



Nico Verdonck winner of the Spa Six Hours!

In addition to his career in the field of modern motorsport, Nico Verdonck has become a reputed and highly appreciated driver in the Historic motorsport world. Since his first race in 2014 at Daytona, at the wheel of an awe-inspiring Porsche 935 K1, the Brussels based driver has systematically made a name for himself in this field. And the victory claimed this last Saturday at the Spa Six Hours represents a major success... and which calls for more!

As in 2017, Nico Verdonck competed in this major historic event at the wheel of the Gotcha Historic Racing Ford GT40 and was teamed up with Marcus Graf von Oeynhausen. *"Marcus not only appreciates my turn of speed, but also the way I set up the car and the coaching I give him regarding driving techniques",* a delighted Nico commented. *"It's pleasing to work with such passionate and willing to learn people as Marcus. In fact, his progress is quite remarkable!"*

But following a Top 5 last year, this Belgo-German team excelled no end this year. *"We clocked up the second best time in qualifying, a mere fraction of a second from claiming pole position",* Nico explained. *"I took the start and very quickly went into the lead, even building up a small gap. Nonetheless the race was pretty intense with numerous neutralisations, bringing about reworked strategies. In our case we carried out one pit stop more than our rivals, and when I took over the wheel for the end of the race we had dropped back to 3rd place. On top of that we had lost 4th gear and needed to change from third into fifth, and inversely also... Notwithstanding that, I initially managed to reclaim 2nd spot and was fully determined to battle it out to the finish, especially seeing the team never stopped signalling 'Push' on our board."*

After the final appearance of the Safety-Car, Nico went into a full offensive to finally come out on top after 6 hours by a mere gap of 2,4 seconds! *"It's the first time since 1994 that a Belgian has added his name to the record of achievements in this race",* Nico smiled. *"In fact, one needs to go back 24 years, with Pierre Dieudonné and Willy Braillard winning the race. I know Pierre well, but Willy even better, a great friend. It's fun to succeed them in the list of Belgian winners!"*

Above and beyond this sentimental touch, Nico is well aware to have claimed a truly splendid victory. "With 114 cars at the start – and no less than 17 Ford GT40 – and renowned drivers entered, these historic races are ... real down to earth races!", Nico continued. "My best lap time of 2'42"470, also the best time of the weekend, goes to show that these classic machines are true full-blooded competition cars. I thoroughly enjoyed being behind the wheel of this Ford GT40 and managing the heavy traffic, always a key factor in this event. Beyond a doubt, this is going to motivate me to continue my involvement in Historic racing in addition to my career in the GT world!"

Pictures : Dereck Latet

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