



ROUNDS 13 & 14 RACE REPORT

Weather: sunny and warm, with a dry track.

Crowd: 41,000 in the weekend.

ALEX ZANARDI CLAIMS HIS FIRST VICTORY WHILE PRIAULX CLOSES IN TO ONE POINT BEHIND DIRK

BMW had a great day on their home racetrack. Not only did the German cars win both races at Oschersleben, but they also finished 1-2-3 in the second one. These results, together with Alfa Romeo's blackest day, also meant that two BMW drivers – Dirk Müller and Andy Priaulx – are pulling away in the Drivers' Championship. The two of them, who fought for the title until the final race in last year's FIA European Touring Car Championship, are separated by only one point. However, despite being scoreless today, Alfa Romeo's leading man Fabrizio Giovanardi remains within striking distance, 12 points from the lead.

But the hero of the seventh meeting of the season was definitely Alessandro Zanardi, who managed to claim his first win since he joined the FIA Touring Car Championship two years ago. In Oschersleben which, ironically, is the closest circuit to the Lausitz Eurospeedway, where Zanardi lost his legs five years ago, the BMW Team Italy-Spain driver dominated the second race from lights to flag, resisting the assaults of his fellow BMW colleague Jörg Müller. After the chequered flag, Alex resumed his own winning ritual from the Formula Cart years, wheelspinning his car in a cloud of smoke before the crowded grandstands.

SEAT, Ford and Chevrolet also had reasons to rejoice. The Spanish Manufacturer claimed another podium result with Rickard Rydell, who climbed up to sixth in the Drivers' Championship, while Jordi Gené showed the potential of the León, finishing twice in the points while on the new cars' first appearance

On their home track, the Ford Focus cars were competitive than ever before, with both drivers being able to fight for top ten positions, and Thomas Klenke losing a comfortable 7th place in Race 2 because of a puncture. In any case the six points scored in the Manufacturers' Championship were a nice birthday present for team principal Hans Hotfiel. As for Chevrolet, Alain Menu managed to score again, after a tough battle with Zanardi's team mate Antonio García.

RACE 1 – PENALTY FOR THOMPSON WIN FOR PRIAULX

Andy Priaulx claimed his first win of the season. At the start the Briton overtook Farfus, which left only James Thompson's Alfa Romeo ahead of him. Unusually, Thompson had incurred a drive through penalty before the start of the race because his car was still on air-jacks when the three minute board was shown. This was not a team mistake, an electric cable of a tyre-warmer got stuck. It was in lap six that Thompson pulled into the pits and handed the lead to the eventual race winner.

Rickard Rydell crossed the line 2nd after holding off the BMW Müller duo for seven laps. Overall, it was a great race for SEAT. Terting claimed 5th, Ortelli finished an impressive 6th on his FIA WTCC debut and Gené took 7th position in the new León. Alfa Romeo certainly did not have the same fortune as none of their drivers scored points in the



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drivers' championship. Their best result came from Farfus who took 9th. Giovanardi was hit by Cirò in lap 1, which caused the Alfa Romeo to spin and re-join last. Despite visiting the pits and continuing for a while, he did not finish the race. Tarquini went wide at a corner on lap 5 and rejoined 12th. After being overtaken by Funke on lap 12, he eventually finished 13th.

Jörg Müller was the final podium occupier. He had a fantastic start as his BMW leapt from 11th to 5th coming into the first corner. In the latter part of the race Jörg had 2nd place in his sights but couldn't find an opportunity to pass Rydell. Dirk Müller finished behind his team-mate in 4th.

Ford had their best results so far as Thomas Klenke finished a great 10th and Funke 12th, meaning 4 points in the Manufacturers' Championship for the Blue Oval. Alain Menu headed a struggling Chevrolet team by passing the chequered flag 11th while Larini and Huff were 17th and 23rd respectively. Eric Hélary did not finish for Peugeot as he stopped on the track during lap 10. Adrianol De Micheli was the victor of the Independent category and 15th overall in his Honda, the first success for the Italian driver.

RACE 2 – ZANARDI LEAD A BMW 1-2-3

Alessandro Zanardi claimed a spectacular win in the FIA WTCC – the first for him and his BMW Team Italy-Spain. He started from pole due to the reverse grid and he drove a solid race to ensure he was the victor. It was in fact a BMW 1-2-3 as Jörg Müller and Andy Priaulx made their second podium appearance of the day. The set of three were very close and Jörg was sitting 2nd on the last lap when he made a nail-biting challenge on Zanardi but went wide and rejoined 3rd. This promoted Priaulx which now means he is just one point behind Dirk Müller in the driver's championship.

At the start Ortelli was hit by fellow SEAT driver Terting and both went off the track. The former continued to finish 15th while the latter pitted and did not re-join. In an attempt to avoid this incident, De Micheli and Hennerici crashed and re-joined towards the back of the field. On lap 2 Giovanardi's misfortune continued as he collided with Rosenblad and crashed into the barriers.

The race was extremely tight over the next few laps with the top 11 drivers crossing the line within 4 seconds. Among the pack were Rydell and Tarquini who were battling for 7th place. On lap 5 contact was made and the Alfa Romeo was forced wide losing five positions in the process and eventually finishing 14th. The SEAT Sport man managed to hold on to 7th while his team-mate Gené had a brilliant 4th place finish in the new León after being third for ten laps. A fight for the final point position was being contested by García and Menu with the Chevrolet eventually crossing the line ahead of the BMW. All the Chevrolet drivers had better results than in Race 1 as Larini and Huff achieved 11th and 12th.

Ford Hotfiel Sport's Thomas Klenke was having a great race and made it up to 7th position overtaking Rydell, until on lap 10 he had problems and had to pit. He returned and passed the chequered flag 20th. However, all was not lost as Funke claimed another 10th position for the team.



ROUNDS 13 & 14 RACE QUOTES

Alessandro ZANARDI, BMW Team Italy-Spain – 8th in Race 1 and 1st in Race 2

“Today my biggest thanks go to my team because last night I was worried that the car wasn’t right and they trusted me enough to change things. After these changes the car felt so different this morning. I had destroyed my previous car in Spa and that meant the team had to build me a new one, so no holidays for them, but now they said they forgive me. It was a close call in Race 1 and I got a bad start because the lights caught me by surprise. I had a good car beneath me and was lucky to pass Farfus on the last lap which meant pole for me in Race 2. In that race I simply focused on the start and then took it turn by turn, lap by lap. It wasn’t easy because the pressure was on and it was tough to keep such great drivers behind. I was not surprised when Jörg tried to overtake me because it is in the blood of these drivers to attack. In a way Imola was going to be my dream day but looking back now I am glad it didn’t happen because it would have been understandable for people to say ‘yes but he did it at a circuit he knows very well’. But here I have struggled in the past so it really was a case of something magic happening for me today.”

Andy PRIAULX, BMW Team UK – 1st in Race 1 and 2nd in Race 2

“It has been an absolutely fantastic weekend for me but what made my weekend special was seeing Alex (Zanardi) win. It’s a very technical and complicated circuit and he was under pressure from us, so to drive as he did is sensational. For me, my new car has hit the sweet spot. I knew straight away it was good and it feels like I have last year’s car back. It means I can drive confidently and aggressively and hopefully make it count but we will see, there is still a long way to go but I feel positive about the circuits that are left and I will work hard to finish all the races.”

Jörg MÜLLER, BMW Team Deutschland – 2nd in Race 1 and 3rd in Race 2

“I don’t think my race 1 start was that great on my part, instead it looked like all the others were sleeping. Last year I came from 12th to 4th so I knew this was a circuit where there is a lot of action going on and you can overtake. I thought ‘relax, stay calm and finish in the top three’, which I did for both races this weekend. In the second race I didn’t want to do anything unfair to Alessandro (Zanardi) and I have to say he made no mistakes. I am happy to be part of one the most memorable races in the history of touring cars, and probably also for disabled sportsmen.”



Rickard RYDELL, SEAT Sport – 2nd in Race 1 and 7th in Race 2

“It was a positive weekend for us here. We like the track and I’m happy we were able to fight with the BMWs. The SEAT team have done a very good job because it has been a tough job developing the new León at the same time as the Toledo. I am looking forward to driving the León in Valencia. I think we need a little more testing but this weekend was encouraging, the car has good corner speed and downforce. We need to work on the balance a little bit but it has great potential.”

Thomas KLENKE, Ford Hotfiel Sport – 10th in Race 1 and 20th in Race 2

“Earlier on in the second race, I had to take avoiding action when driving with a bunch of cars. In doing so, I took a curb harder than I’d normally do. I’m afraid that caused the damage to my tyre or the rim. It’s a shame that I didn’t have the luck to bring the car home and score our first ever drivers’ points.”

Adriano DE MICHELI, JAS Motorsport – 15th in Race 1 and 18th in Race 2

“I am very happy because I was on the podium among great drivers. I really need to thank the team because with my inexperience it is very important that I have trust with the people I work with. The Honda is a very fast car as we can see from Colciago’s pace in Puebla but this is new to me and that makes it difficult. It really is a good result for everyone involved.”

Tom CORONEL, GR Asia - 21st in Race 1 and 13th in Race 2

“In the first race I was stupid and made some mistakes. I was running second of the independents and then I braked too late and Hennerici overtook me. The second mistake was the same and I went straight on at a corner so I was nearly last. In the second race I was a little bit lucky because De Micheli and Hennerici had an incident and that meant I could focus on my own pace. I am closing the gap in the trophy fight but there is still a long way to go.”

Fabrizio GIOVANARDI, Alfa Romeo Racing – 26th in Race 1 and DNF in Race 2

“For Alfa it was not a good weekend and especially for me because I was lying second in the championship and I needed to gain points. However we still have three races left and I think we can come back from this. In Race 1 my rear tyres blew up when Cirò hit me so I was finished there; in the second one I made a good start but unfortunately I touched Rosenblad and that broke my rear suspension. I hope that I have better results in Istanbul.”

Alain MENU, Chevrolet - 11th in Race 1 and 8th in Race 2

“I’m happy that I got another point and that makes it two weekends in a row that I have scored which is great. Overall it was good weekend but a bit of a shame that in the first race I lost a couple of places on the last corner or I would have had a better position for the race 2 and maybe a better finish. All in all it is positive.”