



24 HEURES DU MANS®

17-18 JUIN 2006

The complete entry list : new era, new challenges

Newcomers, variety and top level competition are the outstanding features of the entries selected for the 74th Le Mans 24 Hours. On the brink of new challenges, the 2006 Le Mans 24 Hours looks like being a great race in the year the club celebrates its 100th anniversary.

As previously announced the Selection Committee met after drawing its conclusions from the Sebring 12-Hour race, whose outcome was marked by the first victory of a diesel engine in a major international event.

The Committee's work consisted mainly of completing the LM P1 field with eight additional cars from six different entrants. *"We must congratulate those who have decided to build a new-generation car,"* commented Daniel Poissenot, the ACO Sports Manager and 24 Hour Clerk of the Course. *"The arrival of these new cars in the category is a source of great satisfaction. But it's not the only one. We're delighted by the variety in each category, especially in LM GT2."*

Fifty cars maximum will take part in the Test day on Sunday 4th June.
The categories show a well-balanced spread:

Le Mans Prototype Categories:	24 cars 12 LM P1s 12 LM P2s
Le Mans Grand Touring Categories:	26 cars 12 LM GT1s 14 LM GT2s

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From what is at stake, and the different challenges that have been taken up for the 74th Le Mans 24 Hours, one thing stands out: last year's winner Audi's wish to be the first major manufacturer to win Le Mans with a diesel engine. At Sebring the R10 TDI scored a brilliant victory but in the Sarthe Audi will have to double up in terms of race duration, and will also be up against much tougher opposition defending the petrol engine. Hence the thrill of another battle between the R10s and the Pescarolos (with the confirmation of Rally World Champion Sébastien Loeb's second consecutive presence on the Le Mans circuit), Courage, Zytek, Lola, Lister, Creation etc. in a category where every car is new, or almost.

The quality of the LM P1 entries is reflected in LM P2. Chamberlain-Synergie Motorsport, Intersport Racing, Binnie Motorsport, RML, Paul Belmondo Racing... A look at the teams selected shows that the 2006 field consists of the international elite in LM P2 with a first – class duel in perspective between the winning teams or rostrum finishers in the 24 Hours, the American Le Mans Series and Le Mans Endurance Series (now called Le Mans Series). In addition to the Epsilon team (and the Barazi Epsilon Association) winner of the World Series by Renault FR 3.5, the LM P2 category welcomes a very important newcomer for the 2006 season, the Judd-powered Radical entered by the British team Rollcentre Racing.

Grand Touring: GT1 and GT2 have received an unprecedented variety of entries. Topping the bill the Corvette C6-Rs are out to repeat their 2005 victory in LM GT1. The make's recent success in the Sebring race shows that Corvette is well placed to fight off challengers whether they come from the official Aston Martin Racing works team, BMS Scuderia Italia (winner of the 2005 Le Mans Endurance Series) and Russian Age Racing. The Corvette entered by Luc Alphand Racing will be the first privately entered C5-R ever seen at Le Mans in a category reinforced by three Ferrari 550 Maranellos, a Saleen S7R and another major attraction of the 2006 race, the Lamborghini Murcielago entered by the Japanese JLOC team for the Japanese Lamborghini Owner's Club.

From GT1 to GT2, the Ferrari 430 GT will be to LM GT2 what the Lamborghini is to LM GT1, another major Le Mans newcomer in the 2006 24 Hours. This category is no longer the private hunting ground of a particular make or car whether it is an evolution or a new model. The Ferrari 430 has already given a glimpse of its potential and the Dutch Spykers have a wild card to play. The Panoz Esperantes won the Sebring round and have to show it was no fluke; and of course Porsche is back to repeat its 2005 success. The LM GT2 category is a perfect summing up of the 2006 Le Mans 24 Hours. It looks like being a very open battle for outright victory, and for victory in each of the categories.

Finally, in addition to the fifty cars chosen the 2006 Le Mans 24 Hours Selection Committee had drawn up a list of eight reserves. The rule is that for each withdrawal before 26th May 2006 a reserve will take its place in accordance with the order established by the Selection Committee. Thus, the category affected by a withdrawal has no bearing on the technical definition of the car replacing it.

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