



ROUNDS 19 & 20 RACE REPORT

Weather: sunny and windy, with a dry track.

Crowd: 20,000, full capacity.

ANDY PRIAULX AND BMW WIN WORLD TOURING CAR TITLES

Twenty races, ten countries, twelve race winners but one Champion – Andy Priaulx. The FIA World Touring Car Champion was decided on the very last race of the season in front of fully packed grandstand, and it was to be the 2004 European Touring Car Championship winner's day. Priaulx had a dream weekend after qualifying on pole, and finishing both races in 2nd position. He could have maybe tried to finish on high note, winning one or both races, but while his competitors in the title fight – Dirk Müller and Fabrizio Giovanardi – were eliminated along the way, the Briton remained cool and capitalised on his two trips to the podium.

It was the logical conclusion because Priaulx, who scored only one victory during the season compared to Dirk Müller's three and Giovanardi's four, made of consistency his trump card, finishing 16 races out of 20 in the points and ten times on the podium (Dirk did it 6 times and Giovanardi 8).

The other title hopefuls saw their dreams of glory fading away from the beginning of the event. Giovanardi crashed twice over Thursday and Friday; a very disrupted qualifying session placed him and Dirk well behind Priaulx on the grid. The Alfa man's title fight was over in Race 1 as a suspension failure caused him to crash, and in vain he tried to get what was left of his car back to the pits.

Müller's lasted a bit longer. Victim of a collision with Larini at the end of Race 1, when he was in the points, he then dropped to 10th. His final hopes were lost when his car smashed into the barriers on the third lap of Race 2 while trying to recover.

BMW did the double by also winning the Manufacturers' Championship. A glorious day for the German manufacturer who had already won the only previous World Touring Car Championship, held in 1987, with Roberto Ravaglia.

Marc Hennerici, who has led the Independents Trophy from the very first race of the season, finally clinched the title surviving the crashes that eliminated his rivals Coronel and Cirò.

The celebrations for the new champions did not shadow the great performances put in from Augusto Farfus and Duncan Huisman, who scored their first victories in the championship. Not a surprise for the Dutchman, who had already won the Guia Race three times in the past, but definitely for the young Brazilian, who had never seen this difficult track before.



WTCC LG Guia Race of Macau – Presented by Sociedade de Jogos de Macau
Rounds 19 & 20 – Circuito da Guia, Macau – 18th / 20th November 2005

www.fiawtcc.com – www.macau.grandprix.gov.mo

RACE 1 – FARFUS WINS, GIOVANARDI CRASHES

Augusto Farfus won his first FIA WTCC race at the wheel of his Alfa Romeo 156. Second place went to Andy Priaulx while Rickard Rydell completed the podium. The results meant that Priaulx was leading the championship with 93 points - a margin of 7 ahead of Dirk Müller.

At the start Priaulx got away well but was overtaken by André Couto at the first corner. Jörg Müller went wide entering Lisboa bend. He hit the wall, bounced back, collected Robert Huff and they in turn collected Tom Coronel. The all of the cars were extensively damaged and blocked the track resulting in the race being suspended and then restarted under safety car conditions for one lap.

New regulations meant that one extra lap was added and the race began after a rolling start. On the straight Dirk Müller overtook Chevrolet's Alain Menu for fourth. André Couto lost control of his car at Lisboa and handed Priaulx the lead with Augusto Farfus close behind. Lap three saw Fabrizio Giovanardi stray wide at Lisboa but he did continue. On the next lap Priaulx was overtaken by Farfus and a tight battle began for the rest of the race, with Priaulx putting the Alfa man under great pressure; while Rickard Rydell was closely chasing them in third position. The Briton mounted many attacks at the Lisboa bend but without success. Meanwhile, title contender Dirk Müller, was placed fourth. Giovanardi, the third man within reach of the championship, lost all chances of victory when, at turn 16, he crashed due to a broken suspension. His car was able to move despite the fact it was without its front right left wheel but the Italian soon ground to a halt. The final lap saw more drama as Dirk Müller fell from 4th to 10th after an incident. In spite of suffering from an aching back, after being involved in the pile up at the start, Stefano D'Aste won the independent race with 11th position overall.

RACE 2 – HUISMAN SCORES ANOTHER WIN IN MACAU

Andy Priaulx claimed the FIA WTCC. Dirk Müller, who was the only other driver in a position to become champion, crashed into the Lisboa bend on lap three of the second race and did not finish. Giovanardi did not start the race due to the damage obtained in Race 1.

In the race, Duncan Huisman came from third to first off the start and held onto pole for the entire race while Priaulx came from 7th to 2nd. Alain Menu claimed 3rd position and achieved Chevrolet's first podium. The Lacetti's durability was tested however as Menu scraped the wall at Lisboa for two consecutive laps in the opening of the race. The corner was not as forgiving for Stefano D'Aste however, because on lap 2 he crashed and did not continue. James Thompson also had problems during the second lap and retired to the pits shortly afterwards.

Lap three saw Carl Rosenblad's crash, handing the independent lead to Adriano De Micheli but this was short lived as the JAS Motorsport man was involved in an accident with Peter Scharmach, Robert Huff and Marc Hennerici at Fishermen's bend. Following this incident, Giuseppe Cirò was the only independent driver to complete the race. The safety car was deployed for a period of 4 laps while the four cars and their debris were cleared. On the penultimate lap Nicola Larini went straight at Lisboa losing fourth position.

Menu was later excluded by the Stewards because on one litre of fuel was left in his car's tank, compared to the three required by the regulations.



ROUNDS 19 & 20 RACE QUOTES

Andy PRIAULX, BMW Team UK – 2nd in Race 1 and 2nd in Race 2 2005 FIA WORLD TOURING CAR CHAMPION

“It is really just a strange feeling at the moment. Macau is so special. To qualify on pole meant a lot but I felt that only 10% of the work was done. After Race 1 was over and I learnt Dirk had finished 10th and Giovanardi did not finish, it looked good for me. The pressure was still there though. It was great during the race when I heard I was world champion. This year was harder than last year; it really has been a tough season but I was always focused on the end result. I feel we have been quick at important times and this has been key.”

Dr Mario THEISSEN, BMW Motorsport Director

“There have only been two touring car world champions and I am very happy that both were BMW drivers and Andy is one of them. Last year when Andy won the ETCC we gave him a test drive in a Formula 1 car as a gift. I think we will now have to invent a whole new series because you can't better that.”

Augusto FARFUS, Alfa Romeo Racing – 1st in Race 1 and 3rd in Race 2

“I feel really great that I have achieved my first race win. It was my first time here and before we came, all the other drivers kept saying ‘you wait, it's so difficult.’ I think it is the hardest track in the championship but I learnt it fast and did my job. I have had great fun this weekend.”

Duncan HUISMAN, BMW Team Holland – 6th in Race 1 and 1st in Race 2

“It's good to be back in Macau. The fact that I had no ballast was no disadvantage shall we say. I think I had some bad luck. In qualifying it was so difficult to get a good time with the red flags and then in Race 1 I hit Giovanardi when he crashed. I was lucky to finish and in such a position that enabled me to go on to win Race 2.”

Rickard RYDELL, SEAT Sport – 3rd in Race 1 and 7th in Race 2

“I'm not sure I could have won Race 1 because the León is not that fast on the straight and it was quite difficult. I had Dirk behind me so in order to stop him from overtaking I had to go slow at the beginning of the lap then push to get a gap before we hit the straight. I'm really pleased with this result. Now we need to work on the car a bit more for next year.”



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Alain MENU, Chevrolet Racing – 5th in Race 1 and DSQ in Race 2

“This result is great for Chevrolet and the team. It was our aim this season to finish on the podium and it has finally been achieved, on the last race, and on a difficult circuit. This championship is very competitive and as a newcomer it has been tough for Chevrolet. We want to be fighting for wins next year so there will be lots of hard work happening over the winter.”

NB – Menu was exluded, but the team have appealed the decision

Stefano D’ASTE, Proteam Motorsport – 11th in Race 1 and DNF in Race 2

“I was involved in the accident at the start of Race 1 and was hit badly at the back of my car. For the whole race I had bad pain in my back and it hurt to push the clutch, which was especially problematic here because you have to use it a lot. The car was good, the team was good, I am happy with the win.”

Giuseppe CIRÒ, Proteam Motorsport – DNF in Race 1 and 8th in Race 2

“This is a good result considering it is my first professional championship at such a high level. To be honest I came here with hopes of winning the independent trophy but after the accident in Race 1 I knew this was not possible. However, I have to give my thanks to my team and mechanics who enabled me to go out and win in Race 2.”