



Sunday's Belgian race produced one of the most nail-biting races in several seasons to date, mostly because of changing weather conditions, but also because of the tough fight between Audi and Peugeot factory teams.

The pressure on Team Peugeot Total was massive going into the Spa weekend, and the team delivered in a style that suggests they still are highly competitive with a 1-2 victory.

The Team Peugeot Total trio of Pedro Lamy, Sébastien Bourdais and Simon Pagnaud scored an outright win in the second round of the 2010 Le Mans Series, taking the team's 908 HDi FAP from pole to checkered flag victory, for the great pleasure of 38,000 race-fans.

TEAM PEUGEOT TOTAL AND QUIFEL-ASM TEAM MAKE THE GRADE

Spa-Francorchamps seven-kilometer rollercoaster, which nestles into the wooded Hautes-Fagnes region, is famous for its capricious weather, and it honored its names and fames today during the whole race. The rain made the track very tricky and the race has been disturbed by several safety-cars after some cars went off.

Although the track is very demanding, the Peugeot 908 HDi FAP LMP1 has crossed the line in first after a faultless six-hour race. As the second successive win – after the 12 Hours of Sebring - result for the Peugeot Total factory team this year, it once again proves the exceptional pace, reliability and durability of the marque's cars. This is the second victory in a row at Spa for the French driver Simon Pagnaud, who said: "The communication in the team is perfect, which makes life much easier. This is one of my best races in a while. The race was tough because the track was damp at some point. I am happy that I survived and I did everything to stay alive! This is a very good result for us."

Team Peugeot Total made the grade with the 1-2 victory. The French team clearly showed to its main rivals that it will be once again one of the main contenders for victory at Le Mans in June. Stéphane Sarrazin and Franck Montagny started third and finished second after Stéphane Sarrazin passed Tom Kristensen in the last laps, as he explained: "My first stint was ok because I was able to push, but then the rain started. Soft tires were the good choice and at the end I was pushing hard to catch up. Traffic was difficult to handle because there were a lot of slow cars on the track due to the bad weather conditions. This is a good start before Le Mans."

What Spa proved is that the Audi R15 Plus has speed, reliability and consistency to match the Peugeot 908 HDi FAP. Following the surprising victory at the Paul Ricard track for the 2010 season opener, the German car-manufacturer demonstrated that it was not a lucky victory and that it will be a strong contender in Le Mans. The car had very low downforce as a test for Le Mans as Allan McNish confirmed: "Because of the low downforce, we suffered a little bit with rain and cold. The weather at the beginning was the same for everybody and I struggled to keep the car on the track. I had no interest in fight at that point, but after the red flag, we were reasonably quick."



Strakka Racing and HPD were the clear favorite as the Le Mans Series moved to its second round in Belgium this weekend, but it failed and the reigning champion Quifel-ASM Team is back on the podium after Olivier Pla and Miguel Amaral took the checkered flag in first in the LMP2 class after a thrilling race. The French driver said: "It is good to be back on the podium because in France last month we had problems and we didn't have the pace. I was able to build a gap with my rivals and Miguel could keep it. This is a very good race for us."

After spending the last season in relatively uncompetitive machinery, there was a mix of relief and elation on drivers' face on Sunday, after team RML finished second. Once again OAK Racing combined combative speed with impressive reliability, bringing #35 car home on the podium for the second race in a row thanks to Guillaume Moreau and Richard Hein, who also won the Michelin Green X Challenge.

The Formula Le Mans class prototypes had a hard time in Belgium, and three different teams climbed on the podium. Hope Polevision Racing started from pole, but won the race with the second car driven by Steve Zacchia, Luca Moro and Wolfgang Kaufmann. Boutsen Energy Racing and JMB Racing also climbed on the podium.

MATECH COMPETITION AND TEAM FELBERMAYR-PROTON REIGN ABSOLUTELY

In the GT1 class, the team Matech Competition recorded one-tuos in qualifying and one-two-three in the race. Bas Leinders, Markus Palttala and Eric de Doncker brought the brand-new Ford GT Matech on top of the podium and demonstrated that the car is already competitive. Bas Leinders was delighted to score the victory for his home race: "Matech did a very good job for a brand-new team. They didn't make any mistake in the pits. The victory looks quite good for us. I pushed as much as possible on the tricky track."

Thomas Mutsch, Jonathan Hirschi and Mathias Beche, but also Cyndie Alleman, Rahel Frey and Yan Zimmer made this a day to remember for team Matech Competition taking the checkered flag in second and third.

If the Belgian race is any indication, this is going to be one of those enthralling seasons when the advantage swings like a pendulum between Ferrari and Porsche in the GT2 class, as the battle between the Porsche and the Ferrari teams is fascinating. The race posed some interesting questions in the run-up to Portugal in July, and spelled out in the clearest terms that the 2010 Le Mans Series is going to be a great struggle between Team Felbermayr-Proton and AF Corse. The German team took their second victory in a row, which is great for the classification, as Richard Lietz confirmed: "This victory is important for the championship. Marc flew all the way and the race was perfect for us. We didn't make any mistake on the track or in the pits."

Jaime Melo couldn't convert his pole into a victory, but finished second with teammate Gianmaria Bruni, as AF Corse has two cars on the podium. This is the second podium in a row for Giancarlo Fisichella, Jean Alesi and Toni Vilander, which shows that the Finn is a very good "teacher" as Jean Alesi nicknames Toni.

The race has been stopped for about half an hour because of a regional blackout. All the competitors have been red-flagged in the pits before the race could start again under safety-car procedure for two laps. The organizers regret the circuit amenities malfunctioning and its consequences. More information will be released after further analysis.



FIERCE BATTLES IN SUPPORT RACES

In Radical European Masters, 360° Racing ruled and took the victory in both races thanks to Terrence Woodward and Ross Kaiser. The fight has been very exciting in the first race as runner-up Jamie Patterson finished less than one second behind the winners, whereas in the second race, the British drivers easily secured the victory.

In Classic Endurance Racing, Paul Knapfield honored Ferrari's reputation as he chalked up the best lap and crossed the finish line in first, ahead of a Lola, another famous name in motorsport. Then in the Matmut Carrera Cup France, Frédéric Makowiecki won both races after a fierce battle against Kevin Estre, who was leading the classification before the Belgian weekend.

The next race will be round three of the Le Mans Series at Portimao (Portugal) on Saturday, July 17.

