

Jordan Caruso starts second half of season as half-time champion

02/04/2023 The spectacular feature race of the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup at the Red Bull Ring ended with Gustavo Ariel's surprising victory. The Brazilian had started from tenth place and emerged as the winner from a final phase characterised by intense duels for positions.

Race

Championship leader Jordan Caruso secured first place in the sprint race. To defend his championship lead at the halfway point of the season, he had to make up ground in the feature race. In the All-Stars races, Casey Kirwan and Christian "Keny500" Ortega emerged victorious.

Jordan Caruso is the unofficial half-time champion of the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup. After five of ten rounds so far this season, the Australian from Team Altus Esports has earned 302 points, ahead of the British VRS Coanda driver Charlie Collins (271) and defending champion Diogo C. Pinto (Team Redline, 270). The ongoing leader of the standings prevailed in the ten-hour sprint race on the

4.318-kilometre Formula 1 circuit in Styria. In the fifth lap, he out-braked Spaniard Alejandro Sánchez (Stormforce Racing ART), who had started from pole position in the virtual 911 GT3 Cup. For Caruso, it was his first victory in the PESC. Second place went to Pinto, who valiantly managed to fend off Britain's Sebastian Job (Oracle Red Bull Racing Esports). Places four to six went to the American Zac Campbell (VRS Coanda), Sánchez and the Belgian Julien Soenen (R8G Esports). In seventh and eighth place, Britain's Jamie Fluke (Apex Racing Team) and Moreno Sirica were able to enjoy the front row of the grid for the feature race: the top eight tackled the 20-lap race in reverse order.

Fans were treated to some spectacular action. Sánchez and Pinto took the lead after eight laps and initially pulled away from Soenen and the surprisingly strong Gustavo Ariel. The battle at the front then bunched the leading group closer together again. On lap 17, the fight for positions escalated into furious overtaking manoeuvres on and off the track. When the smoke cleared, Ariel was in first place ahead of Sanchez and Pinto. He was delighted with his first victory in the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup.

In the meantime, drama was unfolding behind the leaders. Charlie Collins, who started Spielberg in second place in the standings, only finished the sprint race in tenth place. In the feature race, the Briton dropped back to P20 after the start. Fierce fights for positions in front of him as well as problems and pit drive-through penalties for other drivers propelled him up to seventh place. Championship leader Caruso suffered a similar fate. The Australian was forced off the track through no fault of his own and initially found himself in 22nd place. He ultimately saw the finish line in 13th place – enough to defend his championship lead.

Kirwan wins All-Stars sprint race, Ortega's charge goes unrewarded

Casey Kirwan (USA) won the ten-lap All-Stars sprint race at the wheel of the digital Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 RS. After gripping slipstream duels and spirited overtaking manoeuvres, he crossed the finish line first followed by Pablo "ThePulpoLopez" López from Spain and Tyson "Quirkitized" Meier from the USA. This, however, also meant that due to the reverse starting order, these three had to line up at the very back of the grid for the second heat over 16 laps. While Meier and Kirwan were shunted off the track when Emily "Emree" Jones spun, Lopez launched a thrilling pursuit through the field.

Shortly before the halfway mark, he had reached second place. A little later he closed the three-second gap to the leader. However, Christian "Keny500" Ortega refused to give up his front spot without a fight. During their slipstream duel on the start-finish straight, both Spaniards made contact and Lopez spun into the track barriers. While Jaroslav "Jardier" Honzik initially inherited the lead, the Czech ultimately had to allow Ortega through and finished second ahead of the Spaniard Borja Zazo.

PESC heads into second half of the season in Watkins Glen

For the sixth of ten Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup races, another picturesque circuit is coming

up in just one week: The 3.94-kilometre classic version of Watkins Glen International. The street circuit in the US state of New York hosted Formula 1 races from 1961 to 1980 and has also featured on the PESC calendar: in 2019, Sebastian Job qualified on pole position there and Kevin Ellis Jr. won the sprint race. On 6 April, the first race runs over eleven laps, with the feature race held over double the distance. As a curtain raiser, well-known influencers and content creators from the esports scene will contest the All-Stars events. The live stream begins around 8 pm (CEST) on twitch.tv/Porsche and youtube.com/@Porsche.

Comments on the race

Gustavo Ariel (BR/TXC Racing by TK): "At the beginning of the season, I found it difficult to get the tyres up to temperature. I managed to improve significantly in that regard and improved my qualifying results, too. My first win is a great result in my rookie year. I've been working with Tony Kanaan for two years, which has helped me a lot. That has a positive impact on my real racing as well."

Alejandro Sánchez (E/ Stormforce Racing ART): "I think I scored more points than anyone else from this event. I'm really satisfied, even though the leader of the standings, Jordan Caruso, is still far ahead. The sprint was not great for me, but that gave me a good starting position for the feature race. The duels with Diogo Pinto and some other drivers were extremely tense and very fun."

Diogo Pinto (P/Team Redline):"I was pretty bad in qualifying. But I tried to improve throughout the eventful races and score as many points as possible. In any case, this is my best first half of a season so far. The gap to Jordan Caruso is sizeable, but I'm working to keep him under pressure."

Jordan Caruso (AUS/Altus Esports):"In qualifying, I was too cautious avoiding a track limit penalty. So, I was happy with second place on the grid for the sprint race. Halfway through the race I overtook Alejandro Sánchez and then had to fight Diogo, whose pace was mega. He put a lot of pressure on me. I'm thrilled about my first victory in the PESC."

Results

Red Bull Ring, sprint race

1. Jordan Caruso (AUS/Altus Esports)
2. Diogo C. Pinto (P/Team Redline)
3. Sebastian Job (UK/Oracle Red Bull Racing Esports)
4. Zac Campbell (USA/VRS Coanda)
5. Alejandro Sánchez (E/Stormforce Racing ART)

Red Bull Ring, feature race

1. Gustavo Ariel (BR, TXC Racing by TK)
2. Alejandro Sánchez (E/Stormforce Racing ART)

3. Diogo C. Pinto (P/Team Redline)
4. Zac Campbell (USA/VRS Coanda)
5. Jamie Fluke (UK/Apex Racing Team)

Overall standings after 5 of 10 rounds

1. Jordan Caruso (AUS/Altus Esports), 302 points
2. Charlie Collins (UK/VRS Coanda), 271 points
3. Diogo C. Pinto (P/Team Redline), 270 points
4. Alejandro Sánchez (E/Stormforce Racing ART), 229 points
5. Sebastian Job (UK/Oracle Red Bull Racing Esports), 213 points

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Subline: Gustavo Ariel ploughs from tenth on the grid to victory in feature race.

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