

IMAGOLIVE

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SCRUTINEERING OVERTURNS PK CARSPORT WIN – VITAPHONE INHERITS AN OSCHERSLEBEN HAT-TRICK.

AF CORSE MOTOROLA VICTORIOUS FOR FIFTH RACE IN A ROW IN GT2

The sun shone on Oschersleben today, for the eighth visit of the FIA GT Championship to the Motorsport Arena, which is celebrating ten years of racing. The 30000 spectators present over the weekend, enjoyed a thrilling round of the FIA GT Championship. However, post-race scrutineering totally overturned the race result in Oschersleben today, with first the third-placed Lamborghini and then the winning Corvette being excluded from the event.



This meant that the nr 1 Vitaphone Maserati MC 12 of Bartels and Biagi inherited the win - giving the German team the Oschersleben hat-trick it had hoped to achieve before the event, winning here in 2005, 2006 and 2007. "We lost the race on the circuit, but rules are rules. From terms of pure performance we couldn't win today," Bartels said afterwards. "It is not a sweet victory. But we have now won three times in a row here, and increased Tomas' lead to eight points. This result has turned the points upside down. We also now have a Maserati one-two in the Championship, with Bertolini and Piccini behind Biagi. It might turn into one of the milestones on our defense of our titles. But we have to be fair – we were not competitive enough to beat the Corvette on the track, and I feel slightly sorry for them, as they did a good job today."



It looked as if Anthony Kumpen and Bert Longin had completed a perfect weekend for PK Carsport, winning the fifth round of the 2007 FIA GT Championship and taking the lead of the Championship before their home race, the Total 24 Hours of Spa.

However, the dream was only to last a matter of hours, as the car failed post-race scrutineering due to exceeding the permitted size of the fuel tank. The third-placed car, the All-Inkl.com Lamborghini Murciélago of local hero Stefan Mücke and Christophe Bouchut, was also excluded, due to the non-conformity of the gear-box.

This promoted the nr 11 Scuderia Playteam Sarafree Maserati, originally fourth, to second place for Bertolini and Piccini. "I would prefer to get second on the track," Bertolini said. "But after a difficult weekend for us, this is a good result coming into Spa, which is a race where anything can happen." Jamie Davies and Fabio Babini, in the nr 23 Aston Martin Racing BMS DBR9, inherited third – their best result of the season. Fourth went to Scuderia Playteam duo Alessandro Pier Guidi and Giambattista Giannoccaro. Menten and Kox scored their first points of the season with a fifth-place finish, while the nr 22 Aston Martin Racing BMS car also moved into the points for the first time, with three for Ferdinando Monfardini and his team-mate for this round, GT3 front-runner Diego Alessi.

Joe Macari and Ben Aucott, in the nr 16 JMB Maserati MC 12, won the Citation Cup to take the lead in the classification, with three-times winner Tom Cloet being absent, and also claimed their first FIA GT points. "I'm delighted with the result," Macari said. "We're in the lead and a little more comfortable now. We keep on coming second and now we've finally won a race. I'm very happy with the way everything went. The car was excellent, the team was first class, everything just went well today."



The final point went to Vitaphone's Montanari and Ramos, who originally finished 15th after a long pit stop.

BIAGI IN COMMAND IN GT1

The Oschersleben result, with the exclusion of two of the leading cars and the non-finish of title contenders Jetalliance and Carsport Holland, has significantly rearranged the GT1 classification. Biagi now has an eight-point lead, ahead of Scuderia Playteam Maserati duo Bertolini and Piccini, with Kumpen, Longin, Wendlinger, Sharp, Montanari and Ramos all tied in third place on 20 points. In the Teams classification, Vitaphone has a 22 point lead over Scuderia Playteam Sarafree, with Jetalliance and All-Inkl.com Racing in third.

FIVE IN A ROW FOR AF CORSE MOTOROLA

For the second race in a row, Stéphane Ortelli and Gianmaria Bruni, in the nr 51 AF Corse Motorola Ferrari 430 GT2, were victorious, claiming full points and slightly closing the gap on their team-mates Dirk Müller and Toni Vilander. The crew of the nr 50 finished off the podium for the first time this season, having suffered a power-steering failure in their Ferrari 430 GT2, which meant a longer pit stop followed by hard work for the two drivers, coping with the car without the power steering. However, five points for fourth place means that they have retained a strong lead in the GT2 classification, while AF Corse Motorola continues to dominate the Teams classification, having a 40 point lead over second-placed teams, Scuderia Ecosse and Racing Team Edil Cris.



Bruni and Ortelli were delighted with their win. "I think this is more of a Ferrari track than a Porsche track and we had the right set up for these conditions," Ortelli commented. "Michelin and AF Corse have found the best compromise on the strategy. Bruni did a fantastic job at the end of the race, scoring points for us both, which is the main focus of this part of the year. Spa will also be important, points-wise, and now we are completely focused on that race."

BMS SCUDERIA ITALIA SECOND IN GT2

Emmanuel Collard and Matteo Malucelli equaled their best result of the season with second place today in the nr 97 BMS Scuderia Italia Porsche 997 GT2. After problems in qualifying, they put in a steady performance, leading the race before their final pit-stop, but rejoining behind the nr 51 Ferrari 430 GT2. An intense and thrilling battle followed between the BMS Porsche and the nr 62 Scuderia Ecosse Ferrari 430 GT2, with Collard and Mullen battling it out until the end. However, Collard kept the advantage to cross the line in second place. "I fought hard with Tim at the end, but he was very fair," Collard said. "We're not the fastest guys but we're consistent, running the same lap times, which I think was really important for this race."

Mullen and Janis were happy with third, however, pleased with the progress shown by their car since the intensive Pirelli tests after Monza. This was also Jarek's 24th birthday, so a podium finish was a good result for the young Czech driver. "For us, we've had a pretty disastrous year so far, so I think we've made a big step forward this weekend. We worked hard with Pirelli; we stayed on at Monza for two days and seemed to find a tyre that was certainly much better for our car and that lasted much better in the races. I'd like to thank them for working hard, and the team as well. It was really great fun at the end with Emmanuel, we battled hard. Jarek did a great job and it's been great driving with him again. Unfortunately when he came in to pit, we dropped a wheel-nut and we lost 18 seconds because of it. But I'm still so happy that we've made it this far this weekend."

With the nr 50 AF Corse Motorola fourth, the nr 52 Racing Team Edil Cris Ferrari was fifth, and the nr 63 Scuderia Ecosse Ferrari of pole-man Kirkaldy and Chris Niarchos sixth. Edwards and Machitski were seventh in the nr 99 Tech9 Motorsport Porsche, after leading the race for quite a time at the start. The final point went to Zani and Busnelli in the nr 74 Ebimotors Porsche, despite having to make a long stop to repair their radiator.

NEXT TIME...

The next race is the Total 24 Hours of Spa, on July 28th- 29th.

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