

# Fanatec GT2 European Series - Valencia (Spain) - A victory and two podiums!

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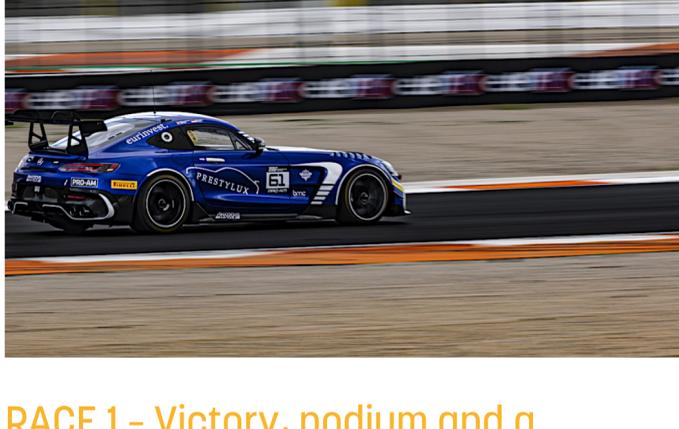
#News

After a few weeks of holiday, the Fanatec GT2 European Series headed to Spain for the before-last round of the season. Akkodis ASP Team entered two Mercedes-AMG GT2 in Valencia. The first for Mauro and Benjamin Ricci (#61) and the second, also in Pro-Am, for the 2022 Pro-AM GT4 European Series champion, Jean Luc Beaubelique, who was joined in the #87 by Ludovic Badey, a previous member of Jérôme Policand's team. This new crew did wonders by winning the first race of the weekend and by crossing the finish line first in the second race, before finally being classified second (after the addition of the regulatory 10 "penalty" seconds for having won the previous day's race). It was also a good weekend for the Ricci duo of father and son, who took a podium on Saturday after having led the race for a while, and finished in the Top 6 on Sunday. In the championship's Pro-Am classification, Mauro and Benjamin Ricci (#61) are in the Top 5. There is no possibility anymore to take the title, but still two more opportunities for podiums or even victories. See you for the finale at the Paul Ricard circuit on the 6th and 7th of October.



The free practice sessions allowed the field to take its marks. In a session delayed by the rain, the crew of the #87 quickly found a good pace and finished in the lead. Thanks to a great turn behind the wheel, Ludovic Badey dominated the competition. Despite a spin that caused a brief red flag, the Akkodis ASP Team sister car of Benjamin and Mauro Ricci classified fourth. In the afternoon, during the pre-qualifying session, the #87 finished fourth and the crew of the #61 eighth.

On Saturday, the qualifying sessions were extremely close, and were among the most hotly contested of the short history of the series. Concentrated on his objective, Jean Luc Beaubelique (#87) set the third best time in Q1 while Mauro Ricci (#61) finished the session seventh (P5 Pro-AM). Q2, which was even more fiercely disputed, gave an incredible spectacle and the second pole position was decided by tiny differences between the PRO drivers. Ludovic Badey (#87) set the fifth time (overall and Pro-AM), while Benjamin Ricci (#61) was seventh. The two races were going to be close.



## RACE 1 - Victory, podium and a scorching race

Jean-Luc Beaubelique (#87) managed his start perfectly, as did Mauro Ricci (#61). After less than 10 minutes, the driver of the #87 was P2. But a competitor lost brake fluid on track, making it terribly slippery. Despite a lot of attention, Jean-Luc was caught out and ended up P3. With the cars slipping one after another, Race Control brought out the safety car before finally pulling out the red flag.

The race was interrupted long enough to sort the track out. The cars were placed under parc fermé conditions in the pit lane. Fifteen minutes later, the lights went green and the race started up again, with 31 minutes remaining.



After the driver change, the pace picked up. Ludovic Badey (#87) went out in P2, just ahead of Benjamin Ricci (#61) who gave up his place a bit further to Anthony Beltoise (Audi). Ludovic Badey increased the gap on his rival but could not shake him completely. With 19 minutes to go, in a sudden twist, the leader went into the pits and Ludovic Badey found himself in the lead. Benjamin Ricci was third. The positions didn't change until the finish. Ludovic Badey and Jean-Luc Beaubelique took a wonderful victory for their first race in this series. Mauro and Benjamin Ricci climbed onto the third step of the podium, their third this season.

Jean-Luc Beaubelique is now the first driver to have won in Pro-Am in the GT2, GT3 and GT4 categories in SRO races.



## RACE 2 - Another podium for the #87!

Sunday morning, a shower drenched the track and when it was time to race, the track was still not completely dry. The conditions were delicate and especially with a GT2, ultra-powerful but without aerodynamic supports. What's more, a KTM went into a spin after the formation lap.

Daring as he can be, Ludovic Badey (#87) managed his start perfectly from the third row and fought for second place as of the first corner, just before taking the lead. The #61 was also doing well. Benjamin Ricci took first place a few laps later, but after taking a corner a bit wide, he handed the reins back over to his teammate.

But when the pit window opened, the #88 left the track and found itself in a dangerous position, which caused a red flag with 22 minutes to go.



The race started again with the second-stint drivers in the order preceding the pit stops. Which meant that the time penalties (from the regulations) from the classification of the first race would be applied after the finish (for the winners the previous day - 10 seconds). When the race started again, Jean Luc Beaubelique (#87) led the pack. Another short period under safety-car disrupted the pace. With five minutes to go, the race went back to green. Right up until the chequered flag, the #87 fended off assaults from the #67 Audi. With 10 seconds added for the #87, and a 30 second penalty for the #67, it was the #1 Audi who would take the victory. The #87 was thus second and the #61 sixth.

In the championship's overall classification, the pair of Mauro and Benjamin Ricci is in the Top 5. The 2023 season finale will take place on the 6th and 7th of October at the Paul Ricard circuit.

