

TDS Racing finishes 4th at the WEC 6 Hours of Fuji

Mount Fuji, Japan, October 14th 2018

After some great performances in Silverstone, the TDS Racing team was over motivated for the 6 Hours of Fuji, 4th event of the 2018/2019 FIA WEC Super Season to take place in Japan, the Land Of The Rising Sun.

Loïc Duval, on duty for the DTM championship was replaced by newly crowned Formula E champion and ELMS leader Jean-Eric Vergne, who shared the #28 Oreca 07 wheel with Matthieu Vaxivière and François Perrodo this week-end.

WEC 6 Hours of Fuji

The three free practice sessions were confirmed to the expectation, with a P1, a P4 and a P2 results. Qualification duties were taken care of by Matthieu and François, they claimed 5th LMP2 best lap time, which placed the car on the 7th row on the starting grid.

With the first wet track of the weekend due to morning rain, the start of the race was given behind the leading car and after two formation laps. Teams had to be careful on strategies to get the best out of the wet in the changing surface at the beginning of the race. Matthieu started with intermediate tires. He managed to complete a superb first stint, taking #28 Oreca to P2 and P1 after one hour. His second pitstop came too early to fit slick tires, which forced Matthieu to do an additional stop after lap 35. Unfortunately this move made him lose all the advantage he had acquired. After 62 laps, he handed the car in P4 to François, who managed a 48 laps stint keeping the car on 4th position. Jean-Eric ultra motivated to get back to the top positions did a festival of stunning lap times (3rd fastest in the race 1'30"640) during his 74 lap stint. Matthieu took over to take the car to chequered flag on 4th LMP2 position. TDS Racing gathers 12 championship points.

FP1 - 45 laps - P1 - 1'30"360

FP2 - 29 laps - P4 - 1'31"040

FP3 - 48 laps - P2 - 1'29"582

Qualification - P5 - 1'28"769 (Matthieu & François)

Race - P4

François Perrodo FRA (Bronze): "Fuji is a difficult track for me, and I am not very happy with my work today. I managed to keep the car on 4th position during my whole stint, but could not make up time to the team ahead of us. I really want to congratulate Matthieu and Jean-Eric for their tough work. On my side, I want to focus on Shanghai in order to reverse this trend."

Matthieu Vaxivière FRA (Gold): "The start of the race was really good for me. I was on 7th starting lane and managed all along my first stint to take the car to P3, P2 and finally P1. At this moment we had a great car for this wetty-tricky track. We first pitted during the Full Course Yellow and stayed on intermediate tires, our second pit was too early to fit the slicks... so I had to pit an additional time, in the end, we lost one lap. I came back out in P3, but handed the car to François in P4. Generally speaking my stints were great, also the final one, we had good fighting on the track. François had a hard time in his first part, but he was much better in his second stint. Jean-Eric did a great job, lapping very quick. We end up 4th LMP2 and the first with a non pro driver, so this result is good. After a P4 in Spa, a P4 in Fuji, we really hope for a P3 podium finish in Shanghai. So we will work toward this."

Xavier Combet FRA (Team Manager) : *"The result of this weekend demonstrates one more time, that our driver line-up is the best one including a Bronze driver. The free practice sessions went well and we could prepare the race as planned. The race direction decided to start the race behind the leading car and with two formation laps because of the wet track and Matthieu perfectly managed this part of the race, taking the car in LMP2 P1. During safety car and FCY (race incidents with #70 and #3), the track condition changed a lot and we could not fit the slick tires at the right moment. So Matthieu had to come in a third time, unfortunately that is when we lost one lap. In these tricky track conditions and on this short and very high pace circuit, our Bronze driver François managed to keep the 4th position. Jean-Eric was very fast, sadly he was not able to make up for the lost time. In this very high level world championship, our 4th LMP2 place finish is the best one of a team with a Bronze driver on board, and this a good for the future races. We are very close to the podium finish, we have shown that our car is fast and our drivers competitive, so we want to step on it in the coming races. See you in Shanghai, on November 16th."*