

Safety first as Le Mans remembers fatal day

This year Le Mans commemorates the 50th anniversary of the worst accident in motorsport history, in which over 80 people were killed when Pierre Levegh's Mercedes hit a slower car before catapulting into the crowd. Since then the circuit has been in the vanguard of safety improvements



Circuit de la Sarthe

00 km/h

337

Mulsanne Straight

330

Chicanes added to reduce speeds

330

1965: Entire 13.6km track lined with guard rails on both sides

Average speed: 233km/h

313

1956: Grandstand and pits rebuilt 6m back to allow track to be widened

START

Scene of 1955 crash

Audi R8

Rollover structure

Safety belt: "Le Mans start", in which drivers ran across track to cars, last used in 1969. Drivers now fitted with harness before race

Survival cell

Race classes

LMP1

Weight: Min. 900kg

Engine: 6-litre or 4-litre turbo, over 550bhp

LMP2

Weight: Min. 750kg

Engine: 3.4-litre (2.0-litre turbo), over 500 bhp

GT1

Weight: Min. 1,100kg

Engine: 4.0-8.0 litres, up to 600bhp

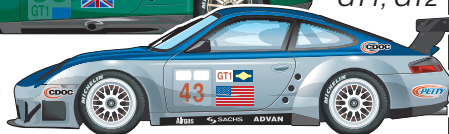
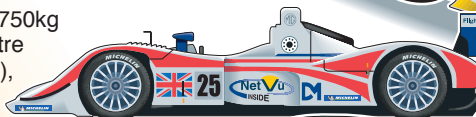
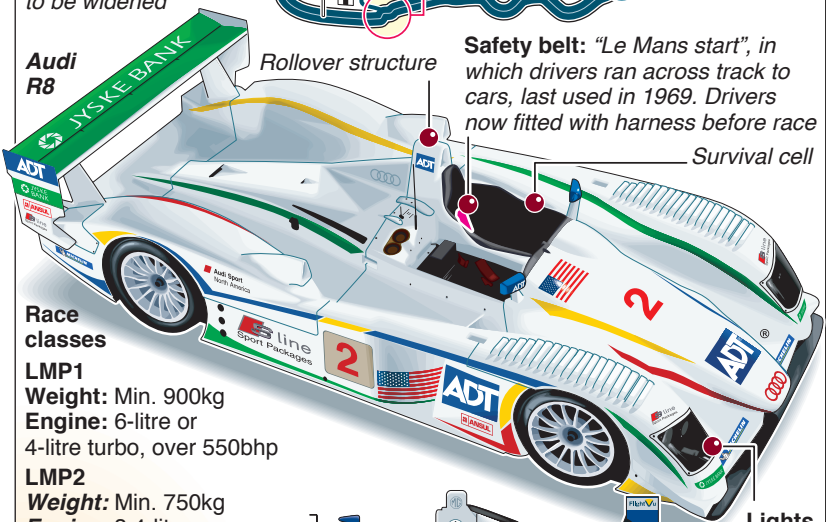
GT2

Weight: Min. 1,100kg

Engine: 4.0-8.0 litres, over 450bhp

Source: Le Mans

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Lights

White – faster LMP1 and LMP2 cars.

Yellow – GT1, GT2