

IMAGOLIVE

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Oggetto: FIA GT CHAMPIONSHIP - ROUND 9 NOGARO - RACE REPORT



For the penultimate round of the season, the FIA GT Championship was in Nogaro, in the south of France, at the 3.636 km Paul Armagnac circuit. The magnificent new buildings hosted an incredibly close round of the Championship, which has further closed up the points in both the GT1 and GT2 Drivers classifications, and set the scene for a fascinating finale in Zolder in three weeks time.

CARSPORT HOLLAND WINS – VITAPHONE CLAIMS THE TEAMS TITLE

Consistency appeared to be the watchword in Nogaro today, with the eventual winners, the nr 5 Carsport Holland Corvette C6-R, starting tenth on the grid but making steady progress up the field, taking the lead towards the end of the first hour, and keeping the advantage until the chequered flag. With their second win of the season, Hezemans and Deletraz have kept the battle alive until the final round, five points behind Biagi, and tied with the Scuderia Playteam Sarafree drivers Bertolini and Piccini and the Vitaphone pairing of Montanari and Ramos. "For the whole race the car was really consistent and fantastic to drive. Since this morning in the warm-up I felt we had a good car for the race," Deletraz explained. "After Mike's fantastic job at the beginning, I just had to hold on to the lead and we won. It's nice as the title is still open for the last race of the Championship, with five cars able to fight, and we promise to do our best to try to win again, and to try to catch the number one! "



They were followed across the line by the two Vitaphone Racing Team Maserati MC 12 cars, securing the 2007 GT1 Teams Championship for the German team - its third consecutive victory. Biagi and Bartels finished second, with Montanari and Ramos third. "It was an interesting race and the start was unbelievable," Bartels said. "I am very happy to win the Team Championship, and to win the eight points here, which was very important after the last two races, especially for Thomas to fight for the Championship. Now we are in a good position, but as we know from the last few races, you never know in this Championship what can happen. But with 30 kg in the car and these Michelin tyres I think we can be very optimistic."

Fourth went to the nr 23 Aston Martin Racing BMS DBR9 of Babini and Davies, with Wendlinger and Sharp fifth in the Jetalliance Aston Martin DBR9, which had 70 kg in Nogaro today. "We had to change our tyres twice, while all the cars which finished ahead of us only changed once," Ryan Sharp explained afterwards. "Without that, I think we could have finished second. Also, we had 70 kg of balance ..."

Fifth and sixth places went to the two Scuderia Playteam Sarafree Maserati MC 12 cars, with Bertolini and Piccini fifth to maintain their title hopes – and strength their teams position as second in the GT1 Teams Championship. The final point went to the PK Carsport Corvette C5R of Kumpen and Longin. They finished ahead of the nr 36 Jetalliance Aston Martin of Lechner and Lichtner-Hoyer, which made a great start and led until lap 16, when Biagi took the advantage. Monfardini and Gounon were tenth in the nr 22 Aston Martin DBR9.

BATTLE FOR THE TITLE TO GO ON TO ZOLDER



The Nogaro result has set up an amazing battle for the final round : Vitaphone's Thomas Biagi still leads with 55 points, but a grand total of six drivers - Hezemans, Deletraz, Piccini, Bertolini, Montanari and Ramos - tied on 50 points in second place, with Sharp and Wendlinger still in with a mathematical chance on 47. Zolder is going to be interesting... especially where the handicap weights are concerned. The nr 5 Corvette and the nr 1 Maserati will both be heavier after today's results; the nr 2 Maserati will be up to 60 kg.

However, the nr 33 Aston Martin will lose some of its weight, as will the nr 11 Scuderia Playteam Maserati MC 12. Although Vitaphone has claimed the Teams Championship, there is still a battle for second and third. Scuderia Playteam Sarafree has 62 points, with both Jetalliance and Team Carsport Holland on 50.

AF CORSE MOTOROLA CLAIM THEIR EIGHTH WIN OF THE SEASON

In the GT2 category, victory in Nogaro for AF Corse Motorola's nr 51 Ferrari 430 GT2 of Stephane Ortelli and Gianmaria Bruni gave the Italian team its eighth win of the season. However, with their sister car, the nr 50 of Championship leaders Müller and Vilander



stopping with mechanical problems, and the fine second-place finish of BMS Scuderia Italia and their Porsche 997 GT3 RSR of Collard and Malucelli, the Championship battle is closer than ever and will go on to Zolder. Bruni started from pole, but was behind his team-mate Dirk Müller in the early stages of the race. A stop and go penalty for not restarting the car on its own battery further delayed them. But when the nr 50 Ferrari came to a halt, the nr 51 was ready to take over the command. "It was a very good race," Bruni said, "All three of us are very close now, and we'll be going to the last race to fight again in Zolder. It was a fantastic day for us today, but we'll have to see what happens in three weeks time."

Second today, Collard and Malucelli, in the nr 97 BMS Scuderia Italia Porsche 997 GT3 RSR are still very much in contention for the title. "At the beginning we were not happy with the car but we worked a lot on the car, and it was very consistent, especially thanks to Pirelli, as we were able to do a double stint easily," Collard explained, adding : "The last race will be very interesting, especially if it is raining."

Third in Nogaro went to Scuderia Ecosse and the nr 63 car of Robert Bell and Andrew Kirkaldy. The car had started from the pit lane after an engine change, but made steady progress throughout the race. "We were not the quickest on the track but we were consistent, keeping the lap times up, passing cars when we had the opportunity," Kirkaldy explained. The team's second car, driven by Tim Mullen and Darren Turner, was fourth, moving the team ahead of Racing Team Edil Cris into third place in the Teams' Championship, just 3.5 points behind second-placed BMS Scuderia Italia.

The two Racing Team Edil Cris Ferrari 430 GT2 cars finished in the points, with Ruberti and Mediani fifth while Cressoni and Rugolo were eighth. Pompidou and Zani, in the nr 74 Ebimotors Porsche, were originally seventh, but they gained a place after a time penalty was awarded to the nr 59 Advanced Engineering Ferrari 430 GT2, for not respecting the minimum driving time. This happened after a tyre problem forced the nr 59 to pit a lap early, adding one minute and 17 seconds to their time, and losing a position.

SO VERY CLOSE FOR ZOLDER

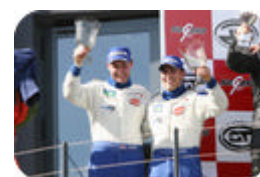


Heading for Zolder, Müller and Vilander have 63 points, Bruni and Ortelli have 62 – and Collard and Malucelli 59. However, having won with the maximum penalty weight, Bruni and Ortelli will have the super maximum of 75 kg, while Müller and Vilander's weight goes down to 30 kg. Collard and Malucelli, second today, will be back up to 50 kg - all three cars also carrying an additional 28 kg penalty for two professional drivers...Add the factor of the weather, and anything could happen...

In the Teams Championship, AF Corse Motorola moved out of reach after Brno. However, the next three teams are only separated by six and a half points : BMS Scuderia Italia have 59 points, Scuderia Ecosse 55.5 and Racing Team Edil Cris 52.5.

CITATION VICTORY GOES TO BEN AUCOTT

The Citation Cup victory today went to Ben Aucott and Stéphane Daoudi in the nr 16 JMB Racing Maserati MC 12, ahead of the nr 14 Solution F Ferrari of François Jakubowski and Steve Zacchia. Third went to Larbre Competition and the nr 6 Ferrari 550 Maranello of Jean-Yves Adam and Philippe Dumas. Third across the line, FIA GT newcomer Wilfried Merafina and Yvan Lebon in the SRT Corvette C5R lost a place after a time penalty for pit lane speed infringements.



Today's victory confirmed Ben Aucott as the winner of the inaugural Citation Cup. "I am very happy," Aucott said. My team-mate made a flying start so we had a really good race It's fantastic to win the Citation Cup. It's my first title. We'll have to see what we can do in Zolder to finish off the season."

BELGIAN RACING LOOKS FORWARD TO THEIR HOME ROUND



The G2 category victory went to the nr 101 Belgian Racing Gillet Vertigo, despite a problem with their rear extractor early in the race. Heading for their home race in Zolder, the car is looking good. "Renaud did the start, and he had to come in after a couple of laps," Bas Leinders explained. "But we couldn't put the extractor back right away, so I did my stint with the rear sliding about. It was very hard, the inside of the car was very hot. Then I came in, we put it back on, and Renaud finished off the race very well. In the end we are happy to get

another G2 win, and we're looking forward to Zolder !" They finished ahead of the Red Racing Chrysler Viper, in the

hands of Carcone, Prignaud and Avenel, which was also competing in the Citation Cup.

The final round of the 2007 season will take at the Belgian track of Zolder, on October 21st, alongside the national Belcar and BTCS Championships. With both main FIA GT Drivers titles still to be decided, it should be a very interesting and action-packed weekend.

Apologies if you receive this report twice. Due to internet problems, it is being re-sent.