so astonishing that Oreca-Matmut AIM made the grade and will start from the front and the second row in the LMP1 class. The French team will try to continue to forge ahead after its fifth place at Le Mans. "I am not really surprised", confirmed Nicolas Lapierre. "We have been competitive till the beginning of the weekend. It was a tough fight, but we are on the pole. Our car is well adapted to the track because of its good mechanical grip. The main job is for tomorrow."

But Aston Martin Racing is right behind and should put its life on the line tomorrow. After a victory at Barcelona and a third place at Spa, Aston Martin Racing demonstrated again that it is a great pretender to the title at the end of the season and fought hard but failed for the pole.

The result is not really unsettled in the LMP2 class, because the car setting on the front row has been the fastest one since the beginning of the weekend, posting the best lap at each free practice session. Indeed, if Olivier Pla and his Ginetta-Zytek posted the best lap, the race won't be easy because many other teams are waiting in ambush and will take advantage of any mistake from the polesitter.

RML will have at heart to shine after retiring from the first two races and to demonstrate that it still can climb on the podium like in the golden age and G.A.C. Racing Team, the biggest good surprise of the qualifying session, will try to take up the challenge. But at the same Quifel ASM Team is running at home, so it should be a strong competitor.

Corvette and Porsche on the front row

The GT1 class is less provided with only two cars entering the race. The Larbre Competition Saleen will hopefully give a hard time to the polesitter Yann Clairay in his Luc Alphand Aventures Corvette, which is missing its boss, Luc Alphand, recovering from bad back injuries due to a fall in a motorbike race earlier in July.

The GT2 class is still highly competitive with many cars able to win tomorrow. Team Felbermayr-Proton and Richard Lietz took an option on the victory by chalking up the best time, but the race will be long and who knows what might happen in the Portuguese night. The fierce battle between the Italian and German cars will continue waging with English and Dutch cars as the arbitrators.

Many races tomorrow

After a day dedicated to the free practice and qualifying sessions, tomorrow will be the D-Day for most of the support races: from 9:50 am, the spectators will hardly have time to breathe with a continuous stream of races available for their visual and auditory pleasure.

The warm-up is scheduled to start at 10:50 a.m. (local time) tomorrow.

