



FIA WTCC NEWSLETTER

36 - 13 October 2006

NINE MEN IN THE TITLE FIGHT

Two more races and the 2006 FIA World Touring Car Championship will crown its champions. With 18 rounds already in the archives, the series is now heading to Macau for the "grand finale".

The fight for the Drivers' Championship will be remembered in the motorsport annals, as never before an FIA World Championship arrived at the last meeting with nine drivers still involved in the title fight – and covered by 12 points with 20 at stake.

Alfa Romeo's Augusto Farfus is the new leader after Valencia with 60 points, only one ahead of BMW fellow drivers Andy Priaulx (the reigning champion) and Jörg Müller. Another BMW man, Dirk Müller is placed 6th, 7 points off the lead. SEAT's hopes rely on a quintet formed by Gabriele Tarquini (4th with a gap of 3 points), Rickard Rydell (5th, 3 points behind Tarquini), James Thompson (7th with 49 points) and the duo Yvan Muller/Peter Terting (tied in 8th place with 48).

In the Manufacturers Championship, BMW edge SEAT by 10 points.

The two final races on the streets of the infamous Guia track will definitely be not advisable for the weak-hearted.

ANDRÉ COUTO TO JOIN SEAT SPORT IN MACAU

The SEAT Sport team will run a seventh SEAT León for the final pair of races in the FIA World Touring Car Championship. Joining the Spanish team's six regular drivers will be Macau resident André Couto. The 29 year old won the Macau F3 Grand Prix in 2000 and was leading the Macau WTCC race last year at the wheel of an Alfa Romeo when he retired with mechanical problems. Couto's inclusion in the SEAT Sport Squad for his home races underlines the team's determination to secure both the 2006 Drivers' and Manufacturers' WTCC titles.

"I'm very happy for this opportunity to join SEAT Sport in the Macau WTCC races. This event is very 'big' for me but I know it is also very important for SEAT. I know the track so well and I'm very confident I can do a good job to help SEAT Sport to win the WTCC titles," commented Couto.

JAN MAGNUSSEN IN MACAU WITH BMW UK

After André Couto the Guia Race of Macau will see another champion joining the WTCC field for the 'grand finale'.

BMW announced today that former Formula 1 star Jan Magnussen will be teaming with Andy Priaulx at BMW Team UK. *"I'm really happy to be a part of the WTCC season highlight with BMW,"* said Magnussen. *"This series is amazingly exciting and the field could hardly be any closer. I hope to be able to do my share in BMW's mission to defend both titles."*

Over the past years, the 33 year old Dane has established himself as an expert in touring cars and long-distance races. He claimed victories in the Le Mans 24 Hours, the Sebring 12 Hours and the American Le Mans Series. A winner of the Danish Touring Car Championship for Peugeot in 2003, this weekend – in a BMW 320si run by Den Blå Avis Fleggaard Racing – Magnussen has the chance to clinch the national crown again. He is facing the DTC final six points behind his BMW fellow driver Casper Elgaard.

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CORONEL IS KING OF THE INDEPENDENTS

Mission accomplished. Tom Coronel and GR Asia have clinched the WTCC Yokohama Independents' Trophy at the end of the first race in Valencia. This result is a well deserved reward to the Dutch driver and the team directed by Paul Ridgway, whose SEAT Holland-backed León has become more and more competitive race after race.

From the moment he switched to the new car (he had driven a Toledo Cupra until Magny-Cours), Coronel was consistently fighting for the overall points and on a couple of occasions he nearly claimed a podium. In Valencia's first race Coronel – together with other drivers – was involved in the collision that put Gabriele Tarquini out of contention. However, after having viewed the films of the accident, the Stewards judged it as a normal racing incident and exonerated Coronel from any responsibilities.

"I managed to win the Independents' trophy already in 2004, but that was a European title, now I also have a world title!" said Coronel.

MENU DROPPED TEN POSITIONS IN MACAU

Chevrolet's Alain Menu will be dropped ten positions on the grid for Race 1 in Macau. The penalty is a consequence of an incident that involved the Swiss driver and Dirk Müller last Sunday, during the deceleration lap of the second race at Valencia. The Stewards judged Menu responsible of causing an avoidable collision and imposed a euro 5,000 fine. However, because he had received a suspended penalty of ten grid positions due to a previous collision (with Rangoni at Istanbul), he will be dropped in Macau. The penalty will be applied to Menu's results in the qualifying session.

Two other drivers received a ten grid position penalty: Alessandro Zanardi, for improving his lap time during the warm up session while yellow flags were deployed, and Andy Priaulx, for a colliding with Tarquini at the start of Race 1. Their sanctions remain suspended and will only be applied if the drivers commit the same infringement again.

MEDIA ACCREDITATION FOR THE TENTH MEETING

Media accreditation for rounds 19 and 20 of the 2006 FIA World Touring Car Championship that will take place at Macau, 16th / 19th November are now open.

IMPORTANT: The deadline to apply for media credentials is Friday, 20 October.

Accreditation Procedure and Accreditation Form may be downloaded from the websites www.fia.com and www.fiawtcc.com.

- **International Press** must send applications to:
Fabio Ravaioli – FIA WTCC Media Delegate
tel +39 06 39729497, fax +39 06 39729470, email: media@fiawtcc.com
- **Macau, Hong Kong and Chinese media, including TV and Radio** must apply on line at: http://gp.macau.grandprix.gov.mo/mgpc/public_html/gp53/en/mediareg/
- **International TV and Radio** must send applications to:
Julien Boinet – Eurosport
tel +33 1 40938213, fax +33 1 40938169; email: jboinet@eurosport.com

COUNTDOWN: - 37 DAYS



to the 2006 FIA WTCC Guia Race of Macau – 17th/19th November, in Macau
presented by Sociedade de Jogos de Macau