

GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE - Nürburgring - Front row and second place on the podium!

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#News

The Nürburgring is a well-known track for most GT drivers, and this weekend it hosted the penultimate Endurance round of the GT World Challenge Europe. The two AKKA-ASP Mercedes-AMG GT3s, which are quite at home in the Eifel, showed good promise from the very first practice session, when 44 cars were on track.

In the first official test session, Raffaele Marciello (#88) was the quickest, while Felipe Fraga, replacing Daniel Juncadella who was taking part in a round of the DTM, was third in the second, sharing the wheel with Jules Gounon. The Franco-Russian trio - Simon Gachet, Thomas Drouet and Konstantin Tereschenko - in the #87 entered in the Silver Cup (P7 and P11) also made a good start.



The free practice sessions confirmed the trend with the #88 leading the standings, as did the Qualifying sessions in ideal weather conditions. Raffaele Marciello (#88) was P1 in Q1, Felipe Fraga P3 in Q2 and Jules Gounon P5 in Q3. Taking the average of their lap times, the #88 was on the front row of the grid in second place. In the #87, Simon Gachet finished P7 Silver in Q1, Thomas Drouet P4 in Q2 and Konstantin Tereschenko P12 in Q3. The #87 was P9 Silver and P21 on the grid.

Sunday at 14h45, the lights went green for three hours of racing. Raffaele Marciello took over the first stint and held onto his second place, at the heels of the leading #63 Lamborghini. The first two started bit by bit to create a gap from the rest of the pack and, after 30 minutes of racing, they had a lead of 7 seconds.



Konstantin Tereschenko (#87) also took a good start when the lights went green and won a place (P20). The battle raged on in all the categories and the #87's Russian driver would pay the price. A collision with the #159 at the first corner broke the radiator of the Mercedes, forcing him to return to the pits after 45 minutes of racing. They were forced to retire, which was a great disappointment.

Felipe Fraga, now in the #88, continued at a steady pace, keeping a gap from the pack, and still running in second. But when confronted by traffic, his lead melted away as the laps went by and the Brazilian could see the #4 Mercedes coming up behind him. The AKKA-ASP driver held on and kept his adversary at a respectable distance.



Jules Gounon was the last to get into the #88. Still in second place overall, the Frenchman was able to get some breathing space with a 4 second lead. But with 41 minutes to go, a Full Course Yellow (FCY) followed by a safety car shuffled the pack. The field was released with 33' to go and Jules Gounon went back to chasing the leader who was somewhat stuck in traffic. With another FCY and SC with 25' to go, the Endurance round was going to end with a sprint finish. The restart took place 13' from the chequered flag.

Jules Gounon, the bit between his teeth, was focused on his objective, the #63 Lamborghini. The match was intense and 1.3 seconds separated the two men. The gap narrowed a little, but despite a remarkable fighting spirit and unwavering determination, the Mercedes-AMG crossed the line in second place. It was a magnificent battle.

Although the overall championship title is now decided, the Endurance Cup is not yet settled and we will have to wait for the finale, in Barcelona, for the tension to be lifted! See you in the 9th and 10th of October in Spain.

