

**Historic Endurance 2019****Spa 3 Hours****Wilson/Pittard win Spa 3 Hours in a Lotus Elan**

- **Wilson/Pittard's Lotus Elan wins Spa 3 Hours**
- **The Portuguese Barbot/Matos narrowly missed first place by 8 seconds**
- **Brits Fellows/Smitheram won the BRM Performance Index in an Austin Healey Sebring**

The public at the Spa-Francorchamps watched this weekend some spectacular racing moments with bated breath. In the 3 hour long Iberian Historic Endurance race, the Shelby Cobra dominated the qualifying, with five cars in the first sixth places. The race itself showcased several different pit strategies and in the last hour the Lotus Elan were in the lead, thanks to their more efficient fuel management strategy.

Known for being the best at channeling the spirit of endurance competitions, the Spa 3 Hours 2019, its fourth edition, was truly a summer race. Under the heat wave which was felt all over Europe, the whole race was ran in 25C+ weather. Fully booked as usual, the race included teams from 13 nationalities and over 18 different makes.

The Shelby Cobra took the lead early on, with four cars in the first positions, including the Portuguese Pedro, Rui Macedo Silva and Joaquim Jorge in first place, followed by the English Jason Yates / Ben Mitchel and the Belgian Thierry de Latre / Christophe Van Riet.

As some cars broke down on track around 45 minutes into the race, and the safety car went in, the strategies for managing fuel stops and tire changes were varied. Some took the chance to go into the pits, while others preferred to stay on the track. Out of those in the five first positions, only the Portuguese Cobra and the English Porsche 911 RS of Paul Daniels/ Mika Palttala, who had in the meantime ascended to fourth place, stayed on track.

At the end of the first racing shift, Pedro, Rui Macedo Silva e Joaquim Jorge continued in first place, followed by Nick Sleep / Joel Wykeham in the British Ford Mustang and the Lotus Elan of Grahame Wilson and David Pittard in third, with the other Lotus Elan, driven by Carlos Barbot and Pedro Matos, in close pursuit. The second shift was extremely exciting, with the English Mustang climbing to the first place, only to be overtaken by the two Lotus Elan, who had been consistently winning places.

Having taken advantage of non-refueling strategy, the Lotus Elan managed to get a considerable advantage over the competition and provided an excellent show during their epic struggle for the first position in the last hour of the race. The Lotus from Luxembourg eventually achieved victory by a narrow 8 seconds over the Portuguese.

Nick Sleep / Joel Wykeham's Mustang finished in third place, due to a perfect pit strategy and excellent consistency, leading to a great result.

In a race dominated by the H1965 category, the best car in the H1976 category was the debuting Ford Escort RS1600 of Greg Caton and Tim Swadkin, who finished in sixth place, by a narrow 15 second lead in the last shift, overtaking the English Porsche 911 Inglês RS, which had earlier fought for the top positions. The final podium team was the French Franck Laga, Patrick Malherbe and Oliver Breittmay, also driving Porsche 911 RS.

In the H1971 category, the BMW 2002ti of the Swedish Daniel Frodin, Thomas Eriksson and Rikard Hasselblad took an early lead. However, 15 minutes later in had been overtaken by the Lotus Elan +2 of the Portuguese Filipe Matias/ Pedro Cerqueira. The Spanish father and son Idefonso and Alfonso Garcia had a very consistent race and seem poised to finish in third place, but their Porsche slowed down in the last lap duo to an mechanical problem and was overtaken by the Portuguese Piero dal Maso / Nuno Nunes right at the finish line, with a difference of less than a tenth of a second.

The BRM Performance Index, the most important category of the Iberian Historic Endurance, was heavily contested, especially due to the favorite two Lotus Elan's magnificent exhibitions. However, it was the small Austin Healey Sebring, driven to the limit by Marcus Fellows / David Smitheram, who climbed position after position throughout the race, managing to finish admirably in 35th place, which won the Performance Index, taking a fabulous watch back home to England. They were joined on the podium by Wilson/Pittard and Barbot/Matos, first and second in the index and the two teams who topped the overall ranking,

For Diogo Ferrão, this was an event that will be hard to beat. "These longer races showcase not only sheer speed but also the drivers' consistency, forcing the teams to read the race and tweak their strategy accordingly. It is a complex system which demands virtual perfection from all members of the team during all three hours to achieve the desired result. I was particularly happy with the several fights for positions until the end of the race, with several positions being decided only in the last lap," he said.

With the latest Historic Endurance race concluded, the competition will take a break for two months, returning on September 14 and 15, at Jerez de la Frontera, in southern Spain, also known as most relaxed weekend in the whole competition.