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ROMAIN DI-FANTE BACK ON TOP HEADING TO THE SEASON-FINALE

CLIO ICE TROPHY – ROUND 3: REVIEW



Tension rose a notch in the penultimate round of the Clio Ice Trophy. Romain Di-Fante (Naudon Rallye Services) won the event after two eventful races on the track, ahead of his team manager Nathael Naudon (Naudon Rallye Services) and Belgian driver Benoît Verlinde (Q-Grafix Racing). Heading to the final round of the calendar, three drivers are still in contention for the inaugural Clio Ice Trophy title.

After a week's break, the Clio Ice Trophy was back in action on Saturday with round three of the season in the Crédit Andorrà GSeries. The discipline demonstrated, once again, its growing popularity with a record field of fifteen entries thanks to the arrival of several protagonists from the Clio Cup scene, rallying and other horizons.

VERLINDE QUICKEST, LANNEPOUDENX MOST CONSISTENT

Round three, held at an altitude of 2,400 metres above sea level, offered a third different layout of the Pas de la Casa circuit. Mathieu Lannepoudenx (Brunet Competition) was the quickest to adapt on the 702-metre track, besting Benoît Verlinde in free practice before the positions were reversed in qualifying, when the Belgian driver took pole position, despite running in the first group on the track. Mathieu Lannepoudenx, however, scored maximum points in the



intermediate classification ahead of Romain Di-Fante and Benoît Verlinde thanks to his best accumulated time over the five laps.

DI-FANTE AND NAUDON GO ON THE OFFENSIVE

In the B Final, Romain Di-Fante took the lead from Benoît Verlinde at the start. The poleman tried to fight back, but the new leader went on to win with a five-second margin. Pierre Paul Baltolu (Naudon Rallye Services), who led the general classification coming into the weekend, finished third in the Clio Ice Trophy and the two-wheel-drive category. Spaniard Tomas Martinez (Brunet Competition) was next, followed by Arthur Bourion (Brunet Competition), Eric Sauteur (Andorra Location) and Thibaud Ries (Driveland), who rounded out the order after the withdrawal of Jochen Claerhout (Q-Grafix Racing) for personal reasons.

In the A Final, Mathieu Lannepoudenx held on to the lead early on, but Nathael Naudon and Bernard Bathedou (Andorra Location) made it a race. Despite the increasingly heated on-track action, the Naudon Rallye Services team manager got the upper hand in the final laps to take the win ahead of Mathieu Lannepoudenx, who was penalized ten seconds for an on-track contact, dropping him behind newcomers Bernard Bathedou (Andorra Racing) and Jordi Palomeras (Driveland). The Catalan had earlier cleared Koen Verlinde (Q-Grafix Racing), while Pauline Dalmasso (Naudon Rallye Services) found an opening on Allison Viano (Q-Grafix Racing) to finish sixth and take a first step towards the best female spot in the general classification.

AN INTENSE FINAL IN SIGHT

With his second victory of the season, Romain Di-Fante reclaims the lead of the Clio Ice Trophy before the season-finale scheduled for Saturday, 5 February. The Nice native is eight points ahead of Pierre Paul Baltolu and eleven to the good from Mathieu Lannepoudenx, the only two drivers now in a position to deny Romain Di-Fante the title. Meanwhile, the Clio's continue to sit on top of the Crèdit Andorrà GSeries two-wheel-drive championship. This crown will also be decided among the three contenders next week.

For more information, please contact cliotrophy@fr.alpineracing.com or visit cliorally.com.



"I have mixed feelings after this round. Qualifying was closer than ever and it shows the level is becoming more balanced and more competitive with some new drivers, more used to close racing than us rallymen. Everything went well in my final with a very clean overtake on Benoît, and I thank him for his sportsmanship. The fight in the second final went my way, but I can't fully enjoy this victory even if I reclaim the lead in the general classification. I am not expecting to be racing next Saturday, but it has been a great experience and I have had a lot of fun discovering a new category and new sensations with Clio Rally5."



Romain Di-Fante

ROUND 3 – FINAL CLASSIFICATION

1. ROMAIN DI-FANTE	38 POINTS
2. NATHAEL NAUDON	32 POINTS
3. BENOIT VERLINDE	29 POINTS
4. MATHIEU LANNEPOUDENX	27 POINTS
5. PIERRE PAUL BALTOLU	24 POINTS
6. BERNARD BATHEDOU	23 POINTS
7. JORDI PALOMERAS	15 POINTS
8. TOMAS MARTINEZ	15 POINTS
9. ARTHUR BOURION	14 POINTS
10. KOEN VERLINDE	10 POINTS
11. PAULINE DALMASSO	9 POINTS
12. ALLISON VIANO	8 POINTS
13. ERIC SAUTEUR	8 POINTS
14. THIBAUD RIES	6 POINTS
15. JOCHEN CLAERHOUT	0 POINT

GENERAL CLASSIFICATION (ROUND 3/4)

1. ROMAIN DI-FANTE	103 POINTS
2. PIERRE PAUL BALTOLU	95 POINTS
3. MATHIEU LANNEPOUDENX	92 POINTS
4. BENOIT VERLINDE	56 POINTS
5. PAULINE DALMASSO	44 POINTS
6. BRYAN DUFAS	41 POINTS



7. DYLAN DUFAS	34 POINTS
8. ARTHUR BOURION	34 POINTS
9. NATHAEL NAUDON	32 POINTS
10. KOEN VERLINDE	30 POINTS
11. FERNANDO NAVARRETE	23 POINTS
12. BERNARD BATHEDOU	23 POINTS
13. GUILLERMO MILLAN	17 POINTS
14. JORDI PALOMERAS	15 POINTS
15. TOMAS MARTINEZ	15 POINTS
16. MARKEL DE ZABALETA	13 POINTS
17. PATRICK CHIAPPE	13 POINTS
18. ENRIQUE HERNANDO	12 POINTS
19. ALVARO LOBERA	12 POINTS
20. JONATHAN ARNOULD	8 POINTS
21. ALLISON VIANO	8 POINTS
22. ERIC SAUTEUR	8 POINTS
23. THIBAUD RIES	6 POINTS
24. JOCHEN CLAERHOUT	0 POINT

ABOUT THE CLIO ICE TROPHY

Introduced in 2022, the Clio Ice Trophy offers spectacular races on ice on the Pas de la Casa circuit in Andorra. As part of the Cr dit Andorr  GSeries, the Clio Ice Trophy draws on synergies within Renault Group, including the experience of Alpine Racing customer racing department based in Viry-Ch tillon and the competition department at the Alpine factory in Dieppe. For its inaugural edition, the Clio Ice Trophy will take place over four rounds and as many different track configurations at the same location, where abundant snow and fantastic sliding conditions promise to be the order of the day.

ABOUT RENAULT

Renault, a historic mobility brand and pioneer of electric vehicles in Europe, has always developed innovative vehicles. With the 'Renaulution' strategic plan, Renault has embarked on an ambitious, value-generating transformation moving towards a more competitive, balanced and electrified range. Its ambition is to embody modernity and innovation in technology, energy and mobility services in the automotive industry and beyond.

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