



ROUNDS 5 & 6 RACE REPORT

Weather: rainy, with a wet track.

Attendance: 28,000 over the three days, 18,000 on Sunday

ONE VICTORY APIECE FOR SEAT AND CHEVROLET

On a rainy and cold day, SEAT and Chevrolet shared the honours on the first visit of the FIA World Touring Car Championship to Brands Hatch.

Despite the weather, a good crowd came to the racetrack to attend rounds 5 and 6 that were both run on soaked asphalt.

The first race was decided at the start, when pole sitter Rickard Rydell nearly stalled his engine, leaving his team-mate Yvan Muller to jump into the lead. The Frenchman led the whole distance, while James Thompson, Peter Terting, Robert Huff and Rydell were fighting behind him. Eventually the German youngster claimed second position from Thompson and Huff.

In the second race Andy Priaux took an early lead, but he then committed one of his rare mistakes, handing command to Alain Menu. The Swiss driver put in a superb performance, resisting the pressure from Rydell and Thompson and giving Chevrolet their first win since they joined WTCC.

These results enabled Yvan Muller and SEAT to get back into the lead of both the Drivers' and Manufacturers' championships.

The WTCC Race of UK was not a lucky one for BMW and Alfa Romeo. Dirk Müller and Andy Priaux collected a few points apiece for the German manufacturer, while Gianni Morbidelli was the only Alfa driver to score (7th in Race 2).

Tom Coronel grabbed another success in the Independents' Trophy, while JAS Motorsport's Scotsman Ryan Sharp came home first in the second race.

The FIA WTCC will resume at Oschersleben, Germany, on June 3 and 4.

RACE 1: YVAN MULLER CLAIMS FIRST WIN

SEAT secured a 1-2-3 finish with Frenchman Yvan Muller taking the chequered flag ahead of team-mates Peter Terting and James Thompson. Robert Huff of Chevrolet had a podium finish in his sights on the last lap but despite being nose to tail with Thompson, he was unable to pass and settled for 4th.

Rickard Rydell, had a bad start in his SEAT León and had dropped from pole to 3rd after the first corner, the Swede eventually finished 5th. Yvan Muller however, shot off the line and led the field from the first corner onwards to claim his first WTCC victory. The SEAT drivers did give the team cause for concern however when on lap 13 Terting touched Thompson and then went through on the inside line for 2nd.



While the SEATs were battling for the top spots, the BMWs driven by Andy Priaulx and Dirk Müller were fighting for 8th. Müller got the better start and led Priaulx but had to defend extremely hard. Lap 10 saw the German being overtaken by Priaulx who then proceeded to break away ensuring pole for Race 2. Dirk's team-mate Jörg Müller had a premature end to his race when he came off at Westfield Bend, also on lap 10.

Gianni Morbidelli had the best result of the N.technology team by finishing 12th overall in his Alfa Romeo 156. His team-mate Tavano didn't finish the race while Farfus had to pit on lap 9.

Emmet O'Brien of Wiechers Sport was on top form and even led the independent race after spectacularly overtaking Tom Coronel on the inside of Druids. His run did not last however as on the very next lap he went off at Stirling's. This left Coronel to claim the win with his GR Asia team-mate Maurizio Ceresoli in second place.

RACE 2 - VICTORY FOR MENU AND CHEVROLET

Alain Menu was welcomed back to the pits as a hero by the Chevrolet garage at the end of Race 2 as he achieved the team's first race victory on an extremely wet Brands Hatch circuit. Rickard Rydell finished 2nd on the podium with fellow SEAT driver James Thompson obtaining his second 3rd place result of the day.

Andy Priaulx had a good start from pole but his dreams of a race win were dashed on lap 6. A safety car was issued for 3 laps while the car of Rob Huff was recovered from the gravel trap at Druids, but on the restart Priaulx made a mistake and ran wide into the gravel at Paddock Hill. The Briton managed to keep control of his BMW 320si and rejoined 11th. He eventually crossed the line 8th, salvaging a single championship point but had to defend hard to keep Alex Zanardi at bay. Dirk Müller of BMW Team Germany and new championship leader Yvan Muller were fighting for 5th but Yvan squeezed through on lap 9.

The next lap saw two spins. The first to suffer was BMW Team Italy-Spain man, Marcel Costa, who was lying 7th, lost control of his car at the soaked Surtees corner. Moments later Pierre-Yves Corthals' fight was over when he went off at Druids and re-joined at the back. Corthals team-mate, Ryan Sharp had a better result as he won the independents race, 13th overall, ahead of Tom Coronel.

Gianni Morbidelli again headed the Alfa pack and managed to score points with a 7th position finish. The Italian had Dirk Müller and 6th place in his sight but couldn't make a successful move. His team-mates Farfus and Tavano crossed the line 11th and 16th.