

# GT4 European Series – Nürburgring – Another podium for Team AKKA-ASP!

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#News

The penultimate round of the GT4 European Series at the wonderful Nürburgring circuit confirmed the 2021 titles in Pro-AM and AM Cup. In the AKKA-ASP clan, the vice-champion Pro-AM drivers title is still in sight thanks to the wonderful race done by the crew of the #87 - Jean-Luc Beaubelique and Jim Pla. It was a nice second place on the podium in Race 2, only a short distance away from victory in the category, and a great demonstration in terms of performance. There were a few regrets for the #88 duo, Timothé Buret and Paul Evrard, having had a clean race Sunday morning until two laps before the chequered flag, when their Mercedes-AMG GT3 spun before crossing the finish line 7th in Silver Cup. It was a Top 10 finish in the AM Cup on Saturday for Mauro and Benjamin Ricci in the #61, but unfortunately, they retired on Sunday after a collision with irreversible effects. The final whistle of the season will blow on the 9th and 10th of October at the very festive track of Barcelona in Spain.



In the official sessions, the free practice sessions, the crew of the #87 placed themselves in the Top 5 of the classification during the three sessions. Their good shape was confirmed when they claimed a first row start for Race 2 with Jim Pla (P2), while Jean-Luc Beaubelique set the 11th time in Pro-AM in the first qualifying session. In the Silver Cup, Timothé Buret and Paul Evrard (#88) hovered between Top 11 and Top 14 during the qualifying sessions, whereas in AM, the crew of the #61, Mauro and Benjamin Ricci, took the final time in Q1 after a collision, and a finished with a very good Top 3 in Q2.

With 41 cars at the start, Race 1 was going to be a busy one, but everyone behaved as they took the first corner. The first relay went by without any major incident. Paul Evrard (#88) reclaimed terrain progressively, climbing up from 26th to 13th. For his part, Jean-Luc Beaubelique entered the Pro-AM Top 10 (P31 overall) by the end of his stint, and Mauro Ricci (#61), who started last, gained 7 places.



The second part of this first race was a lot less calm and the attacks multiplied. On the offensive from the start of his stint, Jim Pla (#87) gained 5, and then 10 places in ten minutes. By the end, he crossed the line in 15th place, in the Pro-AM Top 5. In Silver, Timothé Buret (#88), very competitive, continued the good progress made by Paul Evrard and finished in the Top 10 of the category (P11 overall). Benjamin Ricci (#61) did not give up either, 9th in AM (P34).

The following morning, they headed out for the second race. Starting from the front row, Jim Pla (#87) didn't have the best of starts and lost two positions (still leading Pro-AM). In contrast, Timothé Buret (#88) was opportunistic and slid into 12th, gaining five positions. Benjamin Ricci (#61) was not going to be outdone and skilfully moved from 3rd to 2nd place in AM in a few laps. But after 20' of racing, Benjamin suffered a collision and had to rejoin the pits, forced to retire.



The action on track offered a few good battles. Jim Pla (#87) didn't relinquish his effort, 3rd by the end of his stint and leading Pro-AM with a gap of more than 17 seconds ahead of the 2nd in the category. In the #88, Paul Evrard inherited the 9th place (P8 Silver). His efforts continued right up until two laps from the chequered flag, where he was running 8th, before spinning. The driver of the #88 crossed the line 13th, 8th Silver. At the front, coming under attack from all over, Jean-Luc Beaubelique (#87) resisted the assaults but relinquished some terrain in the final minutes, held up by the #22 Porsche who was acting as a bottleneck. The #26 Porsche then took the Pro-AM lead in the three last minutes. Jean-Luc Beaubelique finished second in the category after, as always, a good fight, and gave Team AKKA-ASP another podium.

In the championship, the duo of Buret/Evrard is 7th in Silver Cup, whereas the pair of Beaubelique/Pla is still in the running for the vice-champion Pro-AM title, currently sitting third.

Next and final meeting of the GT4 European Series on the 9th and 10th of October will be at the circuit of Barcelona. The end of the season will be "caliente"!