



## **ROUNDS 19 & 20 RACE REPORT**

*Weather:* partly sunny, with a dry track.

### **ANDY PRIAULX AND BMW ARE WORLD CHAMPIONS AGAIN**

The 2006 FIA World Touring Car Championship came to an end at Macau with two races full of drama in front of fully packed grandstands. Both Andy Priaulx and BMW retained their world titles in the Drivers' and Manufacturers' Championships respectively.

On the infamous Guia track the German cars won both the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> rounds of the season with Priaulx and Jörg Müller who managed to finish runner up in the Drivers' classification. However it was not an easy job for BMW, as Alfa Romeo's Augusto Farfus, SEAT Sport's Yvan Muller, Fabrizio Giovanardi's Honda Accord and Independent champion Tom Coronel made life difficult for them.

A crash at the start of the second race thwarted Farfus' hopes after a brilliant 5<sup>th</sup> place in Race 1. Yvan Muller saved SEAT's honour with two podium positions that propelled him to 4<sup>th</sup> in the championship, but could not prevent BMW from beating the Spanish make for the Manufacturers' Championship.

Coronel and Giovanardi completed two fantastic performances; GR Asia's Dutchman who had already claimed the Independents' Trophy managed to be on the overall podium, while Giovanardi scored points in both races proving that the JAS Motorsport's Honda Accord can fight for the top positions.

But the day belonged to Andy Priaulx who – once again – proved to be the coolest driver of the field, focusing on the ultimate goal and bravely facing huge pressure. This was the third consecutive FIA Touring Car title for the 32-year old from Guernsey and for Bart Mampaey's RBM; once again driver and team worked in perfect symbiosis, always making the right move at the right moment.

The 2004 ETCC followed by the 2005 and 2006 WTCC meant that Priaulx equalled Roberto Ravaglia's record (1986 and 1988 ETCC, 1987 WTCC) deserving the title of "Mr Touring Cars".

### **RACE 1 – PRIAULX CLOSER TO THE TITLE**

Andy Priaulx turned pole into a win in Race 1, leading all the way and getting closer to a second consecutive World Championship. Second place went to Duncan Huisman while Yvan Muller crossed the chequered flag third.

At the start Priaulx got off well while fellow BMW man Huisman had impressively promoted himself from fourth to second by the first corner. It was at this corner on lap 1 that the first incident of the race happened. Augusto Farfus and Dirk Müller came into the Lisboa bend close; Farfus was on the inside and Dirk spun. The German's car then blocked most of the track which caused the rest of the field to bunch up behind. However, a group of drivers – Fabrizio Giovanardi, Tom



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[www.fiawtcc.com](http://www.fiawtcc.com) – [www.macau.grandprix.gov.mo](http://www.macau.grandprix.gov.mo)

Coronel, Alain Menu, James Thompson and Nicola Larini – were fortunate to find a gap through.

In the first lap Stefano D'Aste and Jan Magnussen had obtained damage to their cars so had very slow journeys back to the pits. The leading pack was held up severely by D'Aste at the Melco hairpin as overtaking on this part of the circuit is forbidden. This resulted in Coronel making ground on the front drivers. Seconds later at Melco, Thompson hit Menu but both kept position – 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> respectively.

On lap 4 Giovanardi overtook Augusto Farfus for 4<sup>th</sup> at the Lisboa bend. The attack on Farfus was resumed on lap 5 by Jörg Müller and continued for the rest of the race. The Brazilian managed to keep Jörg at bay and came home 5<sup>th</sup>. Meanwhile Jörg had to do some defending of his own as Coronel was hot on his tail. Despite some nail-biting action Jörg finished 6<sup>th</sup> followed directly by the independent man from GR Asia.

Thompson was again involved in an incident on lap 7. The Briton went straight on at the Lisboa bend and rejoined 11<sup>th</sup>. Soon after, in a separate turn of events Nicola Larini crashed at the exit of San Francisco bend which meant the end of the race for him. Fellow Chevrolet driver Alain Menu also suffered a premature ending as he crashed on lap 8. With Menu out Peter Terting claimed 8<sup>th</sup> position and the pole for Race 2.

Only three drivers remained in the title fight before the second race: Priaux (69 pts), Farfus (64) and Jörg Müller (62).

## **RACE 2 – JÖRG WINS, ANDY IS CHAMPION**

Gianni Morbidelli's Alfa Romeo and Nicola Larini's Chevrolet did not make the grid after the crashes in the first race.

Jörg got a great start. Augusto Farfus also shot off well but his dreams of the title were soon dashed when he went wide, lost the back of his car and smashed into the Mandarin Oriental bend.

On the next corner Peter Terting, Yvan Muller and James Thompson went through almost in a row. Following them were Duncan Huisman and Jordi Gené but the pair crashed and were stranded on the track at the Lisboa bend. The pack managed to drive through the wreckage but the Solitude Esses were then the scene of another accident, this time involving Gabriele Tarquini and Robert Huff. With two further cars stuck on the track the safety car was deployed for three laps. During this period Alfa Romeo's Salvatore Tavano stopped his damaged car on the track.

On the re-start Jörg managed to gain a massive gap as Peter Terting, who was lying 2<sup>nd</sup>, had technical problems and dropped back. This resulted in Jörg building a big gap ahead of Yvan Muller and Coronel, who continued to fight over the second place for the rest of the race.

Breaths were being held throughout the last few laps as Priaux had to keep Fabrizio Giovanardi at bay and stay out of trouble. He managed to do so however and therefore claimed his second consecutive WTCC title.

Behind Priaux and Giovanardi, the remaining positions in the points were filled by local hero André Couto and Dirk Müller. The only Chevrolet driver classified was Alain Menu, 10<sup>th</sup>.