



Ford Positive Ahead of Traditional Le Mans Warm-Up at Spa

- Round 7 of the 2018-19 FIA World Endurance Championship is the 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps
- Spa race is traditionally the final test before the upcoming Le Mans 24 Hours
- Ford took pole position and the race victory at Spa in 2018, which was Round 1 of the WEC Super Season
- The 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps starts this Saturday at 13:30 CET

GREATWORTH, U.K., April 29, 2019 – The Ford Chip Ganassi Racing team will compete in the penultimate round of the marathon FIA World Endurance Championship Super Season this weekend. The 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps is the final rehearsal before the Le Mans 24 Hours, and the perfect event to make final preparations for Le Mans as the rollercoaster-like Spa circuit is an uncompromising test of man and machine.

Both Ford Chip Ganassi Racing Ford GTs return to their regular two-man driver crews for Spa with Stefan Mücke (GER) and Olivier Pla (FRA) in the #66 Ford GT, and Andy Priaulx (GB) and Harry Tincknell (GB) in the #67 GT. They will be reunited with Billy Johnson (US) and Jonathan Bomarito (US) for the Le Mans 24 Hours.

“Spa is a great event for making sure you have everything in place for Le Mans,” said Mark Rushbrook, global director, Ford Performance Motorsports. “It is also an important race in its own right, so we go there with our eyes on the top step of the podium. We’ve gone through the highs and the lows at Spa, with wins, pole positions and a couple of big crashes. That’s what Spa is all about: it’s an all or nothing track.”

The 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps features twice in the current WEC calendar. The race opened the Super Season in May 2018 and the #66 Ford GT crew of Mücke, Pla and Johnson took victory in the GTE Pro class. Mücke made a decisive move for the lead at the first corner but the three drivers had to fight for every inch of asphalt throughout the six-hour race. Olivier Pla had everyone on their feet when he made the move of the race, passing a Porsche for the lead through the famous Eau Rouge in the final hour of the race.

2018 Spa Highlights: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9b2KtLM2twY>

“Last year’s race was a fun one for me,” Pla said. “To come out in front after racing that hard is the reason why we do this! The Ford GT suits Spa and we all love to race there, so it is the perfect challenge for us. I hope we can go back this year and have a repeat performance. We certainly have the car and the team to do so!”

The #67 Ford GT crew of Priaulx and Tincknell have unfinished business at Spa. Racing with Tony Kanaan in 2018 they qualified on pole position and were ready to fight for victory, but it all ended when Tincknell crashed at Raidillon in the second hour.

“It all started well at Spa last year,” Tincknell said. “We qualified on pole and it was all looking good until the crash, so I have a few demons to lay to rest the first time I go through Eau Rouge. We know the car is always quick around Spa and it is where we got our first WEC podium in 2016, so I have good memories of that. The reason the GT goes well at Spa is that you need a car with good aerodynamic efficiency. You always have to compromise as you want a low downforce set up for the fast parts of the track, but then there are some tight turns there, too. It’s like Le Mans where you want outright speed on the straights, but then you need some grip to get through the Porsche Curves.

“It’s good to go back to a track where we know we are strong, but it’s never easy at the front as the opposition is strong, too. It has been a tough season for us results-wise, but the pace, our strategy and the team effort has always been spot on.”

The 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps underway on Saturday, May 4 at 13:30 CET.

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