



ASTON MARTIN RESUMES CHAMPIONSHIP PURSUIT AS FIA WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP RETURNS AT SPA

- **FIA WEC resumes after prolonged coronavirus lockdown delays season**
- **Aston Martin leads Manufacturers' Championship after five of eight rounds**
- **Nicki Thiim and Marco Sørensen focused on Drivers' Championship lead**
- **Maxime Martin and Alex Lynn seeking to repeat 2019 WEC victory**
- **Spa is also opportunity to hone team ahead of 2020 24 Hours of Le Mans**

Tuesday 11 August, 2020, Spa-Francorchamps. Aston Martin Racing returns to action in the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) for Round 6, at Spa-Francorchamps in Belgium, some 174 days after the team clinched the GTE Pro class victory in the previous round – the Lone Star Le Mans at the Circuit of the Americas in Austin, Texas.

Since then global motorsport has taken a necessary back seat as the world continues to fight the spread of the coronavirus pandemic. This essential delay forced the cancellation of the 1000 Miles of Sebring back in March. It also led to WEC moving the Spa event from its original April date to 15 August, and the 24 Hours of Le Mans from its traditional June slot to 19-20 September. The championship will return to Bahrain for an 8-hour season finale on 21 November.

For Aston Martin Racing, this competitive return can't come soon enough as the team seeks to build on its championship lead in the GTE Pro Drivers' and Manufacturers' standings. The Aston Martin Vantage GTE has recorded six class victories from a possible ten so far this season, which began at Silverstone a week short of a year ago. The all-Danish #95 Aston Martin Vantage GTE crew of Marco Sørensen and Nicki Thiim holds a 26-point advantage in the GTE drivers' table

after three victories (in Japan, Bahrain and COTA) from five races, while Aston Martin is 32 points clear of rivals Porsche in the constructors' championship.

Thiim said: "I'm stocked with energy and power, not just to drive, but to get out there and compete against the best in the world again. It has been a brilliant season for us with three wins and the championship lead and the target is to build on that this weekend." Team-mate Sørensen added: "I've never felt more motivated to win a championship in my life. The team has used the coronavirus lockdown well and we have been training throughout this period as hard as we can."

Team-mates Alex Lynn (GB) and Maxime Martin (BEL) in the #97 Vantage GTE return to the scene of their famous snowy GTE Pro victory from last season still seeking their first win of 2020. Having been pace-setters on several occasions in the 2019/20 season, the duo are third in the standings with three podium finishes so far. "I'm sad that there are no fans here for my home race, but it is a necessary precaution," said home hero Martin. "Nevertheless, I love racing here at Spa and I see no reason myself and Alex can't fight for the GTE Pro win this weekend."

The works #98 Vantage is also seeking its first win of the year in the GTE Am category with the points situation incredibly tight at the top of the table. 2017 GTE Am world champion Paul Dalla Lana (CDN) and Ross Gunn (GB) are just 6.5 points off the lead after three consecutive podium finishes. This duo will be joined by BMW works driver Augusto Farfus (BR), who is a close friend of Dalla Lana's. Indeed Farfus, along with Dalla Lana and Mathias Lauda finished third in the GTE class in last weekend's 4 Hours of Spa, using the European Le Mans Series race as a warm-up.

Aston Martin Racing partner team TF Sport has been a revelation in the GTE Am class this season and arrives at Spa two points off lead and with three victories under its belt for Salih Yoluc (TUR) and works drivers Jonny Adam (GB) and Charlie Eastwood (GB).

Aston Martin Racing Team Principal Paul Howarth added: "The coronavirus break has been a tough challenge for the entire organisation and it's a relief to be back out there racing again in WEC. The team has put several protocols in place to protect our staff and the wider paddock community and we have every faith in WEC and the Belgian authorities to keep everyone safe. On track, this is a critical juncture in the championship. We hold an advantage in the points but a simple lapse in concentration could eliminate it swiftly. This is also our last opportunity to prepare

for what will be a unique 24 Hours of Le Mans. Maximum focus and performance will be required this weekend from the whole team.”

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