



Le Mans 24 Hours - Qualifying

Car 44: P4 – 3:38.03

Le Mans, France
7th May 2016

Often referred to as the greatest car race in the World, the Le Mans 24 hour race is special in many ways. Unlike other races that count towards the FIA's World Endurance Championship, there are three Qualifying sessions, known as Qualifying Practices.

The race itself will be the third round of the championship but is the only round at which Manor Endurance Racing plan to run only one of its two Oreca 05 chassis as the team was only able to secure one entry for the race at the beginning of the year. For the team's drivers it is important to take part in the race due to its double-points status and with only three seats available at Manor, two of them have had to find another drive for the race. The line-up for car #44 is Matt Rao, Roberto Merhi and Tor Graves.

The first of the Qualifying Practices was held in drying conditions and was the only one of the three where it didn't rain during the session, so as it turned out the grid positions would be determined by this session.

Tor initially took the wheel, before handing over to Matt but the early part of the session was beset by incidents causing both yellow and red flags. Midway through the session, the team managed to send Roberto out into a gap in the traffic for his first ever qualifying in the dark and he set the fourth fastest time in the LMP2 class.

The track continued to evolve and later in the session Roberto managed to improve his time, but still remained P4. With the rain falling in the second and third sessions,

John Booth, Team Principal

"I'm very happy. With all the rain we've had, to have the car still in one piece is excellent news. Everyone in the team has worked really well together. We have had limited dry running, and with two drivers having no experience of night racing, we can be very proud of our performance. It's a long race and we will no doubt have much to learn but I'm looking forward to competing in this great race for the first time."

Roberto Merhi, Driver Car 44

"Qualifying was OK in general but not the best it could have been. Maybe we would not have been on pole but I feel we could have maybe got P2. I'm ver happy with the job the team have done so far, and I'm also happy with the job I've done. It was the first time for me to qualify in the dark and the first Le Mans for the team. I think it's very good.."

Matt Rao, Driver Car 44

"To have the car back in one piece is the main thing for Le Mans. Qualifying fourth was a brilliant job by Roberto. We had great pace in the dry, and have scope for improvement in the wet. Rain is also forecast for the race so I think we'll improve there as that's when the competitive edge really comes out. If everything goes well we should be looking at a place in the top five, or maybe we could even challenge for the podium."



Tor Graves, Driver Car 44

“We have definitely learned a lot about the car and the tyres. I’m quite happy with qualifying fourth, it was a very good effort. We can race from there although the forecast is for mixed conditions, probably wet for the first few hours and the hopefully dry for the rest of the race. But we are in really good shape and I’m looking forward to the race.”

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