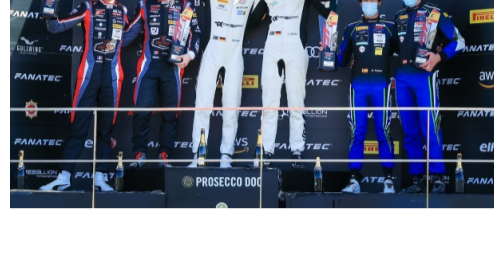
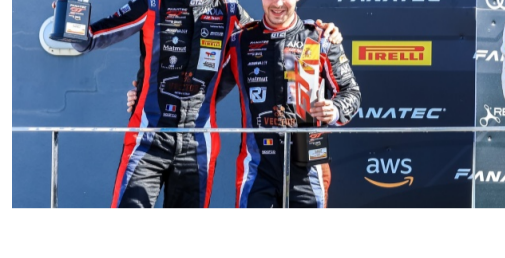


GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE (Sprint) : Pole, victory (Sprint Cup) & podiums!

26-09-2021

#News

Final Sprint event of the season, the round held at Valencia allowed Team AKKA-ASP to pick up some new titles in the GT World Challenge Europe. In Valencia, their resumé got padded out some more: pole and victory in Silver Cup in the 100th Sprint race of the championship for Konstantin Tereschenko and Jim Pla (#87) after getting a podium that same morning, an overall podium (P3) for Timur Boguslavskiy and Raffaele Marciello (#88) in Race 1, and an overall podium (P2) for Petru Umbrurescu and Jules Gounon (#89) in Race 2, and lastly, another victory (the 3rd this season) for the technical crew for the Pit-stop Challenge. At the end, Timur Boguslavskiy and Raffaele Marciello (#88) are on the 3rd step of the Overall Sprint Cup podium for the drivers, whereas Konstantin Tereschenko and Jim Pla (#87) wrap up the season with 3rd place for drivers in the Silver Cup Sprint Cup. In two weeks, the Barcelona circuit will welcome the Endurance finale of the GT World Challenge Europe where there are still lots of points to take for the overall teams and drivers titles.



The Team AKKA-ASP drivers quickly found their marks on the 4km of the Ricardo Tormo circuit in Valencia. Raffaele Marciello (#88) set the best time in the private test sessions (and then again in Free Practice). His teammates were equally at ease, as Jules Gounon (#89) set the second best lap time, and Jim Pla (#87) fifth, quickest in the Silver Cup. Up until the free practice sessions, it had been relatively cloudy, but the clouds parted and let the sun and heat through. In the wake of Timur Boguslavskiy and Lello Marciello (#88), Petru Umbrurescu and Jules Gounon (#89) finished in the Top 6, while Konstantin Tereschenko and Jim Pla (#87) entered into the Silver Top 5 (P11 overall).

Pre-qualifying was the occasion to take a few risks in terms of setup. It paid off for the crew of the #89 who took 3rd place, the #87 finished 7th Silver, and the #88 was P24.



No fewer than 27 cars were lined up for the qualifying session of this 2021 Sprint Cup finale. During the first session, Timur Boguslavskiy (#88) had a great sign off by setting the 5th best time. Also very quick against the competition, Konstantin Tereschenko (#87) was 9th and in the Silver Top 5. Petru Umbrurescu (#89) unfortunately saw his best time cancelled for not respecting the track limits and fell to 15th place.

The teams also performed strongly in the second qualifying session, but there were a lot of track limit violations too. It was just as hot on track as it was under their helmets... Straight to the front, Jules Gounon (#89) set the tone by placing himself at the top of the timing sheet. The Frenchman held onto his overall pole position right until the end of the session, to then lose it by a mere 0.007s! Jim Pla (#87) was also at optimal efficiency and slid into the wake of the sister car, finishing 3rd overall, and claimed the final pole in the Silver Cup in 2021. Raffaele Marciello (#88) had a big upset; having seen his best time cancelled (for track limit violations), he then suffered from mechanical issues in the last part of the session. It was impossible for him to head back out on track, and the Italian had to make do with the 23rd best time...



Race 1: Performance and speed - the best lap in the race and two podiums!

Sun and blue skies were the order of the day for the 99th race in the history of the Sprint Cup and the penultimate race of the 2021 season. Although the title had already been decided, there were still many prizes to be won, so all focus was on the sport.

As the lights went green, Timur Boguslavskiy (#88) had an especially good start and passed from 5th to 3rd place. Caught up in the turbulence of the field, Konstantin Tereschenko (#87) and Petru Umbrurescu (#89) were victims of contacts and lost a few places, respectively falling from 9th to 14th place (P4 Silver), and from 15th to 18th. But by the end of this first lap, the safety car came out on track. Ten minutes later, the restart quickly put Timur Boguslavskiy (#88) under pressure. Despite a remarkable resistance, the Russian driver had to relinquish a place a few laps later (P4 overall). Another period under safety car preceded the opening of the driver change window, then Timur Boguslavskiy handed the wheel of the #88 over to Raffaele Marciello. He was followed by Konstantin Tereschenko (#87), still 4th Silver, who passed the relay over to Jim Pla, and lastly by Petru Umbrurescu (#89), 15th, handing the car over to Jules Gounon.

Right from the start, Lello Marciello (#88) was on the offensive and the Italian set the best lap time in the race in the 16th lap (1'32.649). Jules Gounon (#89) was not going to dawdle (P9) and neither was Jim Pla (#87), on the hunt for another Silver podium. The three AKKA-ASP drivers set a quick pace. With 12' to go, the two cars preceding Raffaele Marciello (#88) hit each other. The driver of the #88 avoided the incident and continued in P3, a position that he would keep right until the chequered flag, and that would allow the crew to climb once more onto the podium. Jules Gounon (#89) continued on his run and finished the race in the top 6. In the Silver Cup, Jim Pla (#87) took 3rd place in the category after the leader suffered a drive through. The duo of Pla-Tereschenko now had two victories and two podiums. The final race of the season was promising a great battle.

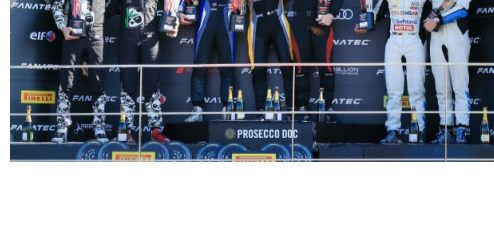
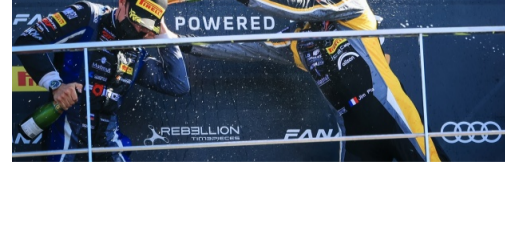


Race 2: Silver Pole and victory (#87) for the 100th race and overall podium (P2/#89)!

The final race of the Sprint season also marked the 100th race of the category since its creation. It was a great opportunity to celebrate the championship and the discipline under a warm and sunny sky. As in the first race, the start was quickly followed (2nd lap) by a safety car. After starting in P2 and P3 (P1 Silver) respectively, Jules Gounon (#89) and Jim Pla (#87) kept their positions at the restart, while Raffaele Marciello (#88), who started from the last quarter of the grid (P23), went into "recovery" mode. After 20', the Italian had already made up 8 places.

At the front, Jules Gounon (#89) gave himself a bit of breathing space ahead of Jim Pla (#87), who had to contend with some tough rivals. The Silver leader was the first to reach the pits for the driver change, sitting in 5th place overall. Konstantin Tereschenko followed in the #87, keeping pace with his teammate and the leaders. Jules Gounon (#89) headed to the pitlane at the halfway point of the race, leaving Petru Umbrurescu in second place overall, a position that the Romanian would not fail to defend. Finally, Raffaele Marciello (#88) was the last to hand over his seat, and so Timur Boguslavskiy headed off in 11th...

The second part of the race was a bit tense. Petru Umbrurescu (#89), still in P2 and Konstantin Tereschenko (#87), still leading the Silver class, had to fight off the attacks from the competition, whereas Timur Boguslavskiy (#88) suffered from some quite strong attacks. In the end, there were few changes as they crossed the chequered flag. Petru Umbrurescu (#89) crossed the line second overall after a remarkable relay, and Konstantin Tereschenko (#87), just as competitive, took the third Silver victory for the crew of the #87 (after Magny-Cours and Misano). Timur Boguslavskiy (#88) finished 14th. Hats off to the technical crew who won the pit-stop challenge for the 3rd time.



In the GT World Challenge Europe Sprint Cup, Timur Boguslavskiy and Raffaele Marciello (#88) are on the 3rd step of the driver's Overall podium. Konstantin Tereschenko and Jim Pla (#87) closed the season in 3rd place in the drivers' Silver Cup Sprint Cup. The last meeting of the European GT3 season will be in two weeks (8-10 October), in Barcelona, for the Endurance finale.