Jordan Caruso new champion of the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup

04/06/2023 Jordan Caruso has claimed the championship crown of the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup. At the final round of the season, the Australian from the Altus Esports team clinched the title early at the sprint race on the Autodromo Nazionale di Monza. The close duel for second place was won by the 2020 champion and 2022 vice-champion, Sebastian Job from the Red Bull Racing Esport squad. In the feature event, Gustavo Ariel from Brazil crossed the finish line first. He represents the team TXC Racing by TK. The virtual one- make cup run on the iRacing simulation platform is contested with the digital version of the Porsche 911 GT3 Cup.

The final round of the 2023 Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup was not for the faint-hearted. Heading to the tenth and final round of this year's championship on the racetrack in Monza's Royal Park, four drivers had a chance to secure the title. Jordan Caruso held the best cards. Competing for Altus Esports, the Australian tackled the race with a 37-point advantage. British sim racer Sebastian Job from the Oracle Red Bull Racing Esports team and Zac Campbell (USA/VRS Coanda) a mere one-point

behind in third overall, diminished their title chances with a disappointing qualifying result earlier in the day.

Caruso planted his virtual Porsche 911 GT 3 Cup on a lowly P13 grid spot. Campbell failed to even turn a classified lap and had to start the sprint race from position 24. Alejandro Sànchez from Spain was also unable to collect any extra points in eleventh place and had to relinquish his outsider chance of winning the championship title. As a consolation, however, the Stormforce Racing ART driver was thrilled with winning the TAG Heuer Pole Award and was rewarded with a high-quality watch.

Starting from fourth on the grid, Caruso took off into the seven-lap sprint race and gained one position in the first lap. At the beginning of lap four, the leading three squeezed too close together in the tight chicane after the start-finish straight. While the leading Diogo C. Pinto (P/Team Redline) and Yohann Harth (F/Apex Racing Team) briefly left the track, Caruso swept into the lead and defended it to the flag. This result boosted his advantage to more than 50 points and earned him the cham- pionship crown.

Drama in the fight for the vice-champion title in the feature race

In the feature race over 14 laps, the decision for the runner-up title went down to the wire between Job and Campbell. Shortly before the halfway mark, Job experienced another nail-biting moment: when he slid sideways in the first chicane, his Porsche 911 GT3 Cup was hit by cars behind him. The resulting damage caused the race stewards to summon the UK racer to the pits for mandatory repairs. Although this relegated him from the front midfield and threw him out of the points, Job was able to rejoin the race. His rival Campbell, meanwhile, was running in 17th, hot on his bump- er in the battle for second in the championship. A gripping duel over many laps un- folded. Although Job finished out of the points in 22nd place, it was still enough for him to clinch vice-champion laurels, with Campbell's 16th place ultimately putting him one point behind Job and third overall in the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup.

Victory in the feature race at Monza went to Gustavo Ariel (TXC Racing by TK). The only Brazilian in the field celebrated his third win of the season and also the fact that he advanced to 14th place in the final standings – thus qualifying for next year's championship. Charlie Collins (VRS Coanda) from the UK clinched second place in Monza, shunting Sánchez from fourth place in the overall standings. Last year's champion Pinto rounded off the Monza podium in third place after an impressive drive in the final laps.

All-Stars: "Quirkitized" wins runner-up title against "ThePulpoLópez"

The content creators invited to the All-Stars race had previously demonstrated what counts when racing in Monza: slipstreaming is the key to success on the long straights. Adding to the challenge for

the All-Stars was the fact that they competed for the first time in the Porsche Mission R, the virtual version of the sports car manu- facturer's all-electric concept car unveiled at the 2021 IAA Mobility. Having already claimed the championship the previous weekend, American Casey Kirwan could af- ford to take it easy in the 11-lap sprint race behind the three eNASCAR guest drivers Parker White, Matt Bussa and Michael Conti. Towards the end of the race, he called on his extensive experience to snatch the lead and defend this position to the flag.

The bid for the runner-up title was left to the feature race over eleven laps. The Span- iard Pablo "ThePulpoLópez" had already shown his resolve to take home the title, achieving fourth place in the sprint - and underlined this with a blistering start into the feature race. With a catapult start, he immediately made up four positions in the first few metres and closed in on Tyson "Quirkitized" Meier. The American had finished the sprint in tenth place. Both rivals went wheel-to-wheel in a gripping duel, swapping positions several times. López ultimately came out on top, securing third place with a 0.1-second advantage. Fourth place, however, was enough for Meier to defend his second place in the overall classification and be crowned vice-champion.

Further up the field, eNASCAR guest driver Conti and Emily "Emree" Jones had extended their lead to around eleven seconds in a fierce duel. Although the Australian was not able to successfully implement the manoeuvre planned for the last lap, her second place outweighed the frustration of spinning in both the qualifying and the sprint race, which robbed her of a better result.

Comments after the race

Jordan Caruso (AUS/Altus Esports): "I still can't quite believe it. I'd been able to use my good form at the beginning of the season, but I was a little off my game in the last few races. Still, before the final round I was determined not to allow any negative thoughts to creep in. Apparently, I succeeded. What concerns me now is I don't even know how and with whom I can celebrate this success. The race finished in the early hours of the morning here in Australia and my friends are probably not even awake yet."

Gustavo Ariel (BR/TXC Racing by TK): "It's been an incredible season for me. Af- ter a poor start, I managed to gain some self-confidence and find a bit of calm thanks to my first two victories. In my rookie year, I learned how important it is to prepare meticulously for each race and to pay a lot of attention to the car setup. I'm very hap- py to have already qualified for the next Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup. And maybe next year I won't be the only Brazilian in the field. That would be great."

Results

Monza (I), sprint race
1. Jordan Caruso (AUS/Altus Esports),
2. Charlie Collins (UK/VRS Coanda)

3. Moreno Sirica (I/Williams Esports)
4. Salva Talens (E/Stormforce Racing ART) 5. Lasse Bak (DK/FYRA SimSport)

Monza (I), feature race
1. Gustavo Ariel (BR/TXC Racing by TK) 2. Charlie Collins (UK/VRS Coanda)
3. Diogo C. Pinto (P/Team Redline)
4. Lasse Bak (DK/FYRA SimSport
5. Moreno Sirica (I/Williams Esports)

Final standings after 10 of 10 rounds
1. Jordan Caruso (AUS/Altus Esports), 511 points
2. Sebastian Job (UK/Oracle Red Bull Racing Esports), 438 points 3. Zac Campbell (USA/VRS Coanda), 437 points
4. Charlie Collins (UK/VRS Coanda), 430 points
5. Alejandro Sánchez (E/Stormforce Racing ART), 429 points

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