Mega gallery and report: the stunning anniversary edition of the Spa Six Hours

Roadbook managed by Alain Defaille and Vincent Collard managed to create a stunning 25th anniversary edition of the Spa Six Hours, one of Europe’s biggest historic motorsports events held on the beautiful Spa-Francorchamps track in the Ardennes region. With more than 650 cars present, including 16 races and qualifying sessions divided over three days the event is more than just a highlight. For the anniversary edition the Spa Six Hours attracted drivers from 25 countries, including Austria, Australia, Brasil, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Lebanon, Luxemburg, Monaco, Netherlands, New-Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Cars from the late 40s until the early 80s filled the sometimes massive grids including Grand Prix cars from the 50s and 60s, Formula 1 cars from the FIA Masters Historic F1 Championship and Le Mans cars from the FIA Masters Historic Sports Car Championship. Furthermore Touringcars featured in both the Masters Pre-66 Touring Cars and U2TC Historic Motor Racing News were present as well as the stunning sports cars from the Woodcote Trophy & Stirling Moss Trophy and a mixed field of cars hosted by the Historic Sports Car Club (closed wheel race).

As a tribute to Barry Sidery Smith the Spa One Hour Race was featured open to a great variety of cars, built between the 40s and 70s. Furthermore the event acted as a ‘test race’ for the brand new Masters Endurance Legends championship launched in 2018. This brand new series organized by the Masters Historic Organisation aims to attract sports-racing cars from the International Sports Racing Legends, the FIA Sports Car Championship, European Le Mans Series, American Le Mans Series, Intercontinental Le Mans Cup and Le Mans Endurance Series.

**Spa Six Hours**

Highlight of the weekend was of course the six hour endurance race held on Saturday afternoon and evening with a massive entry list presenting 120 cars, including 16 Ford GT40s! Qualifying turned out in a true GT40 battle with seeing 8 GT40’s claiming the first 8 spots on the grid. Georg Nolte, Frank Stippler and Michael Funke drove their nr. 9 GT40 to the pole. Just 0,9 of a second slower was the nr. 55 GT40 of Chris Ward and Andrew Smith in their nr. 55 GT40.

Instead of the wet conditions during the 2016 edition, this year the six hours were raced in dry conditions. Due to serious fog during the early morning the programme suffered some delays and the six hour endurance race was reduced to 5 hours and 11 minutes. From the very start on Saturday afternoon GT40s dictated the race pace with a fierce battle between the nr. 9 and nr. 55 GT40. The German GT40 dominated during the first four hours of the race and the drivers even managed to win a lap on Chris Ward and Andrew Smith. However in the end all went wrong during the fuelstop, were they lost 2 laps. As a result Ward and Smith secured their first victory in the Spa Six Hours.

1) Chris Ward/Andrew Smith Ford GT40

2) Georg Nolte/Frank Stippler/Michael Funke Ford GT40 + 2:34.924

3) Jason Wright/Michael Gans/Andy Wolfe Ford GT40 + 2 laps

**FIA Masters Historic F1 Championship**

The F1 cars of the FIA Masters Historic F1 Championship took us back to the 70s and 80s when the Cosworth DFV-engine dominated the pinnacle of motorsports. For their qualifying session 25 iconic F1 cars entered the Ardennes rollercoaster, including a welcome Lotus 81 and two remarkable ATS-cars.

Briton Michael Lyons drove his Williams FW07B to a demanding pole position, followed by the Belgian count Christophe D’Ansembourg in his Williams FW07C and Briton Mike Cantillon in a Williams FW07. During the first race on Saturday it all went wrong for Lyons in the formation lap. The pole sitter and championship leader saw his Cosworth DFV-engine expire, forcing him to retire. Belgian Loïc Demand drove in front of his home crowd from fifth position to victory.

Initially he had to fight D’Ansembourg for the lead in the race, but the Belgian did it all wrong by spinning into Fagnes. This opened the way for Cantillon to finish second as D’Ansembourg finished third.

1) Loïc Deman Tyrrell 010

2) Mike Cantillon WilliamsFW07 + 6.449

3) Christophe D’Ansembourg Williams FW07C + 9.177

Sunday’s second race became a complete different story as a heavy shower at the back of the track forced the drivers to start from behind the safetycar. Deman chose the wrong tyres forcing him to retire after just 5 laps. Michael Lyons profited and drove a lonely race in front of the field, claiming overall victory and the pre-78 title. The battle for second place was fought again between D’Ansembourg and Cantillon. This time the Belgian didn’t make any mistake giving him the second podium finish of the weekend in front of Cantillon.

1) Michael Lyons Williams FW07B

2) Christophe D’Ansembourg Williams FW07C + 16.158

3) Mike Cantillon Williams FW07 + 16.435

 **FIA Masters Historic Sports Car Championship**

Throwback to the Le Mans 24 Hours during the 60s and 70s was created by a huge field of 50 sports cars entered for the FIA Masters Historic Sports Car Championship. Among the favorites were the mighty Lola T70s but the smaller Lola prototypes were a force to be reckoned with. Although the T70s were the most powerful cars, not every driver pairing succeeded in using it. Several drivers got struck by bad luck or made mistakes, despite the T70 Mk.IIIB of Leo Voyazides and Smon Hadfield. The Greek-British driver pairing drove a faultless race claiming the overall victory in their single 61-minute race. Second place went to the beautiful McLaren M6B of Andrew and Max Banks. Belgian Loïc Deman scored his second podium of the weekend by finishing third.

1) Leo Voyazides/Simon Hadfield Lola T70 Mk.IIIB

2) Andrew Banks/Max Banks McLaren M6B + 14.030

3) Loïc Deman Chevron B19 + 17.967

**Stena Line Masters Pre-66 Gentlemen Drivers**

Nearly 50 beautiful GTs from the sixties found their way to Spa including AC Cobra’s, Bizzarrini’s, Jaguar E-Type’s, Lotus Elan’s, Ginetta’s, Porsche 911’s, Austin Healey’s, Triumph’s and others. Usually the qualifying pace is dominated by the Cobra, however this time it was the Bizzarrini 5300GT of Georg Nolte and Michael Funke that set the pace. The Chevy powered Italian was followed by the Jaguar E-Type of Briton’s Julian Thomas and Calum Lockie and the Shelby Daytona Cobra from Leo Voyazides from Greece and Simon Hadfield from the UK.

The race however was dominated by Cobra’s, initially led Graham and Oliver Bryant. As Oliver Bryant overtook under yellow flags he was handed a post-race penalty and as a result he dropped from first to third place in the final results. American Michael Gans and Briton Andy Wolfe got the victory after starting from the very last spot.

1) Michael Gans/Andy Wolfe AC Cobra

2) Leo Voyazides/Simon Hadfield Shelby Cobra Daytona + 10.262

3) Graham Bryant/Oliver Bryant AC Cobra + 35.337

**Masters Pre-66 Touring Cars**

Big American’s dominated the Masters Pre-66 Touring Cars, although the Ford Lotus Cortina’s and Mini Cooper’s were in the majority. Mike Gardiner and Phil Keen, both UK residents won qualifying and drove their Ford Falcon Sprint to the pole, followed by Roger Wills from New Zealand in a Mercury Comet Cyclone.

The single 61-minute race on Saturday morning was won by Mike Gardiner and Phil Keen who drove their Falcon Sprint to a dominant victory. Roger Wills had no answer and could only follow. In the end he finished second, nearly 22 seconds behind the winning Falcon Sprint. The impressive Studebaker Lark Daytona of Harry Whale from the UK finished third.

1) Mike Gardiner/Phil Keen Ford Falcon Sprint

2) Roger Wills Mercury Comet Cyclone + 21.836

3) Harry Whale Studebaker Lark Daytona + 38.746

**Masters Endurance Legends**

The 25th edition of the Spa Six Hours acted as a ‘testrace’ for the new Masters Endurance Legends championship. From 2018 on this new championship will be a regular competitor on the Masters calendar featuring some very interesting Le Mans-prototypes and GTs. Amongst the several beauties on track were a Peugeot 908X, a Lola-Aston Martin DBR1-2, an Audi R8 LMP1, a Judd V10 powered Dallara SP1 and two very loud Ferrari 550/575 GTC Maranello’s.

Shortly before the race the heavens above Spa opened and flooded the track. Kriton Lendoudis from Greece started from the pole in the Peugeot 908X on slicks. The same went down for Belgian Christophe D’Ansembourg in the Lola-Aston Martin. As both drivers had to settle for rain tyres both dropped back. The 40-minute race was finally won by Sean Doyle in a 2011 Oreca 03. Jonathan Kennard finished second and Mathieu Lahaye drove his splendid Pescarolo LMP1 to the final spot on the podium. The GT-division was won by Steve Zacchia in his immaculate Ferrari 550 GT1.

1) Sean Doyle Oreca 03

2) Jonathan Kennard Oreca LMP2 + 2.395

3) Mathieu Lahaye Pescarolo LMP1 + 28.804

**Historic Motor Racing News U2TC**

The glorydays from the European Touring Car Championship from the 60s relived in the Historic Motor Racing News U2TC featuring BMW’s, Ford Lotus Cortina’s, Alfa Romeo’s and Mini Cooper’s. The series are open to pre-66 touring cars under two litre. Max and Ian Goff (UK) proved to be quickest in a BMW 1800 Ti, followed by the Alfa Romeo Giulia Sprint of fellow countrymen Andrew and Max Banks.

It was an impressive sight to see the rear-wheel drive cars sliding across the demanding Spa-Francorchamps race track. In the end the Alfa Romeo of Max and Ian Goff turned out to be too quick and after 61-minutes they crossed the finishline first. Second place went to former British touring car ace Steve Soper, as Michael Gans from the US and Ivo Salvadori finished third.

1) Andrew Banks/Max Banks Alfa Romeo Giulia Sprint GTA

2) Steve Soper Ford Lotus Cortina + 3.257

3) Michael Gans/Ivo Salvadori Alfa Romeo GTA + 52.588

**Woodcote Trophy – Stirling Moss Trophy**

A great variety in cars from the 50s was provided by the combined race of the Woodcote Trophy and Stirling Moss Trophy. It created the atmosphere as seen during the 50s in endurance racing featuring true iconic cars from those days such as the Lotus 15, Lister Chevrolet, Lister Knobbly, Jaguar D-Type, Cooper Monaco, Lister Costin etc.

The battle for the pole was fought on Saturday morning between three Lister’s. Jon Minshaw (UK) and fellow countryman Phil Keen drove their Lister Knobbly to the pole. Chris Ward and Andrew Smith scored the second time in a Lister Costin, followed by the Lister Knobbly of Tony Wood and William Nuthall. Chris Ward and Andrew Smith raced in a league of their own as they finished nearly a minute in front of the Lotus 15 driven by Michael Gans. Dutchman David Hart drove his Lister Costin to the final spot on the podium.

1) Chris Ward/Andrew Smith Lister Costin

2) Michael Gans Lotus 15 + 58.496

3) David Hart Lister Costin + 1:09.514

**Historic Grand Prix Car Association**

Grand Prix cars from the 50s and 60s pleased the crowds with their thrilling races on Saturday and Sunday. Sam Wilson drove two lonely races as his Lotus 18 proved to be too quick for his fellow drivers on Saturday and Sunday. On Saturday Spaniard Joaquin Folch-Rusinol finished second, Max Blees from Switzerland crossed the finishline third. Andy Middlehurst finished second on Sunday, Joaquin Folch-Rusinol scored his second consecutive podium of the weekend by finishing third.

Race 1

1) Sam Wilson Lotus 18

2) Joaquin Folch-Rusinol Lotus 16 365 + 40.286

3) Max Blees Brabham BT7A + 50.003

Race 2

1) Sam Wilson Lotus 18

2) Andy Middlehurst Lotus 25 R4 + 25.821

3) Joaquin Folch-Rusinol Lotus 16 365 + 42.239

**Spa One Hour**

As a tribute to Barry Sidery-Smith, a well known MG-trader and racer, the Spa One Hour race was held on Sunday morning open to a wide variety of cars, including of course Morgan’s and a mixture of touring cars, GT’s and even a Porsche 917 replica. Father and son, Graham and Oliver Bryant took the honours in their Morgan +8.

1) Graham Bryant/Oliver Bryant Morgan +8

2) Neil Fowler MG B GT V8 + 6.284

3) Eric Sechaud/Francois Sechaud Ford Escort + 38.929

**Historic Sports Car Club (closed wheel race)**

The same variety in cars could be seen in the HSCC closed wheel race dominated sports prototypes from the 70s. The first race on Saturday was won by Leo Voyazides and Simon Hadfield in their glorious looking Lola T282. Belgian Eric Mestdagh claimed victory during the second race on Sunday.

Race 1

1) Leo Voyazides/Simon Hadfield Lola T282

2) Guy Peeters Chevron B23 + 15.209

3) Eric Mestdagh GRD + 15.977

Race 2

1) Eric Mestdagh GRD

2) Bob Brooks/Vicky Brooks Lola T212 + 18.045

3) George Douglas Martin BM9 + 18.891

**Jaguar Classic Challenge**

New on the massive Spa Six Hours programme was the Jaguar Classic Challenge intended only for Jaguar cars. Thirty cars filled the grid including 22 E-Type’s, 2 XK120’s, three XK150’s, two Mk.1’s and a single Mk.2. The 61-minute race was won by Graeme and James Dodd in an E-Type.

1) Graeme Dodd/James Dodd Jaguar E-Type

2) Andrew Newall/Rhea Sautter Jaguar E-Type + 1:13.322

3) Lukas Halusa/Niklas Halusa Jaguar E-Type + 2:30.678

Despite the changeable weather conditions and cold and foggy weather on Saturday morning the 25th anniversary edition of the Spa Six Hours was the best Roadbook managed to create so far. We are already counting down the days until the 26th edition in September 2018!

Nieuw op het programma was de Jaguar Classic Challenge. Deze eenuursrace ging naar de E-type van Graeme en James Dodd, nadat Andy Newall het eerste halfuur aanvoerde. Met Rhea Sautter achter het stuur moest de Engels/Duitse equipe zich toch gewonnen aan de Dodds. De broers Halusa uit Oostenrijk werden in nog een E-type derde.

Voor het eerst aanwezig in deze Spa Six Hours, was de Jaguar Classic Challenge, een organisatie van het moederhuis, die toeliet aan de eigenaars van een E-Type om zich uit te leven. De zege ging er naar vader en zoon Dodd, voor de Duitse Rhea Sautter, die werd bijgestaan door de Brit Andy Newall.