

FIA WTCC NEWSLETTER

43 –31 October 2008

ROUTE TO MACAU FOR THE LAST STOP

The clock is ticking out for the 2008 FIA World Touring Car Championship. In less than two weeks the competitors will hit the track for the last two races of the season.

For the fourth consecutive year the FIA WTCC closing act will be staged on Macau's infamous 6.1-km Guia street circuit. On Sunday 16th November two 9 lap races will consecrate the 2008 Drivers' World Champion who will sit on the throne that has been Andy Priaux's since 2005.

Two men are still in contention, both racing for SEAT Sport: last year's WTCC runner up Yvan Muller and 2003 FIA European Touring Car champion Gabriele Tarquini. The Frenchman has a leading gap of 14 points with 20 to be awarded, which doesn't leave many chances to his Italian team-mate.

In the previous four appearances of Super 2000 cars at Macau, including the 2004 Guia Race, BMW have won six races out of eight, with only Augusto Farfus' Alfa Romeo and Alain Menu's Chevrolet breaking this winning streak in 2005 and 2007 respectively. Jörg Müller, the only man ever to win both the Macau Formula 3 Grand Prix and the Guia Race, claimed three of BMW's five victories.

THE YEAR OF THE SEAT

SEAT have already claimed the WTCC Manufacturers' Championship after Okayama's first race and now head to Macau to crown one of his men – Yvan Muller or Gabriele Tarquini – as the new Drivers' World champion.

During a triumphal year, the León cars obtained twelve victories and five pole positions out of the 22 races so far, managing to stop BMW domination that lasted since 2005.

"It has been a fantastic season and we have been fighting for that for several years. We have been given new technology from Tdi that has enabled us to do something more with the car," said SEAT Sport director Jaime Puig, pointing out the fact that this is the first World Championship won by a diesel-powered car.

"We are proud to say now that Spain has won all the three automobile world championships: Formula One with Fernando Alonso, WRC with Carlos Sainz and WTCC with SEAT."

KING ANDY STEPS DOWN THE THRONE

The WTCC races in Okayama marked the end of Andy Priaux's kingdom that lasted from the 2004 European Touring Car Championship.

After four consecutive FIA titles, the triple World Champion is now ready to abdicate in favour of Yvan Muller or Gabriele Tarquini.

"I have to face up to the fact that SEAT have been the fastest this year and although we have had a fantastic reign it is now over. I feel I have been beaten by the best team this year with great drivers. I want to congratulate them, and Yvan Muller who I think will win the title. From now on I just need to go out and get big points to move up the championship table and I am just going to look forward to Macau and not back," said Priaulx, commenting his defeat with the sportsmanship of a great champion.

MAXIMUM BALLAST FOR FIFTEEN

A record fifteen drivers will carry the maximum 70kg success ballast in the season's final race meeting at Macau, including the top-seven of the Drivers' Championship: from Yvan Muller to Augusto Farfus.

The remaining eight drivers laden by the 70 extra kilos are the race-by-race entries who, according to article 79 c) of the Sporting Regulations, must carry in the final event a ballast equal to the average of the top five success ballast weights.

A total of twenty-five drivers will have success ballast in Macau.

Success ballast – Macau

70 kg	Y. Muller, G. Tarquini, R. Huff, R. Rydell, A. Priaulx, J. Müller, A. Farfus, K. Ladygin, M. Orido, M. Kano, M. Choo, M. Marsh, A. Couto, J. Merszei, Let Kit Meng
65 kg	T. Coronel
53 kg	J. Gené
51 kg	F. Porteiro
48 kg	N. Larini, T. Monteiro
44 kg	A. Menu
32 kg	A. Zanardi
24 kg	J. Thompson
14 kg	S. Hernández
2 kg	S. D'Aste

PROTEAM MEN TO FIGHT FOR INDIE TROPHY

Like the Drivers' Championship, only two team mates are still involved in the fight to win the Independents' Trophy: Sergio Hernández, who leads by 29 points, and 2007 champion Stefano D'Aste.

Although the two Proteam Motorsport's men have been in a league of their own at Okayama, where Hernández claimed a brilliant third position overall in Race 2, they will face a strong opposition in Macau.

Franz Engstler of Liqui Moly Team has been able to threaten Proteam supremacy in the latest races and his experience of the Guia circuit may give him the boost he needs to clinch his first WTCC victory.

Other competitors with ambitions are the Wiechers-Sport duo formed by Hong Kong driver Matthew Marsh (third in Race 2 at Okayama) and Takayuki Aoki from Japan. While Jaap van Lagen is eager to prove that the Russian Bear Motorsport LADA cars are improving race after race and Singaporean Melvin Choo wishes to score points once again.

COUTO TESTED WITH N.TECHNOLOGY

Macanese driver André Couto had his first test in the N.technology Honda Accord car on Monday, October 27th, at the Okayama International Circuit.

The Italian team booked the Japanese circuit on Monday morning after the race day, in order to give Couto the chance to get used to the car that he will drive in the next World Touring Car Championship meeting at Macau, on November 15th and 16th.

Couto, who joined the team on Sunday and attended the races from the garage, tested for one hour on the dry track.

“The car is quite different from the Alfa Romeo 156 I drove last year. However, I feel quite comfortable with the team and I believe that with their help I can manage to get in tune with the Honda. I was very impressed by Thompson’s performance in Okayama; this proved that the car has a great potential and I am confident that it will be extremely competitive in Macau,” Couto commented.

MEDIA ACCREDITATION FOR 2009 WTCC

Media accreditation for the 2009 FIA World Touring Car Championship full season is now open.

Journalists and photographers who wish to apply for WTCC permanent media pass must file the proper accreditation form (available from the FIA Media Delegate) and return it via registered mail together with the required documents.

The deadline for application is November 12th, 2008.

COUNTDOWN: - 16 DAYS



to the 2008 FIA WTCC Race of Macau – 15th / 16th November in Macau