



Fanatec GT World - Sprint (Valencia) - Fourth victory!

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#News

Decisive in the quest for the title, the before-last round of the Sprint Cup kept all its promises in terms of suspense. With 40 cars on track and delicate weather conditions, Akkodis ASP Team fought until the end to keep the lead of the championship. Raffaele Marciello and Timur Boguslavskiy (#88) took their fourth win of the season (Race 1) and scored some precious points before the Finale, holding their position with a 6.5 point lead. The weekend was a bit more complicated for the #87 of Jim Pla and Eric Debard. Classified P6 Bronze Cup in the first race, the crew had to abandon in the second race after a contact just before the pit stop and a broken power steering. The conclusion of the 2023 Sprint season will have to wait for the final race, at the atypical Zandvoort circuit (14/15 October) between the dunes and the North sea.



On Friday, the 80-minute free practice session started with a delay due to heavy rain. Heading out on track, the rain stopped and the sun peeked out timidly. Raffaele Marciello was the fastest in the three sectors and set the best lap time of 1m31.359s. On board the #87, Jim Pla and Eric Debard finished the session P34 (P9 Bronze Cup) after the cancellation of their best time.

During the Pre-qualifying sessions, two red flags interrupted the proceedings. Raffaele Marciello and Timur Boguslavskiy finished P2 in the session, 0.122s off the best time.

In the Bronze Cup, Jim Pla and Eric Debard were 4th in the category (P24 overall).



In the first qualifying session on Saturday morning, Raffaele Marciello (#88) set himself on the first row of the grid (P2). The Akkodis ASP Team driver led the session until the last lap, but missed out on pole by 0.064 seconds. In the Bronze Cup, Jim Pla (#87) set the fourth best time, 16th overall. No fewer than 30 cars were in the same second.



RACE 1 - Fourth victory for the #88!

Already from the first lap, the tension was tangible, and there were incidents in the pack. The safety car came out for ten minutes. At the restart, Raffaele Marciello raised his game and took advantage to set the fastest lap of the race, gradually closing in on the leader.

When it was time for the driver change, Lello passed the controls over to Timur Boguslavskiy who now had a seven second gap and was leading the classification thanks to a brilliant pitstop. Throughout his whole stint, Timur was attentive to the slightest trap. Facing the overtaking attempts from the #69 Ferrari, the driver of the #88 did not let up and crossed the chequered flag first with a lead of 0.380s, claiming the fourth victory of the season for the crew. With three races to go until the end of the season, any points won are essential.

In the Bronze Cup, after an excellent start from 16th place, Jim Pla (#87) climbed up to 12th a lap later (P4 Bronze Cup). During the second stint, Eric Debard had to face fierce competition. Unfortunately, the #87 took a 5-second penalty for crossing the track limits four times during the race, falling to P27 (P6 Bronze Cup) after the chequered flag.

On Sunday morning, the second qualifying session was epic. The rain from the previous night made the track slippery, and it was even more tricky once it started to rain a bit before Q2. The session was interrupted by a red flag but the conditions remained delicate right until the end.

The championship leader, Timur Boguslavskiy, only finished 18th in the #88, while Eric Debard (#87) was P35 (P8 Bronze Cup) after a spin at the end of the session.



Race 2 - Objective: Score points

The sun returned above the 4km and the 14 corners of the Ricardo Tormo Circuit in Valencia, but with a temperature of 28°C and notable humidity, the track conditions were not optimal. As of the first lap, the safety car came out on track after a few incidents and a car stuck in the gravel bed. After 12 minutes, the race started up again. Timur Boguslavskiy (#88) was fighting down in 18th place, while Eric Debard (#87) climbed up six positions in a few laps (P4 Bronze Cup). But 8 minutes later, another safety car came out and the pace fell back down.

Eric Debard (#87) was the first to head back to the pits for the driver change, then Jim Pla headed on track looking for a Bronze podium. Unfortunately, he returned to the garage shortly after. In fact, just before the pit stop, a contact damaged the power steering, which broke. The Mercedes-AMG became undrivable and forced them to retire.

In the #88, Raffaele Marciello was now behind the wheel. The Swiss driver headed off on the chase, aware that climbing the standings to score points was vital in order to secure the title. Overtaking one car after another, Lello took no time in getting to 10th place (P8 Pro). With 8 minutes to go, the third safety car came out. The restart released them for four laps... Raffaele Marciello crossed the finish line P9 but was classified P8 (P6 Pro) after a penalty imposed on the #60 Lamborghini ahead of him.

This result allowed the championship leaders to save a few points and to stay at the top of the classification with a 6.5 lead ahead of Drudi/Feller.



Nothing is decided yet and we'll have to wait for the finale at the Zandvoort circuit in the Netherlands (14/15 October) to find out the outcome of this exciting season.