

ROUNDS 5 & 6 – MARRAKECH, MOROCCO RACE REPORT

Weather: sunny and warm, with a dry track

CHEVROLET CLAIM DOUBLE VICTORY IN MARRAKECH

The first visit of the WTCC to the new street circuit in Marrakech provided two exciting races and hailed double success for the new Chevrolet Cruze.

On its third event since the maiden appearance in Curitiba two months ago, the blue and white saloon run by RML made a big leap forward, which resulted in Robert Huff and Nicola Larini winning one race apiece.

After a four race winning streak in Brazil and Mexico, the SEAT TDI cars had to settle for podium positions and points. However, reigning world champion Yvan Muller managed to stretch his leading margin in the Drivers' Championship to 12 points ahead of his team-mate Gabriele Tarquini.

In the second race Jörg Müller had the chance to claim BMW's first win of the season as he led from Chevrolet and SEAT; however the German driver could not rebuff the pressure from his chasers.

The first edition of the WTCC Race of Morocco ran smoothly. The efforts made by the event promoter and the local authorities ensured the event took place without issues and was attended by a crowd of 48,000.

The championship will resume in Pau, France, on May 17th, for rounds 7 and 8.

RACE 1 – CHEVROLET CRUZE TAKES FIRST WIN

Robert Huff converted his pole into a win for Chevrolet, the first for the new Cruze car only on its fifth race.

Huff led the field from the start to finish with Gabriele Tarquini behind him the whole way to take second. Jordi Gené overtook Yvan Muller on the penultimate lap to secure third. Moroccan driver Mehdi Bennani achieved a fantastic start from 14th and stormed home ninth overall to take the Independents trophy with style.

Augusto Farfus was challenged hard by Tom Coronel for 12th position but in the end the Dutchman made a mistake at turn 11 on lap 10 and lost the battle. Farfus' team-mate Jörg Müller was the fastest BMW and his eighth place finish meant pole in Race 2. Fellow BMW driver Alessandro Zanardi retired from the race on lap four.

The safety car was deployed at the end of the first lap after an incident involving Müller, Alain Menu and Rickard Rydell resulted in the latter being squeezed into the wall at turn two and incurring race-ending damage to his car.

Man of the race

In his debut appearance Mehdi Bennani drove fantastically to compete with the best. He qualified 14th but after a great start managed to promote himself to ninth in lap one and keep hold of it for the duration of the race. In his Exagon Engineering SEAT León, the local driver won the Independents' Trophy.

Key moment

The start was pivotal to Huff's success. He managed skilfully to keep the SEAT Sport cars of Tarquini, Muller and Gené at bay and by the end of the first lap had created a slight gap. With the deployment of the safety car the Briton could not rest on his laurels and managed to keep the trio at bay once again at the restart.



Withdrawals

R. Rydell : race incident; A. Zanardi: pierced radiator; K. Poulsen: race incident.

RACE 2 – FIRST WTCC VICTORY FOR LARINI

The second race saw Nicola Larini celebrate his first ever WTCC win. Yvan Muller took second place ahead of Race 1 winner Robert Huff.

Jörg Müller led until lap eight when he went wide at turn 15 allowing Larini, Muller and Huff through. The BMW Team Germany driver eventually finished fourth ahead of Tarquini, Farfus and Monteiro. Franz Engstler took the final point in eighth as well as the Independent win.

Andy Priaulx was in contention for points until lap 11 where he missed the braking point at turn 7 – he retired to the pits on the next lap. Mehdi Bennani also went straight at the same point on lap 11 but continued to finish 10th and third independent.

The safety car was deployed for two laps at the start after Hernández's car was stranded in an unsafe place.

Man of the race

Nicola Larini has come nail-bitingly close to winning many a race in the WTCC's five year history. However, this was his first taste of victory. With a mixture of determination and control the Italian waited for Jörg Müller to make the slightest mistake and pounced to take the lead. With the chequered flag in his sights he didn't falter in the final five laps.

Key moment

Jörg Müller was set to claim the win until he went wide at turn 15 of lap eight. Losing the back of his car and having to recover allowed Larini to charge through. It got worse for the German driver as Muller and Huff also overtook. It was this point that determined the race winner.

Withdrawals

J. Gené: electrical problems; K. Poulsen: incident; G. Tanev: incident; S. Hernández: incident; V. Postiglione: incident; V. Shapovalov: brakes; S. D'Aste: driveshaft; A. Priaulx; flat spotted tyres.

THE WORD TO THE WINNERS

Robert HUFF – winner of Race 1, third in Race 2

“Congratulations to Nicola, his win has been a long time coming. As for me, I managed to get through the first corner of Race 1 first and that meant I had every chance to stay there. The car was fantastic but I struggled slightly with the brakes after four laps. It seems Tarquini also had the same problems though and I kept in front. Race 2 was a great fight with Yvan. He is the hardest man in the world to get past so in the end I settled for third.”

Nicola LARINI – winner of Race 2, 6th in Race 1

“Finally I won a WTCC race! This is a fantastic day for me and the team especially coming from Puebla where we got just one point. For Chevrolet to achieve two wins this weekend is incredible. I can't believe it – it seems like a dream.”

2009 FIA World Touring Car Championship RACE 1 - PROVISIONAL CLASSIFICATION

POS	NO	CL	DRIVER	NAT	CAR	TIME	LAPS	GAP	KPH	BEST
1	11		Robert HUFF	GBR	Chevrolet Cruze	24:04.240	12		135.80	1:50.833
2	2		Gabriele TARQUINI	ITA	SEAT Leon TDI	24:05.969	12	1.729	135.63	1:51.183
3	4		Jordi GENE	ESP	SEAT Leon TDI	24:09.823	12	5.583	135.27	1:51.144
4	1		Yvan MULLER	FRA	SEAT Leon TDI	24:11.284	12	7.044	135.14	1:51.087
5	5		Tiago MONTEIRO	POR	SEAT Leon TDI	24:11.650	12	7.410	135.10	1:51.339
6	14		Nicola LARINI	ITA	Chevrolet Cruze	24:12.817	12	8.577	134.99	1:51.418
7	12		Alain MENU	SUI	Chevrolet Cruze	24:13.283	12	9.043	134.95	1:51.322
8	7		Jorg MULLER	GER	BMW 320si	24:14.079	12	9.839	134.88	1:51.300
9	30	I	Mehdi BENNANI	MAR	SEAT Leon	24:14.638	12	10.398	134.82	1:50.926
10	6		Andy PRIAULX	GBR	BMW 320si	24:15.251	12	11.011	134.77	1:51.055
11	25	I	Franz ENGSTLER	GER	BMW 320si	24:17.097	12	12.857	134.60	1:51.355
12	8		Augusto FARFUS	BRA	BMW 320si	24:21.273	12	17.033	134.21	1:51.642
13	23	I	Felix PORTEIRO	ESP	BMW 320si	24:31.995	12	27.755	133.24	1:52.255
14	10		Sergio HERNANDEZ	ESP	BMW 320si	24:32.527	12	28.287	133.19	1:52.528
15	28	I	Marin COLAK	CRO	SEAT Leon	24:35.727	12	31.487	132.90	1:52.733
16	27	I	Stefano D'ASTE	ITA	BMW 320si	24:39.033	12	34.793	132.60	1:52.483
17	19		Kirill LADYGIN	RUS	LADA 110	24:39.169	12	34.929	132.59	1:52.565
18	31	I	Vito POSTIGLIONE	ITA	BMW 320si	24:46.653	12	42.413	131.92	1:53.384
19	24	I	George TANEV	BUL	BMW 320si	24:48.184	12	43.944	131.79	1:53.401
20	18		Jaap van LAGEN	NED	LADA 110	24:59.261	12	55.021	130.81	1:52.996
21	21	I	Tom CORONEL	NED	SEAT Leon	25:06.136	12	1:01.896	130.21	1:51.600
22	20		Viktor SHAPOVALOV	RUS	LADA 110	22:55.248	11	1 LAP	130.72	1:53.264

NOT CLASSIFIED

26	I	Kristian POULSEN	DEN	BMW 320si	9:29.521	4	D.N.F.	114.79	1:53.627
9		Alessandro ZANARDI	ITA	BMW 320si	7:30.946	3	D.N.F.	108.73	1:54.104
3		Rickard RYDELL	SWE	SEAT Leon TDI		0	D.N.F.	N/A	

FASTEST LAP

11		Robert HUFF		Chevrolet Cruze	1:50.833	8	147.46kph	91.63mph
30	I	Mehdi BENNANI		SEAT Leon	1:50.926	7	147.34kph	91.55mph

Subject to Technical Scrutineering
Weather/Track: Sun 27°/Dry 54°

Marrakech
Circuit Length = 4.5400 km.
Start: 13:03 End: 13:27

Race Director:	Steward:	Timekeeper:
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2009 FIA World Touring Car Championship RACE 2 - PROVISIONAL CLASSIFICATION

POS	NO	CL	DRIVER	NAT	CAR	TIME	LAPS	GAP	KPH	BEST
1	14		Nicola LARINI	ITA	Chevrolet Cruze	27:29.960	13		128.77	1:51.216
2	1		Yvan MULLER	FRA	SEAT Leon TDI	27:31.359	13	1.399	128.66	1:51.750
3	11		Robert HUFF	GBR	Chevrolet Cruze	27:31.738	13	1.778	128.63	1:51.517
4	7		Jorg MULLER	GER	BMW 320si	27:32.688	13	2.728	128.56	1:51.300
5	2		Gabriele TARQUINI	ITA	SEAT Leon TDI	27:33.028	13	3.068	128.53	1:51.440
6	8		Augusto FARFUS	BRA	BMW 320si	27:33.951	13	3.991	128.46	1:51.602
7	5		Tiago MONTEIRO	POR	SEAT Leon TDI	27:34.867	13	4.907	128.39	1:51.346
8	25	I	Franz ENGSTLER	GER	BMW 320si	27:36.739	13	6.779	128.24	1:51.995
9	21	I	Tom CORONEL	NED	SEAT Leon	27:41.044	13	11.084	127.91	1:52.065
10	30	I	Mehdi BENNANI	MAR	SEAT Leon	27:45.604	13	15.644	127.56	1:52.172
11	23	I	Felix PORTEIRO	ESP	BMW 320si	28:01.873	13	31.913	126.33	1:53.512
12	19		Kirill LADYGIN	RUS	LADA 110	28:03.648	13	33.688	126.19	1:52.838
13	28	I	Marin COLAK	CRO	SEAT Leon	28:08.998	13	39.038	125.79	1:54.161
14	27	I	Stefano D'ASTE	ITA	BMW 320si	26:29.288	12	1 LAP	123.40	1:53.118
15	18		Jaap van LAGEN	NED	LADA 110	28:56.292	12	1 LAP	112.95	1:54.312
16	6		Andy PRIAULX	GBR	BMW 320si	23:54.738	11	2 LAPS	125.30	1:51.905
17	12		Alain MENU	SUI	Chevrolet Cruze	28:44.644	10	3 LAPS	94.76	1:51.017
18	20		Viktor SHAPOVALOV	RUS	LADA 110	20:21.738	9	4 LAPS	120.39	1:53.232

NOT CLASSIFIED

31	I	Vito POSTIGLIONE	ITA	BMW 320si	12:44.372	5	D.N.F.	106.91	1:55.191
10		Sergio HERNANDEZ	ESP	BMW 320si		0	D.N.F.	N/A	
24	I	George TANEV	BUL	BMW 320si		0	D.N.F.	N/A	
26	I	Kristian POULSEN	DEN	BMW 320si		0	D.N.F.	N/A	
4		Jordi GENE	ESP	SEAT Leon TDI		0	D.N.F.	N/A	

FASTEST LAP

12		Alain MENU		Chevrolet Cruze	1:51.017	8	147.22kph	91.47mph
25	I	Franz ENGSTLER		BMW 320si	1:51.995	7	145.93kph	90.68mph

Subject to Technical Scrutineering.
Weather/Track: Sun 29°/Dry 53°

Marrakech
Circuit Length = 4.5400 km.
Start: 14:19 End: 14:46

Race Director:	Steward:	Timekeeper:
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2009 FIA WORLD TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP - DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

position	# - driver	Curitiba (BRA)		Puebla (MEX)		Marrakech (MAR)		Pau (FRA)		Valencia (ESP)		Brno (CZE)		Porto (POR)		Brands Hatch (GBR)		Oschersleben (GER)		Imola (ITA)		Okayama (JPN)		Macau (CHN)		TOTAL
		8 March	15 March	22 March	29 March	3 May	17 May	31 May	21 June	5 July	19 July	6 September	20 September	1 November	22 November											
1	Yvan MULLER (FRA)	10	5	5	10	5	8																		43	
2	Gabriele TARQUINI (ITA)	5	10	3	1	8	4																			31
3	Rickard RYDELL (SWE)	6	8	10	6	0	0																			30
4	Jordi GENÉ (ESP)	8	6	2	2	6	0																			24
5	Augusto FARFUS (BRA)	4	3	8	5	0	3																			23
6	Robert HUFF (GBR)	0	0	0	0	10	6																			16
7	Andy PRIAULX (GBR)	2	0	6	8	0	0																			16
8	Nicola LARINI (ITA)	0	0	1	0	3	10																			14
9	Jörg MÜLLER (GER)	0	4	4	0	1	5																			14
10	Sergio HERNÁNDEZ (ESP)	3	0	0	4	0	0																			7
11	Tiago MONTEIRO (POR)	0	0	0	0	4	2																			6
12	Alessandro ZANARDI (ITA)	0	0	0	3	0	0																			3
13	Félix PORTEIRO (ESP)	1	2	0	0	0	0																			3
14	Alain MENU (SUI)	0	0	0	0	2	0																			2
15	Franz ENGSTLER (GER)	0	0	0	0	0	1																			1
15	Tom CORONEL (NED)	0	1	0	0	0	0																			1

2009 FIA WORLD TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP - MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

position	manufacturer	Curitiba (BRA)		Puebla (MEX)		Marrakech (MAR)		Pau (FRA)		Valencia (ESP)		Brno (CZE)		Porto (POR)		Brands Hatch (GBR)		Oschersleben (GER)		Imola (ITA)		Okayama (JPN)		Macau (CHN)		TOTAL	
		8 March	15 March	22 March	29 March	3 May	17 May	31 May	21 June	5 July	19 July	6 September	20 September	1 November	22 November												
1	SEAT	18	18	15	16	14	12																			93	
2	BMW	11	11	14	13	7	8																				64
3	CHEVROLET	2	7	4	7	15	16																				51
4	LADA	7	3	5	3	3	3																				24