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RACE WIN FOR JETALLIANCE – GT1 TITLE FOR VITAPHONE’S BIAGI. GT2 WIN AND TITLE FOR AF CORSE MOTOROLA’S MÜLLER AND VILANDER



For the final race of the 2007 season the FIA GT Championship was in Zolder for a title showdown that saw nine drivers in contention for the overall GT1 title and six drivers battling for GT2 honours. Karl Wendlinger and Ryan Sharp knew they had an outside chance of the title and maximised the performance of their Jetalliance Racing Aston Martin DBR9 to put themselves in the best position by the end of the final weekend. However it wasn't enough as Thomas Biagi and Michael Bartels finished on the podium to secure Biagi's second FIA

GT Championship title.

POLE TO FLAG VICTORY FOR JETALLIANCE – BIAGI TAKES THE TITLE

There was no stopping Karl Wendlinger, who started the 2-hour race from pole position and made the most of this advantage at the start to move ahead of the rest of the field. Robert Lechner, in the nr36 Jetalliance Racing Aston Martin DBR9 moved up to second place, after a bad start by Alessandro Pier Guido dropped the Scuderia Playteam Sarafree Maserati MC12 from the front row down to 4th. Another championship contender who lost out at the start was Mike Hezemans in the nr5 Team Carsport Holland Corvette Z06, finishing the opening lap in 8th.



Lechner followed the lead car for seven laps until a spin at the first corner dropped him down the order. Pier Guidi fought back, setting the fastest lap of the race on lap 4. The Italian passed Anthony Kumpen in the nr4 PKRacing Corvette C5R and then was closing in on the leader when he clashed with the nr23 Aston Martin BMS Aston Martin DBR9 of Jamie Davies, who was struggling with a gear selection problem. Both cars got back to the pits to retire the Aston with severe rear end damage and the Maserati with broken suspension. This left Wendlinger over eight seconds ahead of Kumpen and Thomas Biagi in the nr1 Vitaphone Racing Team Maserati MC12.

The pitstops and the change of drivers didn't alter the order much as Ryan Sharp built on the lead Wendlinger had given him. When the drivers swapped back for the final time this year it was still Wendlinger out in front. By the end of the race the Austrian had built up a comfortable 30-second lead over Kumpen, who had Biagi closing in on his Corvette as the race entered the final few minutes. Kumpen held on to second but Biagi knew that third was good enough to secure the 2007 title and the Maserati took the chequered flag just 0.681second behind the Corvette.

Their win today propelled Wendlinger and Sharp up into joint second in the Drivers Classification, with Hezemans and Deletraz third. "Pole position, the race win – that's all you can ask for on a single race weekend," Karl Wendlinger commented. "We were in complete control of the field, we basically never ran the risk of losing the race. The car was very fast and ran without a hitch – like it virtually did almost the whole season long, so thanks to the entire team as well. The joy at finishing second certainly outweighs the feeling of sorrow for the lost title."



Thomas Biagi commented : "This is a special result, as for an Italian driver I have now won two Championships - one with a Ferrari in 2003, and now with a Maserati. I was confident because since the beginning of the season the Maserati, the Michelin tyres and the Vitaphone Racing Team have always been very competitive and starting from 6th was not a problem. In the race the car was very consistent, with very good pace. That race was the hardest of my career because I have never arrived at the end of a championship with so

many drivers fighting so closely. It is a dream to be here but it is a shame that Michael Bartels is not on the same points as I have."

WIN NUMBER SIX SECURES GT2 TITLE FOR MULLER AND VILANDER

With the nr 62 Scuderia Ecosse Ferrari 430 of Tim Mullen at the back of the field for failing the post qualifying ride height test, the two AF Corse Motorola Ferrari's of Dirk Müller and Gianmaria Bruni were at the front of the GT2. With both cars separated by just one point in the GT2 Drivers classification, an exciting race to the flag looked likely. However it didn't work out that way, with Bruni spinning off on the opening lap, rejoining at the back of the field in 24th place.



This left Müller out in front with the nr63 Scuderia Ecosse Ferrari of Andrew Kirkaldy as his nearest rival. Müller pulled out a lead over the GT2 field before handing over to Toni Vilander who drove a good middle part of the race before handing back to Müller to bring the car home and to the GT2 title.

Second place went to nr74 Ebimotors Porsche 997 GT3 RSR of Marcello Zani and Xavier Pompidou, the pairing's first podium finish of the 2007 season. Pompidou stayed out for a long middle stint, leading the GT2 class for the later part of the race but due to a broken radio he didn't know when to come in to the pits to hand over the car to Zani. He came in just three laps from the flag and Zani drove the car to take the chequered flag 17 seconds behind the lead car. Maurizio Mediani and Rui Aguas also scored their first podium of the year after starting from 8th on the GT2 grid in the nr59 Advanced Engineering Ferrari 430 GT2. Championship hopefuls Emmanuel Collard and Matteo Malucelli in the nr97 BMS Scuderia Italia Porsche 997 GT3 RSR finished in 4th and one place ahead of the recovering nr51 AF Corse Motorola Ferrari 430 GT2 of Gianmaria Bruni and Stéphane Ortelli, but neither car ever threatened the dominance of the new 2007 GT2 Champions during the 2-hour race.

Dirk Müller said: "The victory came just after the start because I already had a 3-second gap and when I looked behind my mirror was empty, something must have happened. From that point on it was good, I was able to control the pace, I didn't push too much to protect the tyres. Everything was running well, the car was performing well and thanks to AF Corse for giving Toni and I a very good car. Winning this championship means a lot to me, to Toni and to the team. For me it is a long time since I have won a championship and it feels really good."

Toni Vilander added: "After the disappointment in Nogaro I couldn't really relax. Mentally it was quite difficult, the championship was in our hands and we needed to be quick but at the same time to avoid mistakes. These six wins have been the highlight of my year and I'm really happy to leave here as champion."

CITATION CUP WINNER CLAIMS FINAL RACE OF 2007



2007 Citation Cup champion Ben Aucott finished off his season with another win with Stephane Daoudi in the nr16 JMB Racing Maserati MC12. An early excursion on to the grass early in the race put Aucott behind the Selleslagh Racing Team Corvette C5R of Maxime Soulet. An early stop handed the Maserati to Daoudi and the French driver pushed the car further up the field in a long middle stint before handing back to his British co-driver ahead of their rivals. At the flag Aucott was just 6.2 seconds in front of Soulet but was

delighted to win another race on the back of his Cup-winning performance at Nogaro.

BELGIAN RACING TAKE CHEQUERED FLAG ON HOME SOIL

The G2 class entry of Bas Leinders and Renaud Kuppens in the nr101 Belgian Racing Gillet Vertigo finished a difficult weekend that saw them make an engine change after free practice, on a high note by finishing 20th overall at Zolder in front of their home crowd. The new engine was down on power by 50hp but Leinders and Kuppens drove a conservative race to get the Gillet to the chequered flag.



The results remain provisional pending engine checks on the nr 1 and nr 50 cars, and pending the results of anti-doping tests.

This is a resend. My apologies if you have received this twice.

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