



## 1000 KM OF THE NÜRBURGRING – QUALIFYING SESSIONS

The Eifel weather is hot, the competition in qualifying for the third round of the Le Mans Series at the Nürburgring even hotter! Nicolas Minassian claimed pole position in the Creation Autosportif LMP1 with a scorching time of 1m 44.850s, and alongside him at the start of Sunday's Nurburgring 1,000 Kilometre race is the fast, reliable Pescarolo C60 shared by Emmanuel Collard, Jean-Christophe Boullion and Eric Helary, the first time in the 2006 series that a third driver has been nominated by team owner Henri Pescarolo.

Just two seconds covers the six cars competing in the GT1 category – two Aston Martins, two Chevrolet Corvettes, the Team Oreca Saleen and the Convers Menx Ferrari 550 – while in the GT2 category, half a second covers the top six cars with the two GPC Sport Ferrari 430s in the leading positions. In fact, less than two seconds covers a dozen cars in the GT2 class, the Ferraris challenged by Panoz, Porsche, Spyker and TVR.

The outcome of the German round of the Le Mans Series is impossible to predict in any of the four categories, but that is the big attraction of modern endurance racing run to the rules of the Automobile Club de l'Ouest! Pescarolo Sport won the two opening rounds of the Le Mans Series at Istanbul and Spa, but since then Jean-Christophe Boullion broke his right wrist in a domestic accident and was unable to compete at Le Mans. Now he returns to the Le Mans based team and says that his wrist has healed perfectly, but as a safeguard Pescarolo drafted Eric Helary into the team. It was Collard who put the green and blue Pescarolo onto the front row of the grid.

Minassian, though, was the pace setter in the blue Creation Judd which he shares with Felipe Ortiz and Beppe Gabbiani. "I knew there was a 45-dead in the car after this morning's practice, when I had plenty of fuel in the car, but do to a 44 was brilliant. We have not done a lot of testing so this is a good reward for all the hard work of the Creation team." There is plenty of variety at the front of the grid as Shinji Nakano was third quickest in the Courage Mugen, and Stefan Johansson fourth in the Zytek.

Tommy Erdos was the talk of the paddock after topping the time sheets during the second practice session in the LMP2 class RML MG Lola EX264, until the last few minutes when he was pipped by Minassian. Erdos was strong again in qualifying, seventh overall in the car shared with owner Mike Newton. Team director Ray Mallock reports that the Lola is responding well to suspension modifications carried out by RML. Second and third in LMP2 were the two Radical SR9s, Joao Barbosa in the Judd powered Rollcentre Racing example narrowly ahead of Stuart Moseley in the new Team Bruichladdich Radical with AER power.

Stefan Ortelli was clearly quickest in the GT1 class driving Team Oreca's Saleen S7R, shared with Soheil Ayari, ahead of the Team Modena Aston Martin DBR9 qualified by Antonio Garcia.

Qualifying in GT2 was closer than a Tour de France cycle sprint with little to choose between the top 12 cars, but Gianpaulo Coppì's Ferrari 430s set the quickest times, Andrea Bellicchi ahead of Fabrizio de Simone by seven-hundredths of a second.



## QUALIFYING SESSIONS- TOP TIMES

### LMP1/LMP2 qualifying:

- 1, Nicolas Minassian/Felipe Ortiz/Beppe Gabbiani (Creation Judd 06H) 1m 44.850s
- 2, Eric Helary/Jean-Christophe Boullion/Emmanuel Collard (Pescarolo Judd C60) 1m 45.504s
- 3, Shinji Nakano/Haruki Kurosawa (Courage LC70 Mugen) 1m 46.036s
- 4, Stefan Johansson/Hideki Noda (Zytek 06S Zytek) 1m 46.123s
- 5, Marcel Fassler/Harold Primat (Swiss Spirit Courage LC70 Judd) 1m 46.133s
- 6, Jean-Marc Gounon/Alexander Frei/Gregor Fisker (Courage LC70 Mugen) 1m 46.168s
- 7, Tommy Erdos/Mike Newton (RML MG Lola EX264 AER) 1m 46.672s \* LMP2
- 8, Bob Berridge/Gareth Evans/Peter Owen (Chamberlain Synergy Lola B06/10 AER) 1m 47.510s
- 9, Jan Lammers/Alex Yoong (Racing for Holland Dome Judd S101) 1m 47.898s
- 10, Joao Barbosa/Martin Short (Rollcentre Racing Radical SR9 Judd) 1m 48.250s \* LMP2
- 11, Stuart Moseley/Tim Greaves (Team Bruichladdich Radical SR9 AER) 1m 48.614s \* LMP2
- 12, Michael Vergers/Juan Barazi/Jean-Philippe Belloc (Barazi Epsilon Courage C65 AER) 1m 49.319s \* LMP2

### GT1 qualifying:

- 1, Stephane Ortelli/Soheil Ayari (Team Oreca Saleen S7R) 1m 53.522s
- 2, Antonio Garcia/Christian Vann/Peter Hardman (Team Modena Aston Martin DBR9) 1m 54.162s
- 3, Pedro Lamy/Gabriele Gardel/Vincent Vosse (Larbre Competition Aston Martin DBR9) 1m 54.448s
- 4, Jos Menten/Pertti Kuismanen/Markus Palttala (PSI Experience Corvette C6R) 1m 54.722s
- 5, Jerome Policand/Patrice Goueslard/Luc Alphand (Alphand Aventures Corvette C5R) 1m 55.057s
- 6, Peter Kox/Robert Pergl/Alexei Vasiliev (Convers Menx Team Ferrari 550) 1m 55.568s

### GT2 qualifying:

- 1, Andrea Bellicchi/Stefano Zonca/Marco Cioci (GPC Sport Ferrari 430) 2m 00.017s
- 2, Fabrizio de Simone/Luca Drudi/Gabrio Rosa (GPC Sport Ferrari 430) 2m 00.088s
- 3, Robert Bell/Warren Hughes (Team LNT Panoz Esperante) 2m 00.105s
- 4, Tim Sugden/Dan Eagling (Virgo Motorsport Ferrari 430) 2m 00.539s
- 5, Marc Lieb/Joel Camathias (Autorlando Sport Porsche GT3 RSR) 2m 00.582s
- 6, Dominik Farnbacher/Pierre Ehret (Farnbacher Racing Porsche GT3 RSR) 2m 00.656s