



ROUNDS 5 & 6 PRACTICE AND QUALIFYING

Weather: sunny with a cold wind and a dry track.

PRESIDENT MOSLEY'S VISIT TO SILVERSTONE

FIA President, Max Mosley, paid a visit to Silverstone today. Angelo Codignoni, president of Eurosport, and KSO top managers Jacques Behar and Marcello Lotti (promoters of the FIA WTCC) escorted him for a stroll in the paddock and the pit lane.

Mr. Mosley commented: *"I am extremely impressed by the show. The paddock is very well organised, everything has a professional look. Both championships are healthy, and the World Touring Car Championship is growing up especially well. The cars are beautiful, very well prepared, and represent important Manufacturers. It really gives credit to the FIA. I think that the concept of having two different FIA Championships in the same meeting is a very good combination. Two different kinds of cars, two different kinds of races. It works better and better each year. People like it."*

PRACTICE 1 – PLATO IS FASTEST

Jason Plato's first appearance in the FIA WTCC saw him top for the first free practice session. Plato used his experience of the track to post his best time 1:26.794, an unofficial new lap record for S2000 touring cars.

The Touring Car Bureau's decision to change the weight scale resulted in six front-wheel drive cars at the top of the time sheet, with former BTCC champions, James Thompson and Gabriele Tarquini second and third fastest in their Alfa Romeo cars. The best performance of a BMW was 7th place from Dirk Müller, with Jörg Müller and Andy Priaulx occupying 8th and 9th spots respectively. Carl Rosenblad was the best of the Independents with the 12th best time overall.

PRACTICE 2 – ALFA AND GIOVANARDI ON TOP

Alfa Romeo had the two fastest cars in a session that was red-flagged for six minutes while the track was cleared of gravel, following Gabriele Tarquini's spin at Brooklands.

Fabrizio Giovanardi posted the quickest time (1:26.862), with fellow Alfa Romeo driver Augusto Farfus in second. Tarquini did not seriously damage his car during the spin and went on to post the fourth best time. Plato was again the fastest of the SEAT team with the third best time of the field.

Two of the Chevrolet drivers featured in the top ten - Rob Huff with ninth overall and Nicola Larini just 0.002 of a second behind. Their fastest laps were only 7 tenths from Giovanardi's. Andy Priaulx improved one place from the morning session to set the eighth best time, top of the BMWs. GR Asia's Valle Mäkelä was the fastest Independent competitor, claiming 13th spot overall.



QUALIFYING – ALFA ROMEO TRIO DOMINATE

When the FIA WTCC cars line up on the Silverstone starting grid for round five of the championship tomorrow, it will be an Alfa Romeo 1-2-3. In an incredibly exciting qualifying session it was Gabriele Tarquini who set the fastest lap time, an amazing 1:25.639 which is a new lap record for S2000 touring cars. The field was so close that only 0.9 seconds separated the top twelve drivers.

Fellow Alfa man, James Thompson was leading the field for some of the session but had to take 2nd as his time was 0.016 seconds off the best. Fabrizio Giovanardi completed the trio to begin from third on the grid tomorrow.

Right behind him will be the BMW of Andy Priaulx who put in a remarkable performance to secure fourth place considering that his car is carrying 50kg of ballast.

Championship leader Dirk Müller spun at Abbey and had to be removed from the gravel, meaning he was not allowed to rejoin due to receiving external aid.

All four of the SEAT cars were among the top ten positions. Young German, Peter Terting headed the team in fifth place with Plato, Rydell and Gené completing the 7th, 8th and 10th quickest laps.

Chevrolet will be hoping to obtain their first top-ten finish of the championship by capitalising on Menu's starting position of 15th with Nicola Larini just behind him.

Ford Hotfiel Sport continued their struggle to find the right set-up with Klenke qualifying 24th and Jäger 25th.

Tom Coronel, of GR Asia qualified 13th - the best of the Independent drivers.

ROUNDS 5 & 6 QUALIFYING QUOTES

Gabriele TARQUINI, Alfa Romeo Racing Team – pole position

“I am really happy because I spent a few good seasons around Britain, I feel quite at home here. I think my performance was really good in qualifying and it’s great to be surrounded by my team-mates. Tomorrow the show will be as great as ever. I have not noticed the 20 kg weight reduction because we have no comparisons of previous races at this track. I am certain however that the Touring Car Bureau’s decision is making a substantial difference.”

James THOMPSON, Alfa Romeo Racing Team – 2nd fastest

“Considering Gabriele is half British I guess it is the next best thing to having a Briton on pole. It was very close in the end. This result is great for the team. We had difficulties in Magny Cours and to come here and have a strong showing is exactly how we needed to bounce back. I think we will have a great crowd tomorrow. Traditionally, touring car racing has been the premiere motorsport in this country. I think the chance to see some good old fashioned touring car racing, with veterans and some new boys on the touring car scene is what people want. They love it here and the International circuit lends itself to racing, it’s going to be a fantastic.”

Fabrizio GIOVANARDI, Alfa Romeo Racing Team – 3rd fastest

“In the free practice my car was very fast, therefore I felt comfortable to push hard in qualifying. Unfortunately I made a mistake which allowed my team-mates to be quicker than me but I am still confident for tomorrow. The starts are always difficult because we know the BMWs are quick off the line, but our cars are fast and over the entire race we will be very competitive.”

Andy PRIAULX, BMW Team UK – 4th fastest

“This was a big turn around. In the first two meetings we were not as competitive as we would like. All credit to the team and everybody because they’ve worked hard to make this step up. The car is really good, testing has definitely paid off. I don’t care how much ballast I have in my car, it’s a really nice car to drive now and of course that is the most important thing for me.”

Peter TERTING, SEAT Sport – 5th fastest

“I’m very happy with 5th position, it’s my best result so far. The lap was good but not perfect, I locked the front wheel, so perhaps I can go even faster. It looks good for tomorrow. My team-mates help me a lot, they are more experienced which is great for me. I hope it stays dry tomorrow. I am aiming to overtake a few guys and stand on the podium but it is more important to use the reverse grid for the second race and gain some championship points.”



Paul RIDGWAY, GR Asia Team Principal

“We are really happy. Tom (Coronel) did a really good job, with a time close to the factory cars’. A little bit disappointed with Valle (Mäkelä), I don’t think he took on his tyres at the right time so he is not in the position we had hoped. I think we could have had a 1-2 which would have been excellent for the team.”

Alain MENU, Chevrolet – 15th fastest

“I am pretty happy with my performance considering that I didn’t take part in the first practice session and I only completed nine laps in the second. If I had been able to get some good practice I’m sure my times would have been a lot faster. It looks promising for the race though.”

Eberhard Braun, German motorsports manager of FordTeamRS

“We have done a lot of testing before Silverstone and managed a number of improvements. However, most of the testing was carried out on circuits with a smooth surface. Thus, we were caught out by the bumps of Silverstone. I’m sure we would have coped had it not been for the lack of track time in the free sessions.”