



GT NEWS

NEWSLETTER NR 22 - DUBAI REVIEW NOVEMBER 24th

PHOENIX VICTORIOUS IN DUBAI MULLEN/NIARCHOS WIN GT2 BUT MELO IS THE CHAMPION

A fantastic race event at the Dubai Autodrome was crowned with the victory of the Aston Martin DBR9 entered by Phoenix Racing and driven by Jean-Denis Deletraz and Andrea Piccini. Their first win of the season, after coming so close to winning the Proximus 24 Hours of Spa, also saw the Italo-Swiss duo claim second place in the GT1 Drivers Championship. GT2 saw victory go to Scuderia Ecosse's nr 63 Ferrari 430 GT2, driven by Tim Mullen and Chris Niarchos. They finished ahead of the two AF Corse cars. Melo and Vilander were second, giving Jaime Melo the 2006 GT2 Drivers Championship, while Aguas and Salo, third today, were also third overall. The Dubai spectators filled the immense grandstand and the amphitheatre, and were treated to an action-packed GT race.

Deletraz and Piccini put in a superb performance to win the tenth and final round of the 2006 FIA GT Championship, at the Dubai Autodrome. Their nr 5 Aston Martin DBR9 behaved perfectly throughout the race, and the two drivers crossed the line 49 seconds ahead of the nr 4 GLPK Carsport Corvette of Longin, Kumpen and Hezemans, with the nr 2 Vitaphone Maserati MC 12 of Davies, Biagi and Vosse third. "For a first year with a new team, it's fantastic. In some races, we have been really close to winning. It was very important for us and the partners to do the race this weekend. We're in a good position for the winter time," Jean-Deletraz said afterwards

A fuel problem and oversteer delayed the Corvette, which nevertheless put the most pressure on the winning Aston Martin; a last minute splash and dash saw the GLPK car 49 seconds behind the nr 5 Aston Martin at the chequered flag. However, Mike Hezemans was pleased with the result: "The car was the best it had been all year, the tyres were fantastic. I must say congratulations to Jean-Denis Denis, because he won the race; I think they really did a fantastic job. We always have a problem, because we always start the seasons so badly. I hope we can compete well next year from the very beginning."

Third was an excellent result for Davies, Biagi and Vosse, especially considering the car carried 105 kg penalty weight in total. The podium was especially sweet for Vosse, who did not get to drive the car during his home race in the Proximus 24 Hours of Spa. The team's second car, with Champions Bertolini and Bartels and their Belgian team-mate Eric van de Poele, finished 11th overall after a long pit stop and a drive-thru penalty further to a collision with the nr 69 Porsche.

Dubai, which so nearly saw the first non-manufacturer win for the Aston Martin DBR9 last year, proved to be good for the Aston cars this weekend, with not only victory for



"For a first year with a new team, it's fantastic. In some races, we have been really close to winning. It was very important for us and the partners to do the race this weekend"

Jean-Denis Deletraz, Phoenix Racing



For more information on the teams,
drivers and everything about the
FIA GT Championship,
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RACE RESULTS - ROUND 10 - DUBAI

1: Deletraz / Piccini
Phoenix Racing Aston Martin DBR9

2: Hezemans/Kumpen/Longin
GLPK Carsport Corvette C6

3: Davies / Biagi / Vosse
Vitaphone Racing Team Maserati MC12

4: Babini / Malucelli
Aston Martin Racing BMS DBR9

5: Wendlinger / Peter / Janis
Race Alliance Aston Martin DBR9

6: Gollin /Ramos
Aston Martin Racing BMS DBR9

7: G2 : Gardel / Zacchia / Makowiecki
Larbre Competition Ferrari 550 Maranello

GT2

1 : Mullen / Niarchos
Scuderia Ecosse Ferrari 430 GT2

2: Vilander / Melo
AF Corse Ferrari 430 GT2

3: Salo / Aguas
AF Corse Ferrari 430 GT2

4: Bleekemolen / Kane
Spyker Squadron Spyder C8

5 : Sugden / Alexander
JMB GruppeM Ferrari 430 GT2

6: Collard /Rockenfeller
Ebimotors Porsche 996 GT3 RSR

G3

1: Pirri / Seiler
Aston Martin DBRS9

Phoenix, but the three other cars finishing in fourth to sixth positions. Fourth place went to the Aston Martin Racing BMS DBR9, after a fine start from Babini, leading the race until lap eight. The team's second car, driven by Gollin and Ramos, finished sixth. In the Manufacturers Cup, Aston Martin scored a total of 173 points this season, finishing ahead of Maserati, Corvette and Saleen.

The Race Alliance Aston Martin was delayed by an early puncture, but recovered to finish fifth for Karl Wendlinger, Philipp Peter and Jarek Janis. This was despite a problem for new Aston driver Janis, whose seat-belt came partially undone during his stint, giving him great problems. The points for fifth assured Jarek Janis of third position in the GT1 Drivers Classification, ahead of his former Zakspeed Racing team-mate Sascha Bert. The nr 9 Saleen had an unfortunate puncture in the early stages, causing damage which took a number of laps to finish. The car rejoined the race on lap 16, finishing 22nd overall and 8th in GT1.

MULLEN AND NIARCHOS VICTORIOUS IN GT2; MELO TAKES THE TITLE

The GT2 victory went to Mullen and Niarchos, in the nr 63 Ferrari 430 GT2 of Scuderia Ecosse, who started from pole. The new British GT Champions put in an excellent performance, and dominated the category all weekend. However, the ten points were not enough to promote Mullen to third in the Classification, as he was followed by the two AF Corse cars. Jaime Melo and Toni Vilander finished second, giving Melo the GT2 title. Aguas and Salo were third today, struggling with a problem in their car, but it was enough to guarantee their third place and the AF Corse domination in the GT2 driver's top three. Mullen finished the season just half a point behind Salo and Aguas, to take a well-deserved fourth.

The nr 79 Spyker Squadron C8 Spyder of Bleekemolen and Kane led the GT2 race, but eventually finished fourth. The nr 55 JMB Ferrari finished fifth, despite a collision with the nr 23 BMS DBR9, for which it received a drive-through penalty. The nr 75 Ebimotors Porsche put in an excellent performance despite starting on the penultimate row further to an engine change; it led the category for much of the middle hour of the race, but finally dropped back to sixth after developing power-steering problems.

The second Ebimotors car was seventh, ensuring Ebimotors third place in the GT2 Teams Classification behind AF Corse and Scuderia Ecosse. Eighth and final point went to Christian Ried and Horst Felbermayr Jr in the Felbermayr-Proton Porsche 996 GT3 RSR.



LARBRE COMPETITION FINISHES SEVENTH OVERALL

The Larbre Ferrari 550 Maranello, running in G2, was awarded 10 kg penalty weight by the GT Bureau, and also placed behind the GT1 cars on the grid. However, it drove a good race and claimed a seventh-place finish for 2005 Champion Gardel, Zacchia and Makowiecki. The drivers were

pleased with the performance shown by the car, with its customer engine designed by Care Racing Development. The Gillet Vertigo stopped with a broken propshaft.

VICTORY IN G3 FOR SEILER AND PIRRI

The G3 category was won by Toni Seiler and Luca Pirri, in the nr 133 BMS Scuderia Italia Aston Martin DBRS9. Both drivers were pleased with the performance of their car, and saw it as a good preparation for next year's FIA GT3 European Championship, which should finish the season in Dubai.

WHAT THEY SAID

Jean-Denis Deletraz: "For a first year with a new team, it's fantastic. In some races, we were really close to winning; we've been unlucky at times. It was very important for us and our partners to do the race this weekend. We're now in a good position for the winter time."

Andrea Piccini: "We knew the circuit very well, the Aston and the Michelin tyres as well, so we were very confident coming here. The car was always good, the tyres very consistent. Thanks to the Phoenix Team all year who have done an excellent job making it a great year. In the end, we're happy at the end to finish second in the GT1 Drivers Championship."

Bert Longin : "I missed my start at the beginning; I lost one place, then I caught it up again. Then I took another place and was in third position when the safety car came out. After the safety car I overtook Bartels and Babini. I thought I could keep the lead and stay a few seconds away, but then I got problems with oversteer. We're not a high budget team and we have to work hard to do this, but we're very happy with our result."

Mike Hezemans: "I drove as hard as I could. Sometimes you make super-quick times, and sometimes you go off a bit. The car was the best it had been all year, the tyres were fantastic. I must say congratulations to Jean-Denis because he won the race; I think they really did a fantastic job. The season was good, but we have a problem, because we always start the year so badly. I hope we can compete well next year from the beginning."

Jamie Davies : "The whole team worked very well. The car, this weekend, was very good for us. Obviously the 105kg in the car didn't help much. So we worked on the balance, the car was very, very good during the race, the Pirelli tyres were awesome during my stint especially. We tried very hard, it's been very good for us."

Thomas Biagi: "I'm sad that this the last race of the season, because these last six races have been fantastic, we were five times on the podium and we've had two victories. We had a very good end of the season, me and Jamie. I have to say many thanks to Maserati, Pirelli and my Vitaphone team."

Tim Mullen: "It's been a fantastic weekend for myself and Chris. We've dominated in every single session – practice sessions, qualifying and the race. It's a great way to finish the year. The car has been absolutely brilliant; we've hardly changed the set-up at all. The tyres were brilliant. I'd just like to say that the track is absolutely fantastic to drive, and there was a very good, enthusiastic crowd this weekend. It'll be a real shame if we don't come back here next year."

Chris Niarchos : We decided before the weekend that as I missed a couple of races due to other commitments, that the priority this weekend was to see if we could get Tim up to third place in the Championship ahead of Mika and Rui. I got in, and Mike Rockefeller got past me. The team decided that the best thing was to prioritise Tim's victory, and called me in early. Unfortunately for us, like usual, these guys just kept going and going. I've never been such a Spyker supporter before ! "

Jaime Melo : "First of all, I would like to thank Toni and the team for doing a superb job. The race was a bit tough at the beginning, there was a lot of confusion and I just tried to keep out of trouble. After that, Toni took over the car and did a very good job. For the last stint, we did a double stint with the tyres, and I tried to push hard to catch these guys, but it was not enough. It has been a very difficult Championship, very competitive, and I'm very proud to be Champion."

Toni Vilander – nr 58 : "The race was OK. It was obviously not easy to come here just for the last race, and I enjoyed the possibility that AF Corse and Ferrari gave me. I did the middle stint and I think I did a decent job – it was really nice to race with Jaime."



GT1 DRIVERS CLASSIFICATION

1. Bertolini/Bartels - 71
2. Piccini/Deletraz - 62
3. Janis - 58
4. Bert - 56
5. Davies / Biagi - 54
6. Babini - 51
7. Hezemans/Kumpen/Longin - 48
8. Gollin - 33.5
9. Wendlinger/Peter - 32.5
10. Pescatori - 29

GT1 TEAMS CLASSIFICATION

1. Vitaphone Racing Team - 125
2. Aston Martin Racing BMS - 73.5
3. Phoenix Racing - 62
4. Zakspeed - 56
5. GLPK Carsport - 48
6. Race Alliance - 32.5

GT2 DRIVERS CLASSIFICATION

1. Melo 79
2. Bobbi 71
- 2: Salo / Aguas - 61
3. Mullen - 60.5
4. Kinch/Kirkaldy - 43
5. Sugden / Alexander - 42
7. Collard - 34
8. Riccitelli - 33
9. Franchitti - 28
10. Ried / Felbermayr Jr - 25.5

GT2 TEAMS CLASSIFICATION

1. AF Corse - 140
2. Scuderia Ecosse- 103.5
3. Ebimotors - 59
4. JMB Gruppe M - 43
5. Team Felbermayr Proton - 27.5

GT1 MANUFACTURERS

1. Aston Martin - 173
2. Maserati - 125
3. Corvette - 65
4. Saleen 58
5. Lamborghini - 5

GT2 MANUFACTURERS

1. Ferrari - 288
2. Porsche - 98.5
3. Spyker - 15

POLE FOR MAKOWIECKI, BABINI AND MULLEN

One of the closest-ever qualifying sessions in the FIA GT Championship saw the top three cars qualify within one tenth of a second, while the top seven were within nine tenths. Pole position went, exceptionally, to a car running in the G2 class, Frédéric Makowiecki in the Larbre Competition Ferrari 550 Maranello, setting a time of 1:55.987. He was very closely followed by the two Aston Martin Racing BMS cars, in their best qualifying session this season. In GT2, Tim Mullen made it a full sweep for Scuderia Ecosse by taking his second pole of the season, ahead of Mika Salo in the AF Corse car and Jeroen Bleekemolen in the Spyker. Marcello Zani took the G3 pole in the nr 115 BMS Scuderia Ecosse Aston Martin DBRS9.

OVERALL POLE FOR MAKOWIECKI

Larbre Competition, FIA N-GT Champion in 2000, FIA GT Champion in 2001 and 2002, and winner of the 2005 GT1 Drivers Championship with Gabriele Gardel, claimed another first when they placed the nr 3 Ferrari 550 Maranello at the front of the starting grid for tomorrow's tenth round of the FIA GT Championship – the first time a G2 car has taken overall pole. Frédéric Makowiecki set an excellent time of 1:55.987 to claim pole position in the nr 3 Larbre Competition Ferrari 550 Maranello, ahead of the two Aston Martin Racing BMS DBR9 cars.

The car, running the new Care Racing Development engine for the first time in the FIA GT Championship, was given permission to take part in the race by the GT Bureau, according to a number of conditions. However the car was moved to the G2 group further to a request from the team, as due to some minor technical issues the car did not conform to the GT1 Technical Regulations. This also meant that the car did not have to carry the 40 kg allotted to all newcomers in the GT1 category. "I'm very happy to be here with Larbre Competition and Care Racing Development, and would like to thank them for letting me drive the car today," Makowiecki said afterwards. "I'm very pleased to be on pole position. It shows how competitive the car is, and is especially good on a nice circuit like this one." Team manager Jack Leconte, whose Ferrari won the Dubai round last year, was delighted with his car's performance: "This is a super job, which has been under preparation for quite some time, since the summer. I would like to congratulate Prodrive, who have undertaken very specialised technical development. And the team is extremely skilled, as we have proved once again. It is very difficult to join a Championship mid-season, so this is really a very proud moment for the whole team."

ONE-TWO IN GT1 FOR ASTON MARTIN RACING BMS

Dubai has seen the Aston Martin DBR9 cars dominate the GT1 category, with the Phoenix and Race Alliance cars fastest in free practice, and the two BMS DBR9 cars qualifying within nine thousandths of a second of each other in first and second. Babini set the best GT1 time, with a lap of 1:56.067 in the nr 23 car, while 2004 Champion Fabrizio Gollin set a time of 1:56.076. "It was a good result," Babini said. "In the free practices I was testing the different solutions for the setup and the tyres. We did a good job two hours before the qualifying session, as we took the decision to start the qualifying with a different setup. But BMS and Pirelli did excellent work to get this result." Mike Hezemans was a further tenth behind in the nr 4 GLPK Carsport Corvette, ahead of the nr 1 Vitaphone Racing Maserati MC 12, carrying a total of 95 kg penalty weight. Philipp Peter was a disappointed sixth in the nr 33 Race Alliance Aston Martin, the Austrian having twice set the fastest second sector time but systematically catching traffic in the last sector. The Phoenix Racing car, fastest in the free practice, was eighth, the nr 5 Aston Martin having stopped on the track with a broken propshaft. The Zakspeed Saleen was ninth, having suffered from differential problem. The nr 75 Ebimotors Porsche did not set a time, due to engine problems, while the nr 101 Vertigo had gear-box problems.



DUBAI QUALIFYING

1. Makowiecki - Larbre Ferrari 1:55.987
2. Babini - BMS Aston 1:56.067
3. Gollin - BMS Aston 1:56.076
4. Hezemans - GLPK Corvette 1:56.116
5. Bertolini - Vitaphone Maserati 1:56.430
6. Peter - Race Alliance DBR9 1:56.540

GT2

1. Mullen - Ecosse Ferrari 430 2:01.260
2. Salo - AF Corse Ferrari 430 2:01.882
3. Bleekemolen - Spyker C8 2:02.018
4. Sugden - JMB Ferrair 430 2:02.302
5. Melo - AF Corse Ferrari 430 2:02.425
6. Kox - Spyker C8 2: 02.682

FULL HOUSE FOR SCUDERIA ECOSSE WITH POLE FOR MULLEN

Ten races, ten pole positions : Scuderia Ecosse continued the pattern they set in the 2005 British GT Championship by claiming pole position at every race this season. Andrew Kirkaldy set a new FIA GT record with eight poles, and Tim Mullen carried on the good work by setting pole in the last race of the season. The nr 63 car set a time of 2:01.260 around the 5.394 km circuit, after a good battle throughout the session with Mika Salo in the nr 59 AF Corse Ferrari. Salo was eventually second. "Andrew [Kirkaldy] had a good run going in qualifying but it's nice to be back in first position again," Mullen explained. "The car has been really good from the word go. We've hardly changed the setup at all, which really helps to get on the case quickly. We've been fast, and fastest, in both sessions. Mika Salo was making me work a little bit more towards the end and I had to push hard to get another lap in but I'm just really pleased for myself and the team."

Third place went to Jeroen Bleekemolen in the nr 79 Spyker Squadron C8 Spyder GT2 R – the first time since Silverstone that anything other than a Ferrari has qualified in the top three in GT2 ! The nr 55 JMB GruppeM car of Sugden, Alexander and Case was fourth, ahead of Vilander and Melo in the nr 58 AF Corse car, with the second Spyker in sixth.

ZANI ON POLE IN G3

Marcello Zani, pole setter and race winner in this year's inaugural season of the FIA GT3 European Championship, and winner of the Aston Martin Cup with his team-mate Max Mugelli, continued his fine performance behind the wheel of the BMS Scuderia Italia Aston Martin DBRS9 with pole position in the G3 class for tomorrow's 10th round of the FIA GT Championship. The young Italian set a lap of 2:06.117 in the nr 115 car, placing him 20th overall. "I did my best. I think the Aston Martin with dry tyres was very competitive, so it was quite easy. I pushed really hard because I needed to get a good result. I'm happy to be here, and I hope to be here again next year."



PHOTO SHOOT AT SKI DUBAI

Sun, sand ... and snow. The leading drivers in the 2006 FIA GT Championship made a quick visit to Ski Dubai, the amazing indoor ski slope located in Dubai's Mall of the Emirates. The cold temperatures made a pleasant change from the 30° outdoors. Of course, snowballs were soon flying !



END OF SEASON PHOTO SHOOT



The traditional end of season photo session took place on the Friday, after the two free practice sessions. All the drivers assembled on the roof of the pit building, with the massive

Dubai Autodrome grandstand in the background.



TEAM NEWS

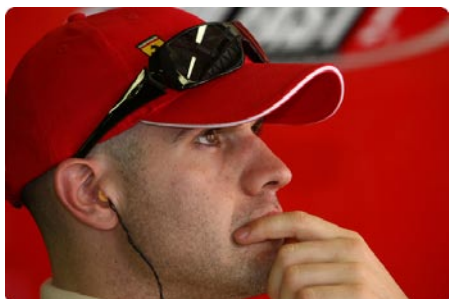
CARE RACING DEVELOPMENT ENGINE TAKES POLE



The new Care Racing Development engine, designed for lower costs in motorsport, took pole position in Dubai, ahead of all the GT1 category cars. Larbre Competition's Jack Leconte, running the Ferrari 550 Maranello car, was delighted with the performance. "This is a super job, which has been under preparation for quite some time, since the summer. I

would like to congratulate Prodrive, who have undertaken a very specialised technical development. Using their electronic restrictor system, they have managed to duplicate exactly the power and performance of the cars taking part in the FIA GT. I should also mention the excellent work of the GT Bureau and Commission, as they have balanced the performance of the cars, and with their technical information, it is possible to show that an engine like this can work at much reduced costs. We have four cars within a tenth of a second. However, it should be noted that our car has no ballast, which gave it some advantage. But it should be remembered that last year we had an excellent set-up for the car, which we have not forgotten. And the team is extremely skilled, as we have proved once again. It is very difficult to join a Championship mid-season, so this is really a very proud moment for the whole team. We have worked hard for the future. We have given an opportunity to a young driver who deserves a chance on the international stage. Today, he made no mistakes and claimed pole – well done. I told him he was not allowed any mistakes; his tyres have to be used tomorrow for the start of the race. He did exactly what he needed to. Larbre is always a question of balance : management, technical abilities, top-level technicians. And all these factors are brought together by myself, as the conductor. I am very, very pleased with today's result, after the difficult task with which they had been entrusted."

ADRIA WINNER FRANCHITTI SWAPS CAR WITHIN SCUDERIA ECOSSE



Marino Franchitti, who won the GT2 category of the Adria race with Tim Mullen, moved from the nr 63 Scuderia Ecosse Ferrari to the team's other car, alongside Nathan Kinch, for the final round in Dubai. Andrew Kirkaldy, who has set a record number of pole positions this year, cannot compete due to other commitments, and Franchitti will therefore take his place. "I

love this track," Marino Franchitti said before the race "I don't have the rhythm of it yet. If you make a mistake, and overdrive one corner, you've had it for the next corner. But it's brilliant. It's like driving in the wet, with a dry line. If you get one wheel off, you've lost it." Unfortunately, Kinch and Franchitti developed clutch problems in the race, and struggled to finish. Nevertheless, with 28 points from just four races in the Championship, Marino finished in a good 9th overall.

CELEBRATIONS FOR VITAPHONE !

With the pressure off, having secured both the Teams and Drivers titles, Vitaphone Racing Team enjoyed the final round in Dubai, with plenty of their guests present to see the last round of the season.



Spa winner Eric van de Poele and Thomas Biagi got into the spirit for the Drivers Parade which took place before the start of the Motorcity 500. The team was able to add another podium to their impressive 2006 score, Biagi, Davies and Vosse finishing third despite 105 kg penalty weight

NATHAN RETIRES... AT 24

Nathan Kinch joined the FIA GT Championship in 2003, sharing the Lister Storm with Jamie Campbell-Walter. In 2004 and 2005 he did occasional FIA GT races with Scuderia Ecosse, while winning the British GT Championship in 2005 with the team. This year, he claimed three GT2 wins. However, at the age of just 24, Kinch has decided to retire from full-time racing. "I'm planning to step down my racing at the end of the season. I've got other commitments – time for a real job," he said. "It's been really exciting, but I'm 24 now, and it's time to do something else. I've got a few things planned, but nothing definite yet."



CHANGES FOR ZAKSPEED AND RACE ALLIANCE

The last round in Dubai saw a number of changes in the grid. Among them, Jaek Janis moved from Zakspeed to Race Alliance, while Paul Ricard pole-setter Jos Menten took his place in the Saleen S7-R. "It's my first time at the circuit, and my first time in an Aston Martin, so it's going to be a steep learning curve," the young Czech driver explained beforehand. As for Menten, he was pleased to return to the Championship. "It will be special to race with this American machine in the beautiful décor of the 'Dubai Autodrome'", said Menten, prior to his adventure in the UAE. As it turned out, both cars suffered punctures in the early stages of the race, but the Race Alliance car was less badly affected, and went on to finish fifth, while the Saleen came in 8th. This allowed Jarek Janis to overtake Sascha Bert and take third place in the GT1 Drivers Championship.



2006 : FIA GT CHAMPIONSHIP - THE CHAMPIONS



**MICHAEL BARTELS -
ANDREA BERTOLINI
GT1 DRIVERS CHAMPION**

Bartels first raced in the FIA GT Championship in 1998, in a Zakspeed Porsche 911 GT1. He returned in 2004 with his own team, and a Saleen S7. He gave the American brand its first FIA GT victory that year, then returned in 2005 with two Maserati MC12 cars. Bertolini started off in an Art Engineering Porsche. He moved to JMB in 2003, and was awarded the 'Driving Performance of the Year'. He joined the Maserati project in 2004, giving the car its first win, and then raced the MC 12 first for JMB, and then claiming the title with Vitaphone this season.



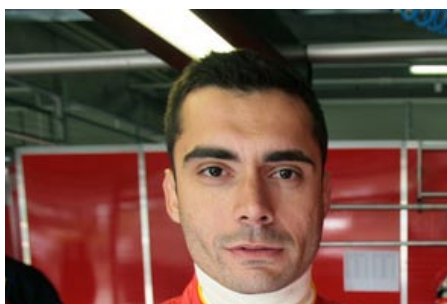
**VITAPHONE RACING TEAM
GT1 TEAMS CHAMPION**

Vitaphone Racing Team joined the FIA GT Championship in 2004, racing a Saleen S7 for Michael Bartels and Uwe Alzen. They won three races. In 2005, the team entered two Maserati MC 12 cars, won three races including the Proximus 24 Hours of Spa and claimed the 2005 GT1 Teams Championship. This year, with five victories to date, including the Royal Automobile Club Tourist Trophy and the Proximus 24 Hours of Spa, the team has retained its title, as well as claiming the GT1 Drivers title for its drivers Bartels and Bertolini.



**ASTON MARTIN - GT1
MANUFACTURERS CUP**

After Maserati claimed the inaugural Manufacturers Cup in 2005, Aston Martin took the lead in 2006. Represented by more cars than any other in the category, they nevertheless faced strong opposition. The points were accumulated over the season by Phoenix Racing, a season-long Championship contender, which put in an amazing performance in the Proximus 24 Hours of Spa and won in Dubai, Race Alliance, which claimed its first win in Mugello, and Aston Martin Racing BMS, which has claimed three podiums and scored points at each round.



**JAIME MELO
GT2 DRIVERS CHAMPION**

Jaime Melo was one of the stars of the Formula Renault Eurocup within the Super Racing Weekend platform. He moved to GT racing in 2004, and earned the distinction of winning races in both the GT1 and GT2 categories that year. In 2005, he raced for GPC Sport, claiming the best result for the Ferrari 575 Maranello, with second at Brno. This year he teamed up with Matteo Bobbi in the nr 58 AF Corse car, with which he claimed the GT2 title. The young Brazilian put in some fine performances behind the wheel of the Ferrari 430 GT2, claiming two wins. All his races in the FIA GT Championship have been with Ferrari, the 360 Modena, 575 M Maranello and 430 GT2.



**AF CORSE
GT2 TEAMS CHAMPION**

AF Corse first took part in the FIA GT Championship in late 2004, when it raced the brand-new Maserati MC12 before it received its homologation, as well as competing - and winning - the final round in Zhuhai.

The team returned in 2006, competing in both the FIA GT Championship and the FIA GT3 European Championship, and winning the GT2 title in Budapest, having placed both its cars in the points in all the races until then, including victory in the Proximus 24 Hours of Spa.

Bobbi and Melo shared the nr 58 car, while Salo and Aguas raced the nr 59; Toni Vilander replaced Bobbi for the last round in Dubai.



**FERRARI - GT2
MANUFACTURERS CUP**

Ferrari succeeds Porsche in the Manufacturers Cup, just as it has in the Teams and Drivers Championships. This year, the new 430 GT2 was fast out of the box, and all three regular teams, AF Corse, Scuderia Ecosse and JMB GruppeM, have claimed wins, while further points have been added by occasional entrants such as Edil Cris Racing Team, RSV Motorsport and GPC Sport.

The success of the Ferrari cars - which have claimed all wins bar one and nine pole positions so far - was accompanied by a numerical superiority at some races, something which had belonged exclusively to Porsche until now.

2006 : FIA GT CHAMPIONSHIP - OTHER NOTABLE PERFORMANCES



JAREK JANIS (CZE) - DRIVER PERFORMANCE OF THE YEAR GT1 & MOST POLES

23-year-old Jarek Janis claimed four overall pole positions in 2006, while no other driver has managed more than one. He also took two wins, and finished third overall in the GT1 Drivers Classification.

Despite his youth, Jarek is an old regular in the FIA GT Championship, having first raced back in 2001, when he was just 17. He has raced with Coca Cola Racing and MenX before joining Zakspeed for 2006. This year he has been one of the undoubted stars of the GT1 category, gaining a reputation for his pole positions, when he stays in the pits for much of the session, then going out and setting pole position, usually on his first flying lap. He also put in some amazing drives, especially at Dijon and Mugello. For the last race, he moved to Race Alliance, and showed how quickly he could adapt to a new car on a new circuit. "It was great to get this trophy," Jarek said afterwards. "It's true that I also got the trophy for the third place but it was fantastic to also get the award for best performance driver. I was going up for the trophy and the whole hall was applauding. It was a special feeling. The award from the organisers is confirmation that I had a really good season. I must say thanks again to both teams I worked with this year."



ANDREW KIRKALDY (GBR) - DRIVER PERFORMANCE OF THE YEAR GT2 & MOST POLES

Scuderia Ecosse set pole position at every race in the 2005 British GT Championship. This year, the team managed to repeat that feat, claiming pole at each of the ten rounds. Andrew Kirkaldy set an amazing eight poles in the nr 62 Ferrari 430 GT2. This is a new record in the FIA GT Championship, both for the total number of poles in a season, and for the number of consecutive poles - seven. The two missing poles - Brno and Dubai - went to Kirkaldy's team-mate, Tim Mullen, in the second Scuderia Ecosse car. Before 2006, the highest number of poles per season went to Christian Pescatori, with six in 2004. This amazing performance earned Andrew the title of GT2 Driver Performance of the Year. Unfortunately, as he was not in Dubai, he was not able to pick up the trophy, which Scuderia Ecosse Team Principal Stewart Roden collected on his behalf.

"Sportscar driving is all about teamwork as it's always more than a one-driver affair. The only personal thing is qualifying as it's just you versus the clock so it's good to get recognition for those performances. This year has been great, getting eight pole positions against very strong competition. On top of getting all the British GT poles last year it's fair to say I'm delighted to get this award...thank you!"



SASCHA BERT (GER) BEST 'ROOKIE' - GT1

Many of the drivers competing in the FIA GT Championship have been there for many, many years, either as regular competitors or occasional visitors. Highest placed of newcomers to the Championship this year is Sascha Bert, who finished fourth in GT1, having raced all season with Zakspeed in the nr 9 Saleen. Sascha claimed two wins, in Brno and Hungary, as well as a podium in Silverstone. Second in the GT1 rookies is Marcel Fässler, the Swiss driver who competed with Phoenix Racing in the Proximus 24 Hours of Spa, finishing 2nd overall.

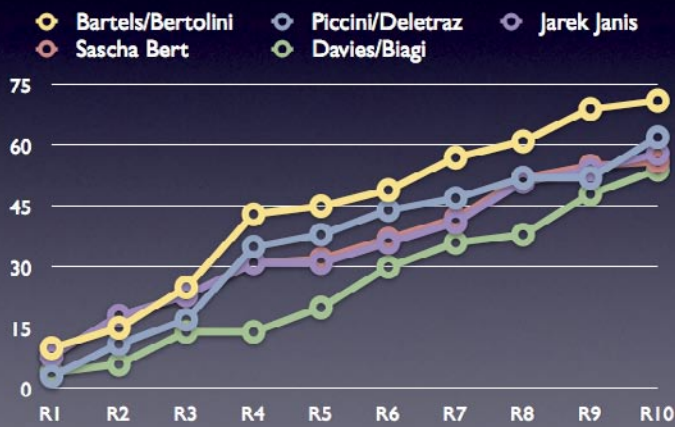


RUI AGUAS (POR) BEST 'ROOKIE' - GT2

Rui Aguas is the only driver in the top ten in GT2 never to have previously competed in the FIA GT Championship. The talented Portuguese driver was a frequent competitor in the Super Racing Weekends, as he raced in the Clio Trophy, but this is his first season in GT racing. He has put in a fine performance in the AF Corse Ferrari 430 GT2, especially in terms of winning the GT2 category in the Proximus 24 Hours of Spa, and scoring points in each of the first eight races. Second among the rookies was Chris Niarchos, driving for Scuderia Ecosse, who has combined his successful campaign in the British GT Championship with frequent outings in the FIA GT, winning the final round in Dubai

HOW THE SEASON PROGRESSED

GT1 Championship Progression



The GT1 season finished as it started, with Bartels and Bertolini in the lead. However, after round 2, Sascha Bert and Jarek Janis took the lead, only to lose it at round 3 when Vitaphone were victorious again.

The nr 1 Vitaphone Maserati MC 12 drivers continued to lead until the end. Piccini and Deletraz took second place after their impressive Spa performance, then dropped down slightly, regaining second in the final round in Dubai. Biagi and Davies made the best recovery in the end of the season, climbing up to finish just behind the Zakspeed drivers.

2nd - Andrea Piccini and Jean-Denis Deletraz

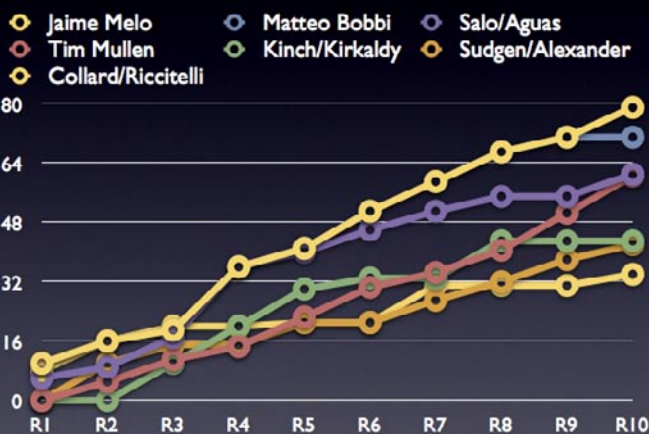


1st - Michael Bartels and Andrea Bertolini

3rd : Jarek Janis



GT2 Championship Progression



As in GT2, the Champion at the end of the season was also leading the classification after the first round at Silverstone. After Brno, however, Bobbi and Melo were tied with Collard and Riccitelli. The Porsche duo took the lead after round 3 in Oschersleben.

After Spa, and AF Corse's domination, the Ferrari team took a definitive lead. All four drivers, Salo, Aguas, Melo and Bobbi were tied in the lead, but as the season progressed, Melo and Bobbi pulled ahead, with Melo completing the final race alone to win the title.

2nd : Matteo Bobbi - AF Corse



1st - Jaime Melo - AF Corse

3rd : Mika Salo and Rui Aguas AF Corse



2006 - UNOFFICIAL 'NATIONS CUP'

In Formula One, an award is given each year to the ASN whose licence-holders have scored the most points. Although no such award exists in the FIA GT Championship, it is still interesting to see the points distribution among the drivers who scored points in 2006, in both GT1 and GT2, which also shows the great number of nationalities represented by the drivers.

Nationality	Points	Drivers	Average
ITA	338.5	9	37.61
BEL	162.5	9	18.06
GER	127	2	63.50
SUI	81	3	27.00
NED	74.5	3	24.83
CZE	74	3	24.67
AUT	68.5	3	22.83
GBR	58	4	14.50
FRA	32.5	3	10.83
POR	22.5	1	22.50
FIN	7	2	3.50
AUS	5	1	5.00

GT1 NATIONS CUP

The Italians scored the most points in 2006 in GT1, with 338.5 points accumulated by nine drivers, including 2006 Champion Andrea Bertolini, Andrea Piccini, Thomas Biagi, Fabio Babini, Fabrizio Gollin, Christian Pescatori, Andrea Montermini, Gabriele Lancieri and Matteo Malucelli.

Second place went to Belgium, also with nine drivers contributing.

However, the highest average score goes to Germany, third overall, with 63.50 points each scored by Michael Bartels and Sascha Bert.



GT2 NATIONS CUP

Great Britain scored the highest number of points in GT2, mainly thanks to the Scuderia Ecosse drivers Nathan Kinch, Andrew Kirkaldy, Tim Mullen and Marino Franchitti, as well as JMB GruppeM's Tim Sugden and Spyker Squadron's Jonny Kane.

Second place went to Italy, whose star drivers included Matteo Bobbi, second overall, and Ebimotors trio Luca Riccitelli, Luigi Moccia and Emanuele Busnelli.

Third overall, and the highest average per driver, is Brazil, whose Jaime Melo won the 2006 GT2 Drivers Championship.

There was a great variety of nationalities in GT2, with drivers of 18 nationalities scoring points, compared to 12 in GT1

Nationality	Points	Drivers	Average
GBR	245.5	10	24.6
ITA	191	10	19.10
BRA	79	1	79.00
FIN	67	2	33.50
GER	64	7	9.14
POR	61	1	61.00
SUI	48	2	24.00
FRA	36	3	12.00
AUT	35	3	11.67
NED	26	3	8.67
CAN	21.5	1	21.5
MON	17	1	17.00
BEL	12	4	3.00
SVK	6	2	3.00
NOR	4	1	4.00
ESP	4	1	4.00
DEN	3.5	1	3.50
HNK	3	1	3.00

THE END OF SEASON PARTY

The 2006 season came to a close in Dubai, with a well-attended and much enjoyed prize-giving at the Royal Mirage hotel. As well as dinner and music, the trophies were awarded to the top three in GT1 and GT2 Teams, Manufacturers and Drivers Championships, and G2 winners, by Saeed Khalfan Chairman of the Dubai Autodrome, and Stephane Ratel, Chairman of SRO, promoter of the FIA GT Championship.

Stephane Ratel gave an end-of-season speech during the event : "2006 was not the easiest of seasons, as we first had to overcome the divorce with Eurosport and the WTCC. Nevertheless, we have managed to produce a very interesting season. There were three essential points that this final race in Dubai has shown, and which give me good reason to be confident for the future.

The first is the victory of Phoenix, after a very hard-fought season. This has brought the number of victorious teams up to five, representing four different brands, proving once again the success of the balance of performance concept. The second point was seeing the victory of Chris Niarchos, a successful entrepreneur as well as talented amateur driver, which proves that our concept of introducing handicap weight for pro-pro teams gives a chance to pro-am teams, which should continue to be encouraged in the future. The third point is that even if it surprisingly took pole position, which raised some criticism from the other teams, Care Racing Development has proven, with the Ferrari 550 entered by Larbre Competition, that their new low-cost engine can be competitive over a three-hour race. That is definitely the way forward, to have engines closer to road production models, lowering the budgets of the teams.

Concerning the Dubai Autodrome, it is a circuit which means a lot to the FIA GT Championship. I first saw the drawings, with the futuristic office buildings, some years ago and thought it was just one of those projects which would never materialize. Then, watching the race today, I had a good view of that office building through the on-board cameras, and it reminded me clearly of those first impressions. It has now become reality. We really feel at home here; I first saw the sand when the preliminary work was taking place. We were the first international circuit-based series to be promoted in the United Arab Emirates and have been one of the main events at the circuit every year since.

Next year, we will make a small change, bringing the FIA GT3 European Championship to Dubai, with probably over 50 cars representing ten manufacturers. The format, with three short races, will surely be more adapted to the local audience, giving three exciting starts with two qualifying races and a final taking place in the evening, finishing with fireworks.

This year, we could really see a great increase in the public compared to last year; it has been our most successful event to date, and should it continue to grow, our objective is to be back in 2008 with GT1, GT2 and GT3 "

