



## **ROUNDS 17 & 18 RACE REPORT**

*Weather:* sunny and hot, with a dry track.

*Crowd:* 52,000 in the weekend.

### **SEAT AND BMW SHARE RACE VICTORIES D. MÜLLER, PRIAULX AND GIOVANARDI WITHIN 5 POINTS**

The WTCC Race of Spain provided two breathtaking races to a large and enthusiastic crowd.

Race 1 turned into another historical landmark for Spanish motorsport, with a Spanish driver – Jordi Gené – winning a World Championship race in a Spanish car – SEAT. The new León, victorious on its only third appearance on the track.

Race 2 provided one of the greatest spectacles in touring car history. Dirk Müller, Andy Priaulx and Fabrizio Giovanardi had an immense battle for the final two podium positions, but their fight was also pivotal in the bid to be the first FIA World Touring Car Champion.

As it stands, the trio head to Macau for the final meeting within five points of each other. Dirk leads Priaulx by a single point and Giovanardi is in striking range. BMW have claimed a stake on the Manufacturers' championship, however their lead of 25 points over Alfa Romeo acts as no guarantee considering there are 36 points still to play for.

Despite two difficult races today, Marc Hennerici has one hand on the Independents' trophy but can't rest on his laurels as recent consistency has placed Giuseppe Cirò 15 points behind with 20 still to be awarded.

The final act will take place along the narrow and insidious streets of Macau, where each little mistake is paid for very dearly. Dirk Müller and Priaulx will have a small advantage in points and experience, as the last time Giovanardi raced there was in the 1988 F3 Grand Prix. And it's easy to predict that none of them will give up until the last corner.

### **RACE 1 – TRIUMPH FOR SEAT AND GENÉ**

At their home race, SEAT Sport had two drivers celebrating on the podium. With a lights-to-flag lead, Jordi Gené claimed his first win of the season with teammate Peter Terting crossing the line 3<sup>rd</sup>. The two SEAT León cars were divided by Dirk Müller who jumped back to the championship lead by just two points.

At the start, Dirk sped ahead of Terting but was forced wide and therefore remained in 3<sup>rd</sup> position. In the first corner, Huff and Farfus collided which left the 4<sup>th</sup> placed Chevrolet stranded in the gravel and the Alfa Romeo rejoining at the back after a visit to the pits. Also on the first lap, Giovanardi was chasing the Müllers with García close behind. Giovanardi made a move on the inside of Jörg and the German went wide and dropped four places to 8<sup>th</sup>. Lap 2 saw Funke and Hennerici involved in an incident which resulted in both of them being towed out



of the gravel. In the next lap Jörg began to work his way through the field again as he overtook Larini. Meanwhile, Terting was being hunted by Dirk for 2<sup>nd</sup> position. Over the next three laps Terting had to defend extremely hard but Dirk successfully overtook the SEAT on lap 6. Fellow BMW Team Deutschland driver, Jörg, overtook Tarquini with Larini and García still close behind. Priaux moved up to 4<sup>th</sup> on lap 9 after passing Giovanardi, and he held the position determinedly. As the cars crossed the line into lap 10, there was an extremely tight battle between Jörg and Giovanardi. The fight ensued but it was Jörg who crossed the chequered flag one position ahead of the Alfa man to claim 5<sup>th</sup>. On lap 10 Tarquini, Larini, García and Zanardi were bumper to bumper. Larini overtook Tarquini for 7<sup>th</sup>. The latter then pushed García off the track and obtained a drive 30-second penalty after the race which demoted him to 16<sup>th</sup>. Marc Carol had a fantastic 10<sup>th</sup> place result on his first appearance in the FIA WTCC. Neither of the Ford Hotfiel sport drivers finished after being involved in separate incidents. De Micheli of JAS Motorsport was the winner of the independent's race. After the implementation of Tarquini's penalty, he was 11<sup>th</sup> overall. Zanardi finished 8<sup>th</sup> winning pole for Race 2.

## **RACE 2 – SOLO FLIGHT FOR JÖRG MÜLLER**

Jörg Müller was victorious in the second race of the day as he cruised across the finish line over seven seconds ahead of the rest. Behind him though was a spectacular fight. Fabrizio Giovanardi, Andy Priaux and Dirk Müller all are in contention for the drivers' title and caused nail biting moments for much of the race. They finished in the order with less than one second separating them. Alessandro Zanardi began from pole with Nicola Larini also on the front row. Off the line Larini was passed by several drivers. Giovanardi overtook Priaux, who was then involved in some contact with Dirk and dropped to 6<sup>th</sup> after losing places to Terting and Larini. Jörg stormed through and by the end of lap 1 he had jumped from 4<sup>th</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup> where he remained. In lap 2 Dirk overtook Zanardi for 3<sup>rd</sup>. De Micheli was fighting among the works drivers in lap 3 as he challenged Priaux for 5<sup>th</sup> but then the Italian independent was involved in two incidents with Terting and Gené. De Micheli obtained a drive-through penalty for clashing with the German. On lap 5 action stepped up a gear as Giovanardi overtook Dirk for 2<sup>nd</sup>. While they battled, Priaux had overtaken Zanardi and caught up on the pair. Furthermore, over the subsequent laps, García had also managed to latch on to the front pack. On lap 8 Dirk tapped Giovanardi and temporarily lost control of the rear of his car. This allowed Priaux to slot into 3<sup>rd</sup> and the Briton then had Giovanardi in his sights. Priaux made a move for 2<sup>nd</sup> but in fact lost out as Dirk slipped past him on the inside. The positions did not remain this way for long however. Lap 8 saw Dirk try to push past Giovanardi but this was not to be, he was out-braked by Priaux and then passed by García. García was swiftly demoted back to 5<sup>th</sup> on the next lap though, as Dirk once again focused on overtaking the BMW Team UK car. The final two laps provided a spectacular show but the top four positions remained. Zanardi finished ahead of García in 5<sup>th</sup>. Marc Carol put in another impressive performance. The young Spaniard finished as the best SEAT driver as well as in the points after crossing the line 8<sup>th</sup>. Right behind him was Tomas Engström who claimed the independent win ahead of Cirò by 0.225 of a second.

## **ROUNDS 17 & 18 RACE QUOTES**

### **Jordi GENÉ, SEAT Sport – 1<sup>st</sup> in Race 1 and 14<sup>th</sup> in Race 2**

“This is the happiest day of my life. The first race was amazing but it actually felt longer than a 24 hour endurance race because I was so nervous about making mistakes or something going wrong. The car is fantastic and for it to win a race on just its third outing is great. The success is definitely due to SEAT’s hard work and we should be proud. The only thing we need to work on is the straight line speed, this is why in the second race it was difficult to fight for the positions. The car was as quick as it was in the first race but I couldn’t overtake anyone because it was too much of a risk.”

### **Jörg MÜLLER, BMW Team Deutschland – 5<sup>th</sup> in Race 1 and 1<sup>st</sup> in Race 2**

“This is my third win of the season and I am very happy with it. To be honest it was quite an easy race once I was in the lead but. In the first race I was hit at the start and was concerned about my steering which set me back. Then I made a mistake and lost more places. I started to fight back to get in the points and had a great battle with Giovanardi. It was exactly as the WTCC should be so I was happy with my race 1 result as well.”

### **Dirk MÜLLER, BMW Team Deutschland – 5<sup>th</sup> in Race 1 and 4<sup>th</sup> in Race 2**

“I got the championship lead back after the first race and that made me really happy. I will arrive in Macau in the lead and that gives me confidence. Last year I was 12 points ahead and I lost it but this year I have a 1 point lead and I will get it.”

### **Andy PRIAULX, BMW Team UK – 4<sup>th</sup> in Race 1 and 3<sup>rd</sup> in Race 2**

“It’s really hard to win championships so I had to fight hard in Race 2. Today was really tough and I enjoyed it immensely. Fabrizio (Giovanardi) was defending really well and we had two clean races. I am pleased to have finished both races. I don’t feel any pressure because I have already won one championship so we will wait and see what happens in Macau.”

### **Fabrizio GIOVANARDI, Alfa Romeo Racing – 6<sup>th</sup> in Race 1 and 2<sup>nd</sup> in Race 2**

“It was not easy to keep the BMWs behind but I knew I had to if I wanted to remain in the title fight. Today was hard but it was my last chance to get some more championship points so I said ‘it’s now or never’. I’m happy because I am pleased with my performance and I enjoyed today very much. I raced in Macau in 1988 but of course that doesn’t count for much. I hope to learn the circuit fast so I can be in contention until the very end.”



**Peter TERTING, SEAT Sport – 3<sup>rd</sup> in Race 1 and 12<sup>th</sup> in Race 2**

“This weekend has been very good for SEAT and it was great that I could contribute to our success. It was my first race in the new car so the podium was extra special. The second race was disappointing because I was fighting hard for 6<sup>th</sup> when I was hit by somebody and that was the end of the race for me.”

**Adriano DE MICHELI, JAS Motorsport – 11<sup>th</sup> in Race 1 and 19<sup>th</sup> in Race 2**

“JAS once again provided me with a fast car which meant I could go out and be competitive. I was in the middle of the battle with the works drivers which is always difficult and I was involved in some contacts, but the car always felt good and I am happy with my weekend.”

**Tomas ENGSTRÖM, JAS Motorsport – 13<sup>th</sup> in Race 1 and 9<sup>th</sup> in Race 2**

“I am happy to be here so to win makes it a great day. Yesterday I had a bad qualifying session and I had to stay out of troubles today. The car was working very well and despite battles with Cirò in both the races I always felt I was faster than him.”

**Nicola LARINI, Chevrolet Racing – 7<sup>th</sup> in Race 1 and DNF in Race 2**

“On the first lap I thought my race would be over any second, as I got hit three times by other competitors. But once the dust had settled, I found myself with a perfect car and was able to drive a perfect race and score some points.”