Bad luck for series leader Caruso leaves title decision wide open

20/05/2023 Slipstream duels and numerous changes at the top of the field characterised the ninth round of the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup at Le Mans. On the long straights of the circuit famous for the 24-hour race, Sebastian Job emerged as the most proficient in the sprint: The UK racer from the Oracle Red Bull Racing Esports team secured a victory. The feature race win went to Frenchman Yohann Harth in the Apex Racing Team's virtual Porsche 911 GT3 Cup. Championship leader Jordan Caruso forfeited a large portion of his lead: The Australian from the Altus Esports team finished the sprint in seventh place and only scored two points in the feature race after a collision.

Race

A dramatic turn of events in the battle for the title in the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup: On the virtual "Circuit des 24 Heures du Mans", Jordan Caruso, who had a big overall lead until then, was struck by bad luck. The Altus Esports driver from Australia had gone into the ninth of ten rounds of the season with a 78-point lead. In the sprint, Caruso only finished seventh, while victory went to his closest rival

from the UK, Sebastian Job from the Oracle Red Bull Racing Esports team. Caruso was involved in a collision in the feature race shortly before the finish and lost his shot at a podium result. As a result, his advantage over Job shrank to just 37 points. At the finale in Monza, Italy, in a fortnight, also Zac Campbell (USA/VRS Coanda) and Alejandro Sánchez (E/Stormforce Racing ART) still have a chance at taking home the title.

A three-way battle between defending champion and polesitter Diogo C. Pinto (P/Team Redline), Sánchez and Job defined the three-lap sprint race on the 13.62-kilometre circuit. The lead changed several times. Ultimately, it was Job who took victory, with Pinto and Sánchez following him over the line in his slipstream.

Numerous overtaking manoeuvres from the slipstream, some of which were daring, to say the least, also characterised the six-lap feature race. Italian Alessandro Bico (Williams Esports), Charlie Collins (VRS Coanda) from Great Britain and Frenchman Yohann Harth (Apex Racing Team) took turns at the front several times per lap. Close behind them, Jordan Caruso and Sebastian Job awaited their chance, separated by Alejandro Sánchez. Harth eventually edged out Sánchez by less than 0.2 seconds to celebrate his first victory in the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup. Caruso was involved in an unfortunate contact shortly before the finish and spun off the track. The Australian continued but had to settle for P24. Job finished eighth.

Casey Kirwan takes an early All-Star title

Thanks to his victory in the All-Stars feature race, Casey Kirwan secured the championship for content creators at the penultimate round of the season. Prior to this, the American had to retire his virtual Porsche 911 RSR in the five-lap sprint after spinning off the track. However, thanks to the reversed starting order for the feature race, this put him on pole position. Nevertheless, he was only able to enjoy the lead for a short period: A slow-down penalty saw him drop back to fourth place after just a few kilometres. Kirwan resolutely used his extensive slipstream experience from virtual NASCAR races on the long straights of the “Circuit des 24 Heures” and clawed his way back to the front. On the fifth of six laps, he regained the lead, and at the finish, his advantage over the German Daniel "Dan Suzuki" Sosulski was in excess of two seconds.

At the season finale in Monza in two weeks time, Spaniard Pablo “ThePulpoLópez” López and Tyson “Quirkitized” Meier will battle for second place in the overall standings. The defending champion from the USA won the sprint race at Le Mans ahead of López and finished third in the feature race.

PESC finale in Monza: Title decision in the “Temple of Speed”

In two weeks, the finale of the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup (PESC) will go down to the wire in northern Italy. The Autodromo Nazionale in Monza is one of the fastest racetracks in the world – which earned the 5.793-kilometre circuit its nickname “Temple of Speed”. For the drivers of the virtual

Porsche 911 GT3 Cup, making masterful use of every possible slipstream is the key to success in both the sprint and feature races.

IIn Monza, content creators will also tackle their final doubleheader event of the season. For the first time, the All-Stars will drive the Mission R, an electrically-powered concept racing car from Porsche. The live streaming of the All-Star races starts on 3 June at 8 p.m. (CEST) on www.twitch.com/porsche and https://www.youtube.com/@Porsche.

Comments after the race

Sebastian Job (UK/Oracle Red Bull Racing Esports): "I knew my speed on the straights wasn't the best today. I think we all competed with minimal downforce so I had to be brave when braking."

Yohann Harth (F/Apex Racing Team): "Our teamwork came together today. Alex Sánchez of the sister team Stormforce Racing ART pushed me to victory. There was no communication between us – it was all instinct."

Alejandro Sánchez (E/Stormforce Racing ART):"Yohann and I managed some good teamwork in the final lap. I struggled with understeer over the whole race, so I was quite happy to finally get close to the leading group in the last lap after some incidents around me. I am super happy for Yohann as well, it's his first win."

Charlie Collins (UK/VRS Coanda): "It feels like ages since I finished on the podium of the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup. I'm really happy. When we started the last lap, I felt like I was in a good position to win. But in the end, I was maybe a bit too aggressive. Unfortunately, it didn't work out in my favour."

Casey Kirwan (USA): "It was a fun season with the whole bunch of content creators. We still have one race to go. At the next round, we're driving the Mission R from Porsche. It'll probably be a wild one because nobody really knows what to expect with this electric car."

Results

Le Mans (F), sprint race
1. Sebastian Job (UK/Oracle Red Bull Racing Esports)
2. Diogo C. Pinto (P/Team Redline)
3. Alejandro Sánchez (E/Stormforce Racing ART)
4. Zac Campbell (USA/VRS Coanda)
5. Charlie Collins (UK, VRS Coanda)

Le Mans (F), feature race

1. Yohann Harth (F/Apex Racing Team)
2. Alejandro Sánchez (E/Stormforce Racing ART)
3. Charlie Collins (UK, VRS Coanda)
4. Alessandro Bico (ITA/Williams Esports)
5. Zac Campbell (USA/VRS Coanda)

Overall standings after 9 of 10 rounds

1. Jordan Caruso (AUS/Altus Esports), 465 points
2. Sebastian Job (UK/Oracle Red Bull Racing Esports), 428 points
3. Zac Campbell (USA/VRS Coanda), 427 points
4. Alejandro Sánchez (E/Stormforce Racing ART), 406 points
5. Charlie Collins (UK, VRS Coanda), 363 points

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