

Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge Canada by Yokohama at the 2019 Montreal F1 race weekend

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10/06/2019 De Angelis claims victory in both races at the Circuit Gilles-Villeneuve

The Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge Canada by Yokohama was back at the Montreal Formula 1 weekend on the famous Gilles-Villeneuve circuit for races three and four of the 2019 season.

"Perfect weather, nearly 40-car field, and the energy of the large crowds present contributed incredible excitement at our second race weekend of the year," said Marc Ouayoun, President & CEO, Porsche Cars Canada, Ltd. "We witnessed enhanced competition as we welcomed the Porsche GT3 Cup by Yokohama USA for the first of two combined races this season."

June 8, 2019 – Race 1

On Saturday, Race 1 for Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge Canada and USA by Yokohama competitors proved to be a race of survival for the 39 drivers and Porsche 911 GT3 Cup cars, and coming out on top was Canadian Roman De Angelis in the No. 79 Mark Motors Racing / Kelly-Moss Road and Race Porsche.

A few laps into the 30-minute race, a series of incidents took place across the track that resulted in a 15-minute full course caution. While De Angelis – who is competing for points in both GT3 Cup Challenge Canada and GT3 Cup Challenge USA at this joint race weekend – led flag-to-flag, he admitted to mistakes that kept the race for the lead closer than it should have been.

"It's never easy," said De Angelis. "Initially on the start, we had pretty good pace. We set the car up so it was good towards the end, but it was struggling at the beginning to pull a gap. It seemed like – and obviously not and I hope everyone's okay – but everyone kind of crashed on one lap and had a lot of clean up to do."

"When it went green again, I kind of made a stupid mistake braking into (Turn) 1 and made the same mistake into (Turn) 3. I locked the front tires, so I had a flat spot on the left and right front and I had to deal with that for the five remaining laps, so that didn't make easy. We had a good car though with Kelly-Moss and Mark Motors which made it cool."

Like De Angelis, Parker Thompson in the No. 3 Porsche is also competing for two championships this weekend with SCB Racing in GT3 Cup Challenge Canada and with JDX Racing in GT3 Cup Challenge USA. Thompson – a rookie from Canada, new to sports car racing this year – finished second in both championships in his first time at Montreal.

Thompson faced a stiff battle in the closing minutes with fellow GT3 Cup Challenge USA competitors Maxwell Root in the No. 7 Wright Motorsports Porsche and teammate Sean McAlister with JDX in the No. 11 Porsche.

Ultimately, Thompson was able to hold off the duo while Root and McAlister finished third and fourth, respectively. This is also the first trip to Circuit Gilles Villeneuve for Root and McAlister, who have both been recipients of the IMSA Hurley Haywood GT3 Cup scholarship – Root in 2018 and McAlister this year.

In the Platinum Masters GT3 Cup Challenge USA class, it was a first career victory for Bill Smith in the No. 42 Topp Racing Porsche over teammate David Baker in Topp Racing's No. 56 entry.

"I'm really thrilled with the result," said Smith. "I had a pretty tough start because I had never been to this track before and on my first full lap of practice, I happened to kiss the wall and bent the control arm. My practice session was pretty rough and qualifying wasn't much better."

I started the day with low expectations, but as things unfolded and opportunities presented themselves, I was able to move up. My teammate unfortunately was losing a tire, so I was able to get him at the last lap just before the last corner. In the event, we're thrilled to have the 1 and 2 positions for Topp Racing."

At the right spot at the right time to win the GT3 Cup Challenge USA Gold Class was Kurt Fazekas in the No. 52 Kelly-Moss Porsche. Fazekas was running second to polesitter Sebastian Carazo in the NGT Motorsports' No. 27 entry, who was slowed by an incident and lost time and positions to eventual winner Fazekas.

What a great venue and we're so fortunate to race with the likes of Formula One drivers, the greatest drivers in the world and hopefully put on a good show," said Fazekas. Just too bad there was so much carnage out there. It kind of took away, I think, from the spectacle of the GT3 Cup series because it's such a great, competitive series."

Earning Yokohama Tire's Hard Charger Award in the Platinum Class for gaining the most positions in the race was Juan Manuel Fayen driving the No. 19 FMS Motorsport Porsche.

With De Angelis and Thompson taking the first two spots on both the GT3 Cup Challenge Canada and USA podiums, third place in the Canada championship went to Marco Cirone in the No. 88 Mark Motors Racing Porsche.

Cirone's podium finish also solidified his second Platinum Masters victory in GT3 Cup Challenge Canada and a big swing in the point standings for that championship, as fellow Masters competitors Alan Metni in the No. 99 Kelly-Moss/AM Motorsports Porsche and Etienne Borgeat in the No. 2 Lauzon Autosport Porsche were involved in the series of incidents at the beginning of the race.

While it was smiles for some GT3 Cup Challenge Canada competitors, others found themselves walking away from a difficult race.

Quebecers Borgeat and his Lauzon Autosport teammate Patrick Dussault in the No. 77 were both involved in separate incidents at the start of the race. While Dussault was able to continue to a ninth-place finish in GT3 Cup Challenge Canada, Borgeat was forced to retire with a heavily damaged racecar.

Another Quebecer, Jean Audet – piloting the No. 67 Grand TIMES Hotel Porsche with an IMSA 50th anniversary livery – suffered a similar fate during the race, being bumped and forced off track by another competitor for a moment. It was enough to relegate Audet's Porsche to the back of the field.

Earning Yokohama Tire's Hard Charger Award for gaining the most positions in GT3 Cup Challenge Canada was Marc Raymond driving the No. 30 SCB Racing Porsche.

Sam Fellows, winning in the GT3 Cup Challenge Canada Gold Class, took seventh overall in the Gold competitors on Saturday.

June 9, 2019 – Race 2

Having worked slightly harder on Sunday, De Angelis once again found his way to the top of the podium at the Canadian Grand Prix in Montreal. Coming from pole position in Race 1 on Saturday, Roman De Angelis started from the first spot in No. 79 Mark Motors Racing Porsche, but surrendered the lead to Parker Thompson shortly after the drop of the green flag on Lap 1.

Thompson opened a gap between his No. 3 SCB Racing machine and De Angelis, but the latter kept Thompson within striking distance. With 20 minutes remaining, Thompson made the minor mistake heading into the hairpin, locked up the brakes and went into the turn, allowing De Angelis the opportunity to sneak by. De Angelis drove pressure-free for the rest of the race.

Behind De Angelis, it was a dramatic finish for the remaining two overall podium finishers – Max Root and Riley Dickinson, both GT3 Cup Challenge USA drivers.

Root in the No. 7 Wright Motorsports Porsche claimed his second podium of the weekend after finishing third in Race 1 and second in Race 2. Yet, Root never saw the checkered flag as he was involved in the late-race incident with the No. 74 TPC Racing Porsche of Tom Kerr. Root and Kerr made contact in Turn 11 that sent Root into the grass and Kerr into the inside wall. The incident brought out a race-ending red flag, but Root maintained his second-place position.

For Dickinson, the checkered flag initially awarded him fourth-place finish behind Root and Thompson. However, Thompson's move past Dickinson for third place resulted in a 29 –second penalty equivalent to an in-race drive through and promoted Dickinson to the podium.

Thompson was relegated to 10th-place finish overall. Like De Angelis, Thompson also earned points this weekend towards both the GT3 Cup Challenge Canada and USA championships.

Root's Wright Motorsports teammate Fred Poordad collected another podium finish for the team in Race 2 driving No. 20 Porsche. Poordad scored the Platinum Masters victory over GT3 Cup Challenge Canada and USA competitor Alan Metni in the No. 99 Kelly-Moss / AM Motorsports Porsche, who bounced back from retirement in Saturday's race.

In the Gold Class, it was a battle between No. 27 NGT Motorsports Porsche of Sebastian Carazo and the No. 91 FMS Motorsports Porsche of Angel Benitez, Jr. While Carazo started from the pole, the two swapped positions throughout the race, with Carazo ultimately coming out on top.

Earning the Yokohama Tire Hard Charger Award for gaining the most positions during the race was Gold Class driver Efrin Castro in the No. 65 ACI Motorsports Porsche.

Rounding out the GT3 Cup Challenge Canada podium were Patrick Dussault in the No. 77 Lauzon Autosport Porsche and rookie Ethan Simioni in the No. 40 Porsche for Policaro Motorsports.

The runner-up result matches Dussault's best of his GT3 Cup Challenge Canada career, which he first recorded at Canadian Tire Motorsport Park last month. It also comes on the heels of a frustrating Race 1 at Montreal for the Quebecker, who was spun early but salvaged a ninth-place finish.

For Simioni, a rookie in the GT3 Cup Challenge Canada, the third-place finish is his best to date. Teammate Jeff Kingsley in the No. 16 Porsche – who also earned points towards the GT3 Cup Challenge USA championship with JDX Racing – finishing just behind Simioni in fourth.

In the Platinum Masters class, Marc Cirone was seeking a weekend sweep of his own in the No. 88 Mark Motors Racing Porsche. However, a spin due to contact from another competitor demoted his Porsche down the leaderboard.

Taking the Platinum Masters win in his first weekend this year with GT3 Cup Challenge Canada was Michael Levitas in the No. 37 TPC Racing Porsche. Levitas was the highest finishing Masters driver in the field on Sunday.

Sam Fellows earned both the GT3 Cup Challenge Canada Gold Class Victory and the Yokohama Tire Hard Charger Award in the No. 35 Pfaff Motorsports Porsche.

Rounds 5 and 6 for the GT3 Cup Challenge Canada are set for the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship weekend at Canadian Tire Motorsport Park on July 5 – 7, 2019. In the meantime, news and updates on GT3 Cup Challenge Canada can be found on IMSA.com and Porsche.com/Canada, as well as on social media using the hashtags #GT3Canada and #IMSA.

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