

## **ROUNDS 9 & 10 PRACTICE AND QUALIFYING**

*Weather:* sunny in the morning, cloudy with a threat of rain during the qualifying session; the track was dry.

### **PRACTICE 1 – THOMPSON TOP BETWEEN RED FLAGS**

The first practice session at Puebla was extremely eventful with two separate incidents resulting in red flags. The first cause was half way into the session when Giuseppe Cirò spun and Jörg Müller went off in avoidance; the German's BMW hit a concrete barrier with force and obtained extensive damage to the front right of the car.

After the BMW had been removed, the session resumed and at this point it was Colciago who had the fastest lap of 1:31.973. Immediately, James Thompson of Alfa Romeo posted a time of 1:31.302 and within a matter of seconds his team-mate Farfus jumped to second - just 0.043 of a second slower. The two remained at the top while SEAT drivers, Jordi Gené and Peter Terting claimed third and fifth positions respectively. They were divided by Gabriele Tarquini.

With five minutes remaining, De Micheli also came off and similarly to Jörg's BMW, the Honda crashed into a concrete barrier. Once again the red flags were issued and the session did not resume.

The top ten lap times were within one second of each other and contain at least one car of the five manufacturers represented at the Mexican races. Andy Priaulx was the fastest of the BMW drivers and occupied 9<sup>th</sup> spot – 0.819 of a second off the best time while Robert Huff was tenth for Chevrolet.

Tom Coronel had the 11<sup>th</sup> fastest time overall and the best of the Independents.

### **PRACTICE 2: MASTRETTA SHINES ON HOME GROUND**

It was again an Alfa Romeo that completed the fastest lap in the second practice session but this time it was driven by Fabrizio Giovanardi. At the opening stages, the Italian driver clocked a time of 1:31.081 and this was good enough to keep him at the top for the entire 30 minutes. Thompson occupied second position until, Colciago joined the session after 10 minutes and demoted him to third. Colciago's time was just 0.092 slower than that of Giovanardi.

Peter Terting was the fastest of SEAT Sport drivers and fourth overall, while Augusto Farfus' time of 1:31.749 made him the final member in the top five.

In the Independents' category, Tom Coronel was the quickest until, with seven minutes remaining, his Mexican team-mate Carlos Mastretta improved dramatically and posted a lap of 1:32.342. This launched him to 11<sup>th</sup> position overall and the top independent.

Dirk Müller was the 12<sup>th</sup> quickest for BMW and Alain Menu of Chevrolet posted the 13<sup>th</sup> best time, with team-mate Huff just behind. Jörg Müller's BMW and De Micheli's Honda did not take part in the session, as they were extensively damaged in the crashes during the previous session.



## **QUALIFYING: COLCIAGO FASTEST BUT NOT ON POLE**

Roberto Colciago and Peter Terting claimed a virtual top row for tomorrow's Race 1. However, despite posting the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> fastest times in qualifying, they will both be demoted 10 places on the grid. For Colciago this was due to the implementation of a suspended penalty obtained in Imola, and for Terting it was a result of an engine change between practice and qualifying. This meant pole position was handed to Fabrizio Giovanardi, who will share the front row with team mate James Thompson. Tarquini will start third, alongside Gené, while Rydell and Huff will share the third row. Huff's 6<sup>th</sup> starting position is the best result so far for Chevrolet.

Augusto Farfus and Jason Plato are also dropped 10 places each due suspended penalties from Imola and therefore start 14<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> respectively.

In the opening stages of the session Thompson and Colciago battled for the top spot until, after eight minutes, Giovanardi clocked a time of 1:30.149 which put him at the top. Tarquini and Gené made contact coming into a corner and the latter came off the track, his SEAT stranded just beyond the kerbs. This incident resulted in the first period of three, under red flag.

After resuming, Colciago topped the time sheet once again with a lap in 1:29.830. This was the best lap of the entire session. Within a matter of minutes, Thompson went wide on the banked corner and hit the wall. Once again the red flags were issued as his Alfa Romeo car was towed away.

Terting shot to second position as the session continued. His time was a mere 0.029 of a second slower than Colciago's. In the following laps, Farfus improved his times and slotted into fourth position, demoting team-mate Thompson to fifth.

With seven minutes remaining, Larini went wide and crashed into a concrete wall causing the red flags to be waved again. Not all of the cars returned to the track for the final stages of the session and none of the top positions were altered. Tom Coronel was the best of the independent drivers and 13<sup>th</sup> overall.

Due to their crashes in the first free practice, Jörg Muller and Adriano De Micheli missed the qualifying session.

## **ROUNDS 9 & 10 QUALIFYING QUOTES**

### **Roberto COLCIAGO, JAS Motorsport – 1<sup>st</sup> fastest**

"It's been a good day for me. The gap between me and Terting was incredibly small so I am pleased to have kept the fastest time. I am happy for the team and Honda. With nobody having previous knowledge of the track it is more equal and we can see that the car is fast and very competitive. In relation to my penalty, of course it would have been better for me to start on the front row but I will still try my best and I hope it pays off. I have no problems with the track and I don't think its condition is worse than anywhere else. It is always slippery outside of the racing line."

### **Peter TERTING, SEAT Sport – 2<sup>nd</sup> fastest**

"In my first outing of qualifying I was held up by a little bit of traffic but in the second outing the setup was great. We have done a lot of work over the past two weeks and as you can tell, it has lead to great improvements. Starting from twelve will make it a hard fight for me tomorrow but it was a technical problem – an engine change – and therefore there is nothing else we could have done."

### **Fabrizio GIOVANARDI, Alfa Romeo Racing Team – 3<sup>rd</sup> fastest**

"I'm really happy because I have great confidence in my car. I drove cleanly during the practice sessions and qualifying so it looks good for me tomorrow, especially as I have nobody in front of me. I'm so sorry for Roberto (Colciago) and Peter (Terting) being penalised, and I have to admit that I was lucky today. When the team saw the layout of the track and began to think about setups we thought it could be difficult for us but all of the Alfa cars are fast so have it right."

### **Carlos MASTRETTA, GR Asia – 19<sup>th</sup> fastest**

"It's amazing what the people have done to finalise this track in such a short space of time. Of course, the track is still green but we are aware of this and everybody is driving in the same conditions. My aim for tomorrow is to finish both races. Having the 11<sup>th</sup> fastest time in the second practice session gave me a lot of confidence but in qualifying I could not repeat my success due to the red flags. Just as my tyres were getting to their optimum levels of performance I had to stop. But I know now that when everything is working well I can get good results."