



GT WORLD CUP

**ENGEL REPEATS
THE TASTE OF
VICTORY**

RENATO MARQUES



UGOCHUKWU WINS FIRST-EVER FIA FR WORLD CUP

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MCLAREN development driver Ugo Ugochukwu claimed victory in the chaotic FIA FR World Cup Race that concluded this year's Macau Grand Prix program. The race, which was marred by multiple incidents and finished behind the Safety Car, highlighted the importance of securing a strong position in the final qualifying sessions that determine the starting grid.

Starting from pole position, Ugochukwu, who drives for the R-ace GP team, maintained his lead throughout the race, avoiding any mistakes during the three restarts. His performance earned him the win and secured his place in history as the first-ever FR World Champion.

Race officials explained that the start behind the Safety Car was not due to rain, which had affected the weekend's weather, but rather as a measure of "fairness." They noted that a standing start could unfairly

favor drivers on the racing line, which was drier than the rest of the track.

Having set the fastest lap in Qualifying 2 (Q2) with a time of 2:19.107, Ugochukwu solidified

his position by winning Saturday's Qualifying Race. Oliver Goethe finished second, and Noel León

took third, mirroring their results in Q2.

In Sunday's main race, Goethe, starting from the front row, successfully defended his position despite repeated challenges, particularly from León. However, the top three drivers—Ugochukwu, Goethe, and León—were able to maintain their positions as the gap between them remained small, with most of the race run behind the Safety Car following multiple incidents.

The final incident, which involved Freddie Slater crashing while attempting to overtake León for third place, brought out the Safety Car for the final time. Slater, attempting a late-braking move into Lisboa Bend, misjudged his maneuver and ended up in the barriers.

Enzo Deligny and Matteo de Palo completed the top five. Of the 27 cars that started the race, only 15 managed to finish, as numerous incidents caused several retirements, including a multi-car crash at Lisboa Bend on the opening lap. Local driver Tiago Rodrigues, who started from 17th on the grid, was also involved in the crash.

'A FEELING HARD TO PUT IN WORDS', UGOCHUKWU ON TRIUMPH IN MACAU

VICTORIA CHAN

UGO Ugochukwu expressed his delight with the win, saying, "Can't describe the feeling. Of course, I am super happy. It was quite a tricky race." The young driver said in a press conference after the race. He further elaborated on the challenges he faced, stating, "It was pushing the whole way. But, you know, I was confident in the pace. Ever since Q2 [Qualifying 2], we've been really quick."

The race was marked



by numerous safety car periods, which tested the drivers' ability to maintain their focus and execute perfect restarts. Ugochukwu navigated these

challenges with composure.

"Every safety car restart, I had to make sure I got it perfectly. Otherwise, in the slipstream, I would have

had to be really defensive into the first braking zone," Ugochukwu explained. "So, that was my full focus, getting good restarts and then just nailing the last few corners to give myself a bit of a gap."

Oliver Goethe, who finished in second place, acknowledged the difficulty of the race conditions, saying, "Ugo [Ugochukwu] did a great job with the restarts. Every time I got a bit closer, especially at the end, [I was never] close enough to make a move."

Goethe expressed his struggles with tire temperature and the challenging track conditions.

Third-place finisher Noel León also had his fair share of excitement, fending off a last-lap attack from Freddie Slater to secure the final spot on the podium.

"Everybody wants to send it to be on the podium, you know. So, it was a tricky race, especially for me in the last two corners," León said. "I knew he was going to do something crazy because, obviously, it's the last lap and you kind of decide after turn three who's going to be on the podium," he concluded.

TCR WORLD TOUR Michelisz crowned in Macau

RENATO MARQUES

NORBERT Michelisz (Hyundai Elantra N) has been crowned champion of the 2024 FIA TCR World Tour after the last round of the season (Race 2) in Macau.

With a slim advantage over Thed Björk (Lynk & Co 03) after Björk's win on Race 1, Michelisz knew that

he could not put one foot wrong on the final race of the season.

Without a race to remember, Michelisz controlled his pace and stayed safe from problems, finishing the last race of the season in fifth but three places ahead of his title rival Björk, who finished the race in eighth.

In the final standings, Michelisz won by 11 points

over Björk, with Mikel Azcona (Hyundai Elantra N) securing third place.

In a final race that got its start postponed due to the condition of the asphalt of Guia Circuit being battered by heavy rain yesterday morning, the Hondas of Dušan Borkovi, Esteban Guerrieri, and Marco Butti dominated, finishing 1-2-3.

Starting behind the sa-

RENATO MARQUES



fety car, this was a wet-to-dry race with some racers inclusively risking to go for slick tires, while the title contenders had a more conservative approach and started on wets.

Néstor Girolami (Hyundai Elantra N) also played an important role in Michelisz's win by placing himself right at the back of his teammate to defend his back, while up front, the

contenders for the China TCR title were making most of the expenses of the race.

In the end, Michelisz closed the championship with a total of 323 points, 11 points more than Björk, with Azcona scoring 295 points in total.

In TCR China, the winner was Martin Xie (Honda Civic Type R FL5), who finished ninth overall, while Martin Cao (Hyundai Elantra N) settled for 11th position, which was enough to secure him the title, as his contender Jason Zhang (Lynk & Co 03) stopped on the final lap.

FIA GT World Cup

Engel adds to his success in thrilling race

RENATO MARQUES

MARO Engel (Mercedes-AMG) won what was arguably the best edition of the FIA GT World Cup to date. The weekend was full of surprises, making it nearly impossible to predict who would emerge victorious on Sunday. Both the Qualifying Race on Saturday and the main race on Sunday were thrilling spectacles, providing motorsport fans with a feast for the eyes.

Despite few interruptions or major issues, the GT World Cup delivered excitement throughout the weekend, with each session—spanning from Day 1 to Day 4—offering something new. Under changing conditions, Porsche appeared to have the upper hand after Day 1. However, by Friday, BMW seemed to have taken over, placing four cars in the top six during the Qualifying Race. This included the top two spots, with reigning champion Raffaele Marciello leading, followed by Dries Vanthoor.

Somewhat of a surprise, although completely justified by his performance, was the third-place finish of Antonio Fuoco in the Ferrari 296. Such a result placed Ferrari also in contention for the trophy.

Engel, in fourth, rounded out a competitive top four, with every manufacturer represented in the Top 10.

Sunday brought heavy rain, which led to the postponement of the second race in the TCR World Tour. The GT cars were the first to hit the track after the storm, and with poor visibility, the race began behind the Safety Car. After a few laps to adjust to the conditions, the Safety Car pulled in, and the race began in earnest, with overtaking attempts and action unfolding in multiple parts of the track—not just at the traditional braking point into Lisboa Bend.

With eight laps remaining, Dries Vanthoor, who had already lost a position to Fuoco in the Ferrari, collided with the wall at Faraway Hill, after being nudged by Engel. The impact severely damaged Vanthoor's BMW M4, forcing him to retire from the race. The incident was under investigation by Race Direction.

With Vanthoor out of the picture, Fuoco was free from pressure and soon realized he had the pace to challenge for



Antonio Fuoco



Maro Engel

the win. With just two laps to go, Fuoco passed Marciello at R Bend in a move similar to his earlier pass on Vanthoor. Marciello, not willing to give up the lead, immediately counterattacked Fuoco in every way he could.

As they approached Lisboa, Fuoco defended his position by taking the inside line. Both drivers braked late in an attempt

to hold their positions, resulting in contact. Neither could hit the ideal braking point, and both went straight into the escape road, handing the lead to Engel, who was running in third.

With just one lap to go, it seemed like the race was decided, but a penalty for Engel loomed. Race Direction handed him a 5-second penalty for the earlier contact with Van-

thoor. While the penalty wasn't enough to drop Engel from first, it forced him to push hard in the final lap to maintain his lead. He crossed the line with a gap of 6.641 seconds over second-place Augusto Farfus, who was driving another BMW M4.

Completing the podium was Sheldon Van Der Linde, also in a BMW M4. The top five was

rounded out by two Porsches 911 GT3 Rs, with Alessio Picariello and Laurens Vanthoor finishing fourth and fifth, respectively.

With this victory, Engel added another title to his career, having previously won the inaugural FIA GT World Cup. This also marked the third consecutive win for Mercedes-AMG in the event.

ENGEL EXPRESSES JOY FOR SECOND GT WORLD CUP VICTORY

VICTORIA CHAN

MARO Engel, expressed his delight at the victory, saying, "Incredible emotions. Incredible race for sure, a lot happening there, and for sure, it feels amazing," speaking in a press conference after the race the Mercedes-AMG driver admitted that they did not expect to win, especially in the dry conditions, but the rain proved to be their chance.

Engel also apologized to Dries Vanthoor for the incident earlier in the race, where the two came together, leading to a five-second penalty for the winner. "I want to say sorry to Dries [Vanthoor]. It's unfortunate we came together, I had no intention [to push him out], I went for a move, he tried to close it, we came together slightly, and I think he tagged the wall, so yeah, sorry to him for that," he said.

Augusto Farfus, who finished second for the new team from Macau (KRC), was also pleased with the result,



stating, "Macau is always a surprise box. This weekend was probably the hardest weekend I've had in Macau. We had all kinds of weather, we had all kinds of condi-

tions." Sheldon van der Linde, who secured his first Macau podium, spoke about the pressure he faced from the cars behind him, saying, "It was a bit unexpected, to be honest,

before the race, starting from P6. You never really expect to move three positions forward in Macau, especially where you can't overtake," the South African said.

RENATO MARQUES



71ST MACAU GRAND PRIX WINNERS LIST

FR WORLD CUP

- 1 – Ugo UGOCHUKWU (USA)
- 2 – Oliver GOETHE (DEU)
- 3 – Noel LEÓN (MEX)

GT WORLD CUP

- 1 – Maro ENGEL (DEU)
- 2 – Augusto FARFUS (BRA)
- 3 – Sheldon VAN DER LINDE (ZAF)

TCR WORLD TOUR

Race 1

- 1 – Thed BJÖRK (SWE)
- 2 – Norbert MICHELISZ (HUN)
- 3 – Mikel AZCONA (ESP)

Race 2

- 1 – Dušan BORKOVIĆ (SRB)
- 2 – Esteban GUERRIERI (ARG)
- 3 – Marco BUTTI (ITA)

MOTORCYCLE GP

- 1 – Davey TODD (GBR)
- 2 – Erno KOSTAMO (FIN)
- 3 – Peter HICKMAN (GBR)

GBA GT CUP

- 1 – HAN Lichao (CHN)
- 2 – YANG Xiaowei (CHN)
- 3 – TSE Wing Kin Kevin (HKG)

ROADSPORT CHALLENGE

- 1 – LEI Kit Meng (MAC)
- 2 – Jerónimo BADARACO (MAC)
- 3 – MOU Chi Fai (MAC)

ROADSPORT CHALLENGE – MACAU SAR CUP

- 1 – Damon CHAN (HKG)
- 2 – CHEANG Kin Sang (MAC)
- 3 – Ivan SZETO (HKG)

SPECTATORS: 101,000

