



## **ROUNDS 9 & 10 RACE REPORT**

*Weather:* in the early morning a thick fog delayed the warm-up by 15 minutes; later the sky cleared and the weather was sunny and dry.

*Attendance:* 34,000 over the weekend.

### **ANDY PRIAULX IS BACK ON SOLO LEAD**

SEAT and BMW won a race apiece on the first visit paid by the FIA World Touring Car Championship to Brazil. A successful event that gathered 34,000 spectators on the grandstands of the Curitiba racetrack.

The first race was enlivened by the fight between Alfa Romeo local boy Augusto Farfus and SEAT Sport men Jordi Gené and Peter Terting. Starting from the pole, Farfus managed to maintain the lead for half of the distance in front of his home crowd, but finally Gené and Terting succeeded in overtaking him, giving SEAT a 1-2 finish.

Race 2 was full of drama. Andy Priaulx led all the way from the green light to the chequered flag, but he was forced to re-build his lead twice after two safety car periods. Behind him there was a breathtaking fight for the second position, with a number of clashes that involved Rydell, Gené and Farfus. Finally Gianni Morbidelli and his Alfa Romeo managed to claim second place beating Alessandro Zanardi by inches.

With these results, Andy Priaulx re-gained a solo lead in the Drivers' Championship, with a 3-point margin ahead of James Thompson, while Gabriele Tarquini is third, one further point adrift.

The SEAT vs BMW fight is also very close in the Manufacturers' Championship, with the Spanish make leading by one mere point.

The FIA WTCC will resume in Puebla-Amozoc, Mexico on July 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **RACE 1 – GENÉ BEATS FARFUS**

The dream of winning on home soil was not to come true for Farfus in Race 1 but all was not lost as he crossed the line 3<sup>rd</sup> securing a place on the podium. The victor of the race was Jordi Gené for SEAT Sport and Peter Terting passed the chequered flag in second position.

Farfus and Gené both got a great start from the front row. The same could not be said for GR Asia driver, Ceresoli however, as his car ended up along the wall of the start straight. Lucas Molo who was making his WTCC debut also had troubles on the first lap and after spinning, his car was stranded on the track which resulted in the safety car being dispatched for two laps.



At the re-start, Farfus got away brilliantly. Further down the field, Morbidelli made a move on the inside of Priaux for 7<sup>th</sup>. They finished in these positions and therefore Priaux began Race 2 from pole.

On lap 6 Gené was clearly closing on the lead man and reduced the gap to just 0.198 of a second over the following three laps. It was on lap 10 that Farfus and Gené came nose to tail. The Spaniard didn't let the opportunity go to waste; squeezing through shortly followed by Terting.

Robert Huff got the best result out of the three Chevrolet drivers by finishing 18<sup>th</sup> overall. Ryan Sharp claimed the win from the independent category and crossed the line 12<sup>th</sup> beating Tom Coronel and Luca Rangoni by inches

Zanardi from BMW Italy-Spain had a spectacular race. Despite starting from 26<sup>th</sup> due to an accident in qualifying, he finished 10<sup>th</sup> after working his way through the pack.

## **RACE 2 – PRIAULX WINS EVENTFUL RACE**

Andy Priaux achieved his fourth race win of the season after a lights-to-flag lead of a race which was filled with drama. Gianni Morbidelli from Alfa Romeo finished 2<sup>nd</sup> followed by Alessandro Zanardi.

The safety car was required twice during the race, which was eventually red flagged with one lap remaining. On lap 6 Rangoni of Proteam Motorsport spun and ended up in the gravel at turn 4 which meant safety car conditions for one lap. On the restart Yvan Muller and Alain Menu were battling for 9<sup>th</sup> position.

Lap 9 saw Zanardi overtake Thompson's SEAT for 3<sup>rd</sup> position. On the same lap the incident which caused the deployment of the safety car for the second time occurred. Emmet O'Brien went wide at the turn at the exit of Curva da Vitória and crashed heavily into the tyre wall before spinning onto the track. The safety car was out for three laps and the field forced to drive through the pit straight before the racing action could begin once again. It was short lived however because in an exact replica of the crash that had just occurred, Alain Menu suffered the same fate. Again, the car was stranded in a dangerous place and this time the race was red flagged.

Due to regulations, when the race finishes under red flag conditions the final results are taken from the penultimate lap before the flag was issued. Therefore in this case the results were taken from lap 14 in which Menu was 10<sup>th</sup>. His Chevrolet team-mate Robert Huff finished in the final point scoring position of 8<sup>th</sup>. Nicola Larini did not start the race due to an engine failure.

James Thompson was the best SEAT finisher in 4<sup>th</sup> place while Tarquini and Terting occupied 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> respectively. Yvan Muller finished a disappointing weekend 13<sup>th</sup> and Gené 14<sup>th</sup> after being involved in an incident with a BMW on lap 5 which forced him wide. The sixth SEAT driver, Rickard Rydell, collided with Farfus in lap 4 which resulted in both parties unable to finish the race.

The Independents' trophy battle is hotting up and Tom Coronel and Ryan Sharp were fighting for maximum points. It was Coronel who took the win and 11<sup>th</sup> position overall but Sharp was literally right behind in 12<sup>th</sup>. Sharp's team-mate Giovanardi was unable to take part in the race due to engine problems.