

Guasch & Bell Continue To Lead British GT Championship

Fourth & Sixth Place GT3 Class Finishes Keep Anglo-American pairing ahead



Michael Guasch (USA) and Matt Bell (GB) head into a near two month summer break still leading the Avon Tyres British GT Championship.

The Anglo-American pairing for United Autosports lead the 10-race series by two-points courtesy of a last lap overtaking manoeuvre in the second and final race at Spa-Francorchamps (Belgium) today (July 9).

Having achieved sixth place in the opening race, the #23 Molecule Audi R8 LMS of Guasch/Bell secured fourth in class in Race Two when Guasch overtook their closest championship rival on the final lap.

The Guasch/Bell "combo" has now achieved five top-sixes from the opening six rounds and has led the series since their round three victory in May. The "sister" #24 Teknavo Audi of John Bintcliffe (GB) and Jay Palmer (GB) registered ninth place in today's second race after the latter had unluckily crashed out on oil in the opening encounter.

Twenty-five cars from the British GT Championship were joined by 30 others from the Aston Martin GT4 Challenge and the Benelux & Dutch GT4 Cup that meant over 50-cars contested each race staged on the 4.35-mile Spa circuit.

Avon Tyres British GT Championship (after six rounds):

- 1 Mike Guasch and Matt Bell, 90.5-points
- 2 Gedie/Gedie, 88.5pts
- 3 Griffin/Cameron, 76pts



Race 1 (duration 60mins)

Qualifying: 7th #23 Guasch, 2m 27.270s; Weather: Dry, cloudy.

Race Result: 6th (#23) +19.687s P1; Weather: Dry, cloudy.

Guasch lined-up his Audi sports cars in seventh on the 50 plus car grid courtesy of times achieved in the 15-minute session staged on Friday – overnight rain leaving the track damp but with a dry “racing line”.

The American, who was spun out of the previous Brands Hatch race on only the second lap, was hit from behind at the “bus stop” chicane on the opening lap and dropped to 11th.

With 15mins gone, Guasch had made up 3 spots and was running in 8th.

Guasch, had moved up to seventh place at the 20 minute mark, then pitted during a Safety Car period on 25mins, a punctured front left tire also needing to be replaced during the driver change pit-stop which dropped Bell to ninth when the race resumed with 31mins to run.

For the final 10mins, Bell was on the tail of a four-car dice for fourth place – the young Briton moving up to sixth on the 23rd and final lap.

Race 2 (duration 60mins)

Qualifying: 7th #23 Bell, 2m 24.673s; Weather: Dry, cloudy.

Race Result: 4th (#23) +26.247s P1; Weather: Dry, cloudy.

A crashed car caused a premature close on the second qualifying session on Friday with Bell posting a time good enough for P7.

By lap five, Bell was at the tail of a furious four-car dice for second place. Bell moved up to third after 23mins and then making a late pit stop in the regulation pit-stop “window”.

Guasch resumed fifth for the final 25mins. The American was the fastest driver on the track over the final laps, Guasch reducing the gap to the Geddie/Geddie Ferrari and ultimately passing it on the final lap.



#23 Molecule – Audi R8 LMS

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

“In both practice and qualifying the balance of the Audi was fantastic. Unfortunately we were still a second off the pace and there were over 50 cars on the track which is an extra element to deal with. The additional time we lost to change the wheel in Race One wasn’t a massive drama because we pitted during the Safety Car period. The handling of our Audi was compromised following the contact Mike suffered. I got a very good start in Race Two but the front tires dropped off near the end of my stint. Audi hadn’t got the outright speed compared to the Ferrari, Porsche and Aston today. I could make up time in the corners but on the straight it was difficult. But we still lead the championship so we’ve got to be happy.”

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

“Traffic in qualifying was very difficult but I was happy with P7 and it wasn’t a bad place to start in Saturday’s opening race. Initially the opening lap for Race One was good, I’d made up a few places and was looking to make up another when I was hit from behind – again – at the ‘bus stop’ chicane. There was no damage apart from me losing a couple of places. I recovered some places but must have run over some debris which punctured a tire which we changed during our driver change stop. When I took over from Matt in Race Two, I struggled with the [seat] belts which cost us some time and then I rejoined the race in the middle of the GT4 field which cost me more time but worked hard and got the reward on the last lap of taking fourth exiting Eau Rouge. Our main aim was to get as many points as we could from both races today and although I’m a little disappointed with our results, we achieved a decent score. The championship is really tight.”

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

“We had a decent weekend. Mike was hit in the first race, collected a puncture as a result, while the impact also knocked the rear tracking out and damaged the exhausts. We lost time changing the wheel because it was difficult to jack up the car with the damaged bodywork. So when Matt resumed it certainly wasn’t the best handling car on the track. Jay crashed off on oil which caused us a hectic interval between the two races to get the #24 and of course the #23 Audi repaired. The team did a fantastic job.

In Race Two, Matt did well to stay with the lead group running third before pitting, the stop not being one of our best but we’ll address that for next time, then Mike rejoined in the middle of a huge GT4 battle losing 20secs on his out lap which dropped us down. He settled down and stole fourth on the final lap. I’m confident looking ahead to the remaining races. John touched a Mercedes on the second lap of Race Two which caused front suspension damage. To date, we’ve achieved a win, second, third, fourth, sixth, eighth, and two ninths. Unfortunately the Brands non-finish for Mike and Matt has brought the title race very close. The Ferrari must get a penalty and the three remaining tracks all suit the R8 LMS. It’s a pleasing position to be in.”

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).

Date of issue: Saturday July 9, 2011

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