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Report: Race Report, Monza 2007

FIA GT3 European Championship
MONZA - Race 1
25.6.07

FIRST VICTORY OF THE SEASON FOR A CORVETTE

With their powerful engines, the Corvettes were logically the favourites on this fast track. But to win for the first time of the season, Luca Pirri and Jürgen von Gartzen had to fight really hard at the beginning of the race. In the nr 18 Martini Callaway Racing Corvette Z06R GT3, Pirri and von Gartzen finally won, and came back to second position in the FIA GT3 European Championship, half-way through the season. Bradley Ellis and Ed Morris, in the nr 8 RPM Dodge Viper Competition Coupe finished second, the best result for a Dodge so far, and Italian drivers Diego Alessi and Alex Frassinetti (nr 23 BMS Scuderia Italia Aston Martin DBRS9) were third on the podium.

Luca PIRRI and Jürgen von GARTZEN win and rejoin the Championship race

Since the beginning of this week-end, the Corvettes have been on top. But it was not easy for Luca Pirri and Jürgen von Gartzen to win this race, in the nr 18 Martini Callaway Racing Corvette Z06R GT3. At the beginning of the race, with a strong and wonderful fight between five different cars, the outcome was really undecided. It was hard to tell the difference between Gilles Vannelet's nr 38 Kessel Racing Ferrari 430, the nr 15 S-Berg Racing Lamborghini Gallardo GT3 driven by Erik Janis, Diego Alessi's nr 23 BMS Scuderia Italia Aston Martin DBRS9, the nr 8 RPM Dodge Viper Competition Coupe driven by Bradley Ellis and Luca Pirri's Corvette. All of those drivers were leading the race for a while, but a few of them had trouble, as Luca Pirri had expected. *"I went off in the Parabolica in the first lap, then I took it easy as I knew that something was going to happen at the front"* explains Luca Pirri. And he was right. First Janis lost several positions when he went straight at the first chicane, then Gilles Vannelet, the Championship leader with his team-mate Henri Moser, went off. The French driver managed to get back on the track, but he lost a lap. *"When we saw the Ferraris out, we knew that we had to push to win that race, in order to come back in the race for the Championship."* So Pirri chose to save tyres and fuel. And that was the right strategy, as Jürgen von Gartzen was able to make the difference in the second part of the race. *"Luca Pirri did a fantastic job" he said. "My car was great, our tyres were perfect, and I was able to push as much as I wanted."* So von Gartzen went back to first position, after overtaking the nr 23 BMS Scuderia Italia Aston Martin DBRS9 then the nr 8 RPM Dodge Viper Competition Coupe, and decided to save fuel at the end. *"I haven't raced here since 1993, so it is great to be home and to win here"* said Pirri, as a conclusion.

Luca Pirri and Jürgen von Gartzen won their first victory of the season, and are now second in the FIA GT3 European Driver Championship with 21 points, 5 points behind the leaders, Henri Moser and Gilles Vannelet. For the second time in a row, Vannelet and Moser did not score any points.



Stephane Daoudi and Ian Khan, with a technical problem, did not score any points either. So After 5 races out of 10 this season, the FIA GT3 European Championship is far from being decided.

Report: Second Qualifying Rundown, Monza 2007

Qualifying 2 rundown from Monza

- 1st Corvette Z06R GT3 : Klaus Ludwig - Martini Callaway Racing nr 18
- 1st Ferrari 430 : Henri Moser - Kessel Racing nr 36
- 1st Dodge Viper Competition Coupe : Ed Morris - RPM nr 8
- 1st Ford GT : Thomas Mutsch - Matech Racing nr 43
- 1st Ascari KZ1R GT3 : Andrew Thompson - Damax nr 28
- 1st Aston Martin DBRS9 : Alex Frassinetti - BMS Scuderia Italia nr 23
- 1st Lamborghini Gallardo : Jaromir Jirik - S-Berg Racing Team nr 15
- 1st Porsche 997 GT3 Cup: Darryl O'Young - Trackspeed Racing nr 5
- 1st Morgan Aero : Johan-Boris Scheier - AutoGT Racing nr 51

Qualifying Sessions report

The CORVETTES are unbeatable

The fastest track of the season seems to suit the Corvette very well, as in both sessions, a Martini Callaway Racing Corvette Z06R GT3 got the pole position. And while the first session, where Italian Driver Luca Pirri was the fastest, eight different makes were in the eight first positions, in the second qualifying session, the Corvettes set the three fastest times. So, it is clear that over one lap the Corvettes are fast here, but in a one hour race, everything could be different!

FIRST POLE FOR LUCA PIRRI

Italian driver Luca Pirri has not raced in Monza for 14 years! So for his return to his home track, the Martini Callaway Racing driver was really happy to set the pole position with a lap of 1.54.207. "In 14 years a lot has changed here ! For me it is really special to get the pole position here, and now we are concentrating on the race, we want to win both of them" declared Luca Pirri. But with eight different cars in the top 8, and eleven cars in two seconds, the first race is going to be tough. "Over one lap the Corvette are fastest, but we will see how consistent they are going to be in a one hour race" analysed Erik Janis, second in the nr 15 S-Berg Racing Lamborghini Gallardo.

FIRST FREE PRACTICE : Klaus Ludwig gets off to a good

The nr 28 Damax Ascari KZ1R GT3 was the first car to set a significant time, in front of the nr 25 Hexis Racing Aston Martin DBRS9 and the nr 31 Team Berlanga Ascari KZ1R. But of course, the times improved a lot during the session. The Ascaris were the fastest of the first part of this session, and the nr 28 Damax Ascari was leading the session when the red flag came out, because of the nr 24 BMS Scuderia Italia Aston Martin DBRS9, which was stuck on the track with a gear box problem.

At the restart, Klaus Ludwig, in the nr 16 Martini Callaway Racing



Corvette Z06R set the fastest time with a lap of 1.54.976. The nr 28 Damax Ascari, the nr 15 S-Berg Racing Lamborghini Gallardo and the nr 38 Kessel Racing Ferrari 430 each occupied second position for a while. With a lap of 1.55.6, the nr 38 Kessel Racing Ferrari finally finished the session in second position ahead of the nr 32 Team Berlanga Ascari, and nr 15 S-Berg Racing Lamborghini. However, in this first free practice session, nobody was able to beat Klaus Ludwig's time.