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2003 EUROPEAN TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP **BMW Strengthens Its Hold On The Championship At ETCC Rounds 15 & 16**

Oschersleben, Germany , September 22, 2003 ... Two strong wins from BMW Team Deutschland's Jörg Müller and BMW Team Great Britain's Andy Priaulx give BMW a 53-point lead in the Manufacturers' Championship as the ETCC goes to the final four races. Prior to this weekend (September 20-21), both drivers were in strong positions in the battle for the Drivers' title. Now, their results mean Jörg's lead for the title has gone from two points to five and Priaulx has been promoted to second place. The BMW Team Italy-Spain cars also showed winning potential with Fabrizio Giovanardi leading the opening laps of race two and Antonio Garcia finishing the race behind Priaulx, who won by just half a second.

BMW Team Deutschland – Schnitzer Motorsport - Charly Lamm:

"It was a very good weekend for us as Jörg was able to extend his lead in the Drivers' Championship. Mission accomplished at Oschersleben, a track which suits the BMW, and now it will be a tough fight to the end of the championship."

Dirk Müller (GER) –

Qual 8th; Race 1 – 9th; Race 2 – DNF

"My car was excellent, one of the best I have had this season. In race one on the first lap I had gearbox problems and I even went off the track and dropped down to 17th. It got better towards the end of the race, which I finished in 9th. In the second race I started behind Jörg and then Tarquini ran into the back of me on lap one. To avoid Jörg, I went straight over the chicane, hit something really hard and damaged the front bumper and radiator. It was okay for four or five laps but then started to leak fluid so I stopped as I did not want to risk the engine."

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Jörg Müller (GER)

Carrying 30 kilos (66 pounds) of ballast
Qual 1st, Race 1 – 1st, Race 2 – 4th

“It was a fantastic weekend for me as with thirty kilos, I was not expecting a win. The first race was tough as the tires went down on the last four or five laps, so I was lucky the guys behind me were fighting and making a few mistakes. I was not the fastest in the field, but I was the most consistent. The second race was brilliant. I am going to watch it on TV. It was good driving with Gabriele as it was very clean. There are still forty points to win in the championship battle, so it is not decided at all and the last two events are going to be as hard as it was here.”

BMW Team Great Britain – Bart Mampaey:

“It was a fantastic weekend for us with a superb third place for Andy in race one. He had a great start in the second race, was in a good fight at the beginning, got into first place on lap five and took advantage of that. Antonio was very fair with him, as we were with Jörg in the first race, so I think all in all it is a very good weekend for BMW and also for BMW Team Great Britain, RBM and Andy Priaulx.”

Andy Priaulx (GBR)

Carrying 10 kilos (22 pounds) of ballast
Qual 3rd, Race 1 – 3rd, Race 2 – 1st

“This is a BMW circuit and I wanted to make sure I made it a BMW circuit. I got a couple of good results out of it and am very pleased. Estoril and Monza are going to be very hard but if I keep finishing races and keep having good results then the championship is wide open for everybody.”

BMW Team Italy-Spain / Ravaglia Motorsport – Roberto Ravaglia

“Antonio was driving against Andy, who was fighting for the championship, and he said to me he didn’t take any risks as he wanted to finish. In the first race Fabrizio had tire problems and finished eighth and then had more problems in the second race.”

Fabrizio Giovanardi (ITA)

Qual 5th, Race 1 – 8th, Race 2 – DNF

“I had another bad weekend. I was hoping to be able to get my first good finish, but as you can see from the results this didn’t happen.”

Antonio Garcia (ESP)

Qual 4th, Race 1 – 4th, Race 2 – 2nd

“We were very competitive the whole weekend. We decided to go with old tires for the first race and I felt very confident with the car. I think I was faster than the front group as I caught them. In Race Two, I made a mistake at the start because the Alfa and the SEAT went to the middle and the gap between them was very small, which let Andy through. I was faster than him but on this track especially it is very difficult to overtake without contact. I pushed to try and force him to make a mistake, but he didn't make one.”

Results:

Race 1 - 14 laps- 1. Jörg Müller (GER/ BMW 320i) 22:09.081, 2. Gabriele Tarquini (ITA/Alfa Romeo) 22:09.793, 3. Andy Priaulx (GBR/BMW 320i) 22:10.133, 4. Antonio Garcia (ESP/ BMW 320i) 22:17.591, 5. Roberto Colciago (ITA/Alfa Romeo) 22:19.347, 6. Frank Diefenbacher (GER/SEAT) 22:23.096, 7. Tom Coronel (NED/BMW 320i) 22:25.496, 8. Fabrizio Giovanardi (ITA/BMW 320i) 22:25.998.

Race 2 - 13 laps- 1. Andy Priaulx (GBR/BMW 320i) 20:32.449, 2. Antonio Garcia (ESP/BMW 320i) 20:32.984, 3. Frank Diefenbacher (GER/SEAT) 20:34.679, 4. Jörg Müller (GER/ BMW 320i) 20:38.353, 5. Gabriele Tarquini (ITA/Alfa Romeo) 20:39.515, 6. Roberto Colciago (ITA/Alfa Romeo) 20:41.608, 7. Duncan Huisman (NED/BMW 320i) 20:42.051, 8. Nicola Larini (ITA/Alfa Romeo) 20:51.811. (race reduced to 13 laps after start aborted due to pole man Tom Coronel suffering a broken driveshaft on the grid.

Championship Positions:

Drivers: 1. J Müller 87, 2. Priaulx 82, 3. Tarquini 76, 4. Larini 71, 5. D Müller 64, 6. Colciago 54, 7. Garcia 46, 8. Giovanardi 36, 9. Huisman 36, 10. Rydell 18, 11. Coronel 13, 12. Balzan 10, 13. Diefenbacher 9, 14. Ruberti 9, 15. Francia 4, 16. Gené 4, 17. Couto 3, 18. Tavano 2. 2.

Manufacturers: 1. BMW. 240, 2. Alfa Romeo 187, 3. Seat 13.

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