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Michael Guasch and Matt Bell Make Storming Start To British GT Championship Campaign

- Guasch & Bell score fantastic double podium results for Anglo-American United Autosports team to earn themselves joint second place in the championship standings



Michael Guasch (left) and Matt Bell scored a “double” podium in the opening two rounds of the British GT Championship today

Michael Guasch and Matt Bell got their Avon Tyres British GT Championship title aspirations off to a flying start when the duo scored United Autosports’ best-ever race result in the opening race at Oulton Park (England) today (Monday April 25).

The #23 MOLECULE Audi R8 LMS of Guasch and Bell, partnering together for the first time, finished second in the opening round of the BGT series before placing third in Race Two which puts them joint second in the championship standings – just four-points off the series lead.



Race 1 (duration 60mins)

Qualifying: 4th #23 Guasch, 1m 39.883s; Weather: Dry, cloudy.

Race Result: 2nd (#23) +1.528s P1. Weather: Dry, sunny.

Guasch started from fourth on the 26-car grid and spent the opening 15-laps hounding the third-placed #22 Mercedes AMG before the American dived past the 2009 BGT champion during the pit-stop phase and in to 3rd place. After a brilliant pit stop which allowed the duo to move up into 2nd place, Co-driver Bell took over 30mins into the race, resuming second, 6.7secs behind the leading #1 Porsche.

Bell, setting a string of quick laps, repeatedly brought the gap down and ultimately took the checker a mere 1.528secs behind the 2010 BGT winning Porsche 997 after 36-laps.





Race 2 (duration 60mins)

Qualifying: 3rd #23 Bell, 1m 37.562s; Weather: Dry, cloudy.

Race Result: 3rd (#23) +30.411s P1; Weather: Dry, sunny.

Bell started from third, however, the Safety Car was deployed for 10mins after an incident on the opening lap with the #23 car placed fourth.

Another Safety Car period 19mins into the race brought the field together again, Bell placed fourth as compulsory pit-stops began. The #23 Audi pitted with Guasch resuming 12th – due to an additional 10secs “success” penalty imposed for finishing second in Race One .

With 20mins remaining, Guasch was up to seventh, but the American charged through to a fine third place with three minutes remaining.

Upcoming . . .

The next round of the British series is a two-hour race staged at Snetterton, Norfolk (England) on May 15. However United Autosports begins its quest for FIA GT3 European Championship honors at the Autodrómo Internacional do Algarve circuit near Portimão (POR) on May 7-8.



#23 Molecule – Audi R8 LMS

Matt Bell (GB). Age: 21. Born: Newcastle-upon-Tyne, T&W. Lives: Barningham, N. Yorks, England:

“The #22 Merc that Mike had spent Race One dicing with exited the pits just behind me. I got my head down and pulled away, quickly reducing the gap to the lead Porsche. My tires were good in the second half of the race and perhaps with a few more laps, may have seen me challenging for the lead. I struggled initially to get sufficient heat into the tires in Race Two but was part of a three-car dice for second place before I pitted under yellows. Although we’ve achieved second and third places, we’re a little disappointed which shows what we are aiming for in 2011.”

Michael Guasch (USA). Age: 53. Born: Palo Alto, California. Lives: Martinez, California, USA:

“I started the opening race from fourth after a disappointing qualifying session on Saturday. I just couldn’t find a way past the #22 Merc – he made it as wide as a boat. My tires seemed better than his just before our pit-stops and I stuck it past him at Knickerbrook. Our pit-stop was a little late in the second race but I just put my head down, focused and pushed real hard. The Audi was awesome today and I’m delighted with our points haul from here.”

Richard Dean (GB), Managing Director & Co-Owner of United Autosports:

“Mike [Guasch] lost vital time behind the Mercedes in the opening race – although he was faster. Oulton is such a tight and narrow track, it’s relatively easy to defend. Mike did get past the Merc but it was too late and while the pit-stop was perfect and Matt drove a very strong race, he just came up short against a very, very good driver in Richard Westbrook, a former Porsche and current Corvette ‘factory’ driver. Mike deservedly picked up the Sunoco Driver of the weekend Award – for his two drives. He drove superbly all day ably backed up by Matt. Mike and Matt have laid the foundations for a good maiden season in BGT with two podiums.”



United Autosports

Created in 2009, United Autosports is co-owned by American Zak Brown and Briton Richard Dean, both successful entrepreneurs and international race car drivers. The unique Anglo-American racing team fields GT3 class Audi R8 LMS sports cars from its United Kingdom headquarters in Leeds. It also races a fleet of “Legends of Motorsports” historic racing cars from its US facility in Indianapolis, Indiana. In 2011, the team competes in full-seasons of FIA GT3 European Championship, Avon Tyres British GT Championship and the “Legends of Motorsports” series. It will additionally contest selected GRAND-AM Rolex Sports Car Series events, the 24 Hours of Spa (Belgium) and Macau GT Cup race (China).

Audi R8 LMS

V10 5.2-liter engine, 4 valves per cylinder, petrol direct injection, 365-412 kW (496-560 PS), emission control by two racing catalytic converters, rear-wheel-drive, traction control (ASR), sequential pneumatic activated 6-speed sport gearbox with shift-paddles, Audi Space Frame (ASF) made of aluminum with bolted steel roll-cage, carbon-fiber composite/aluminum bodywork, Avon radial tires. Start weight 1,300kg. Limitation at 8,500rpm for every gear. Developed by Audi Sport with cooperation from quattro GmbH. Won seven championships across Europe in 2009-2010 plus Spa 24 Hours class victory in debut 2009 season and Nürburgring 24 Hours class victories in 2009-2010 and scoring a total 64 victories.

* Bell, Bintcliffe, Guasch & Palmer biographies plus team & car profiles are available on the United Autosports website <http://www.unitedautosports.com/>

* A comprehensive library of Editorial Copyright Free photographs can be downloaded at www.flickr.com/unitedautosports/sets

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