

Fanatec GT2 European Series - Paul Ricard (France) - Victory and a podium to close the season!

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#News

The beautiful Paul Ricard circuit, in the South of France, welcomed the final round of the Fanatec GT2 European Series last weekend, with the largest entry list of the year. Just as in Valencia, Akkodis ASP Team entered two cars, the #61 Mercedes-AMG GT2 for Mauro and Benjamin Ricci (in the championship Top 5), and the #87 of the "newcomers" to the series, Jean-Luc Beaubelique and Ludovic Badey. With a victory and a second place for their first races, the duo made a stunning entrance into the series in Spain. In France, history repeated with a superb overall victory in the first race for the #87 and a podium (P3) in the second. Despite excellent performances, including qualifying on the first row of the second race, the crew of the #61 could not turn that into results and had to content themselves with a Top 6 and a Top 8 finish. At the end of a season full of twists and turns, disputed at superb circuits, the Ricci father and son duo finished in the Pro-AM Top 5 without having taken part in the full season (having missed the first round in Monza). Jean-Luc Beaubelique and Ludovic Badey were ninth (after just two events).



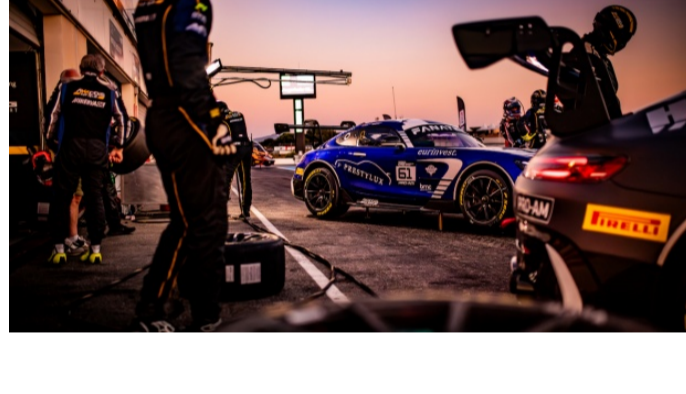
Competing in the final of the Fanatec GT2 European Series on the Circuit Paul Ricard is synonymous with celebration. The summery weather also helped to bring many spectators out to enjoy the SRO Racing Festival.

The free practice session was the moment to rediscover this special circuit. Jean-Luc Beaubelique and Ludovic Badey set the 6th time, while Mauro and Benjamin Ricci were P8 Pro-AM.

Pre-qualifying allowed the #87 Mercedes-AMG to take the third place in the session, while the #61 finished P7.

Sometimes a risky exercise, the Qualifying sessions are the occasion to reveal their skills. In the first session, Jean-Luc Beaubelique (#87) produced an impressive performance and qualified third Pro-AM and overall, while Mauro Ricci (#61) finished P6 Pro-AM (P8 overall).

In Q2, it was up to Benjamin Ricci (#61) to show off the extent of his talent. He qualified P2 overall, while Ludovic Badey (#87) set the 9th best time.



RACE 1: Another victory for the #87!

Saturday morning and the weather was perfect at the Paul Ricard Circuit for the penultimate race of the season. Having started in P3, Jean Luc Beaubelique (#87) wasted no time in settling into a steady pace and defended his position tooth and nail. At the end of his stint, he was P2. Mauro Ricci (#61) didn't disappoint either, fighting like a devil and handing over the wheel P7.

After the driver change, Ludovic Badey (P3) and Benjamin Ricci (P6) dove into the fray. The pace did not let up and the fight raged on with each lap. Heading after second place, Ludovic Badey came up strong onto the leading duo and set the fastest lap in the race. After having taken P2, Badey was up in the leader's exhaust and the last five minutes were scorching. Finally, the #87 crossed the finish line in P2, but the winning #812 was penalised by 10s, which gave the victory to the #87 Mercedes-AMG. After Valencia, the Beaubelique-Badey duo took home another success. In the #61, Benjamin Ricci did not let up during his stint and crossed the line P6.



RACE 2: A podium to finish the season!

For the final race of 2023, the track conditions were just as favourable as those in the morning. For the competitors, the final meeting of the season was also the occasion to let go and really give their everything.

The battle got off to a very strong start as soon as the lights went green. From the first row, Benjamin managed his start, but a few laps later, he went off track after braking a bit hard on cold tyres, causing him to spin out. He re-joined the track in last place.

In the #87, Ludovic Badey had a breath-taking start, going from P9 to P4 in a few seconds. After that it was a real driving festival. Sitting in P3 after 20' of racing, Badey took another position a few laps later. When the driver change window opened, Ludovic Badey was P2, while Benjamin Ricci had magnificently climbed back up to P9.



After the pitstop, Jean-Luc Beaubelique (#87) headed back out in P3, while Mauro Ricci (#61) was P8. The second half of the race was even more animated. With less than 10' to go, Jean-Luc lost a position, while Mauro kept the pace remarkably.

The final two laps were hyper-charged with harsh attacks. Finally, the #87 crossed the line in P4, but after the penalty applied to the #1, they gained third place and took another podium. Mauro Ricci (#61) finished P8.



In the championship, Mauro and Benjamin Ricci finished in the Pro-AM Top 5 even though they did not participate in the full season (having started in Austria). Despite some good performances, the duo struggled to turn those into results occasionally. They really deserved their place in the leading trio.

Two victories and two podiums in two races, Jean-Luc Beaubelique and Ludovic Badey really made the most of their brief appearance in the championship!

