

Fanatec GT World - Sprint Cup (Misano)

- A crushing victory and leading the championship!

16-07-2023

#News

After a long pause since the start of the Fanatec Europe GT Sprint Cup in Brand Hatch back in May, the season continued last weekend in Italy. Misano welcomed the biggest field in the history of the series for the second round of the championship with a 42 car grid on this atypical 4.226km circuit, situated alongside the Adriatic sea. With two cars entered, Akkodis ASP Team did not come to play tourists. Raffaele Marciello and Timur Boguslavskiy (#88 Mercedes-AMG) who set their first victory of the season at Brands Hatch did not mess up their arrival onto the track. Having set pole for the first race (the 14th for Lello Marciello), the solid duo then followed up with a clean victory, fruit of the team's labour on the two stints, all in the sweltering heat. The following day, and still under the summer sun, the #88 carried out a nice climb back up the field to cross the finish line at the foot of the podium (P4) after starting from the 5th row (P11). In the championship, Akkodis ASP Team, Raffaele Marciello and Timur Boguslavskiy are leading the Sprint Cup but also the overall championship (Sprint + Endurance). Entered in Bronze Cup, the team's second Mercedes-AMG GT3, entrusted to Eric Debard and Jim Pla, made its first appearance in Sprint (three Sprint races in the championship: Misano, Hockenheim and Valencia). Despite a strong climb in Race 1 (from P26 to P17), the crew was penalised by 15s after the finish, for not respecting the track limits. Unfortunately, Race 2 did not go great either. The #87 crossed the line in 31st place (P8 Bronze Cup) after having received two more penalties. It was a weekend to forget... In two weeks, before the summer break, they're heading to Germany to the Nürburgring for an Endurance round, before going back to a Sprint Cup race at Hockenheim, on the 2nd and 3rd of September.

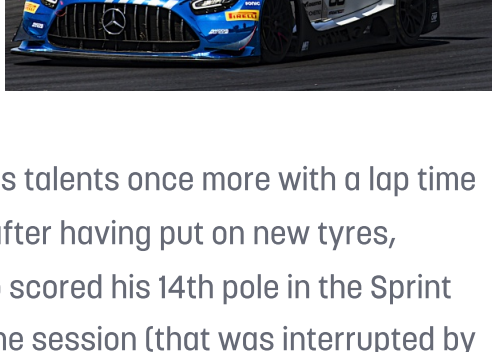
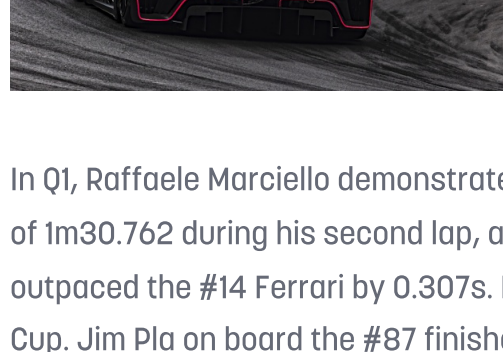


The track attendance records are often broken in Misano. After a record 38 cars in 2016, it was now 42 GT3 cars that were on the boiling Italian track last weekend. The heatwave that hit the south of Europe did not spare Emillie-Romagna, and the temperatures were already in the 30s in the morning.

The free practice session was very close, and interrupted by two red flags, with 24 cars in the same second. The #87 Mercedes-AMG placed itself in the top 4 with Jim Pla leading the Bronze Cup. Raffaele Marciello (#88) was P7 overall (P6 Pro).

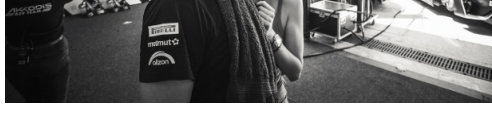
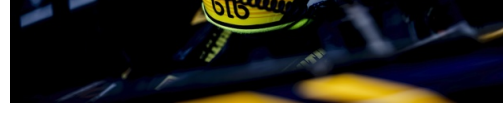
In Pre-Qualifying, the #88 of Raffaele Marciello and Timur Boguslavskiy finished the session in P3 (P2 Pro), the only non-Audi in the Top 8, while the #87 of Jim Pla and Eric Debard entered the Bronze Cup Top 6 (P24 overall).

Due to the high number of entrants, the qualifying sessions were divided into two 10 minute segments. For Q1, the first period was for Pro and Gold Cup cars, while the second session was reserved for Silver and Bronze. For Q2, the order was reversed.



In Q1, Raffaele Marciello demonstrated his talents once more with a lap time of 1m30.762 during his second lap, and after having put on new tyres, outpaced the #14 Ferrari by 0.307s. Lello scored his 14th pole in the Sprint Cup. Jim Pla on board the #87 finished the session (that was interrupted by a red flag) P26 overall, P7 Bronze, after having laps cancelled due to not respecting the track limits.

The following day, Q2 started at 9am, and it was already very hot out (30°C). Timur Boguslavskiy did not fall behind and placed the #88 on the 5th row (P11). Eric Debard (#87), having to cope with less than favourable traffic conditions, had to make do with 12th in Bronze, placing at the back of the grid.



RACE 1: Crushing victory for the duo Marciello /Boguslavskiy!

Early afternoon on Saturday, the heat is suffocating for the start of the event's first race (the track was showing a temperature of 51°C). Leading a field of 42 cars, when the lights went out, Raffaele Marciello kept hold of his advantage ahead of the #14 Ferrari. The first four leading cars quickly pulled away. Narrowly missing a contact ahead of him, Jim Pla (#87) successfully pulled out of the pack and went in one lap from P26 to P17.

As the laps went by, Lello Marciello took some space ahead of his adversaries and managed to make a gap. Shortly before the half-hour mark and the mandatory pitstops, the leader was five seconds ahead of the Ferrari.

This advantage allowed the team to approach the driver change more serenely and to push their lead even further. When Timur Boguslavskiy was back on track, still leading, he had a 9 second advantage. Timur did not simply manage his stint, he aimed for a strong pace that allowed him to keep distance on this adversaries, more determined than ever. Without making any mistakes, he kept his solid advantage right until the chequered flag (7.461s). It was a crushing victory, the team's work paying off. Raffaele Marciello claimed his 12th victory in the Sprint Cup.



In the Bronze Cup, despite a promising start, things did not go well, forcing Jim Pla and Eric Debard (#87) to give up on a potential podium. Despite this, lap by lap, Jim then Eric did not lack in fighting spirit up against strong opponents and aggressively defended their positions. But they received three 5-second penalties for not respecting the track limits, and the crew of the #87 was classified P9 Bronze (P33 overall).

At the end of this first race, the duo of Marciello/Boguslavskiy has taken back the lead of the provisional classification of the Fanatec GT Sprint Cup.



Race 2: The #88 a hair's breadth from the podium (P4)

Sunday, and the heat was still just as oppressive, sparing neither man nor machine, but as the lights went green, no incident came to upset the start.

Timur Boguslavskiy (#88) held onto his 11th place, while Eric Debard (#87) already started to work on trying to climb up from the last row. After 15 minutes, he had a bit of a scare by going off into a spin after a contact with a Porsche but also received a track limit warning.

A few minutes later, there were several incidents and contacts which caused chaos in the field and brought out a Full Course Yellow, then a safety car. The restart, with 35 minutes to go, preceded the driver change window by only a few moments.

From his 11th place, Timur passed the wheel over to Raffaele Marciello who went out in the #88 with new tyres. Eric Debard handed his place over to Jim Pla (#87), who quickly went hunting for positions after a disrupted pit stop as the #87 and its neighbour were in each others' way and lost precious seconds. Lello Marciello upped the tempo and had a fright going wide and ended up in the sandpit which damaged the front left wheel arch. With 25' to go, the #88 was in the Top 10. Jim Pla (#87) was P9 Bronze (P31 overall).

During the final 15', Raffaele Marciello pulled out all the stops to climb up to fifth position as he passed under the chequered flag with dexterity, notably passing the #14 Ferrari with an unstoppable dive down the inside.



In the Bronze Cup, Jim Pla crossed the line P30 and P7 Bronze. But the #87 got two penalties, 5 seconds for not respecting the track limits, and 10 seconds for not respecting the Full Course Yellow procedure. A sanction that makes them lose a place. However, the #88 became fourth after the #69 received a penalty.

In the provisional classification of the Sprint Cup (and overall, Endurance + Sprint), Akkodis ASP Team, Raffaele Marciello and Timur Boguslavskiy are leading. The third round will be at Hockenheim on the 2nd and 3rd of September. But in the meantime, the next round of the Endurance series will take place at the Nürburgring in less than two weeks (29/30 July).