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TORELLI MAINTAINS HIS MOMENTUM AT SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS



In just his second Clio Cup Series appearance of the season, Gabriele Torelli (Rangoni Corse) was unstoppable as he claimed his third pole position and third win from as many starts. On the Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps, the Italian won a thrilling duel with David Pouget (GPA Racing) to consolidate his lead at the top of Clio Cup Europe and Clio Cup Mid-Europe. Alessandro Brigatti (Progetto E20 Motorsport) finished third and won the Challengers Cup while Luca Franca (MC Motortecnica) clinched the Racers Cup to complete an Italian treble.

Fifty-nine drivers were in Belgium to kick off round four of the 2023 Clio Cup Series season. Gabriele Torelli and Alessandro Brigatti topped the timesheets in practice on Friday, but the former regained the upper hand in qualifying to continue his perfect record this year. The Clio Cup Europe leader took pole position ahead of fellow Italian Alessandro Brigatti and David Pouget while Alexandre Finkelstein (GPA Racing) and Tomas Pekar (Carpek Racing) completed the top five.

As a precautionary measure given the number of entrants and the grid slots available, the race began behind the safety car. Once the field was released, Gabriele Torelli kept the lead despite pressure from his challengers. The battle at the front came to life when David Pouget found a gap and passed Alessandro Brigatti at the entry of the Raidillon on lap four. Alexandre Finkelstein tried to emulate his teammate in the process, but Tomas Pekar took advantage before a caution period to evacuate the cars of Mariano Alonso (GPA Racing), Mickaël Carrée (T2CM) and Alex Lancelotti (Faro Racing), who retired in separate incidents.



The race resumed two laps later thanks to the excellent work of the marshals. On the restart, David Pouget tucked into Gabriele Torelli's slipstream before making his first passing attempt. The Frenchman tried again the following lap, but to no avail, as Tomas Pekar, Alessandro Brigatti and Alexandre Finkelstein closed in. However, the third attempt paid off for David Pouget, who took the lead on the final run to Les Combes.

While on his way to victory, David Pouget locked a wheel under braking at the Chicane, opening the way for Gabriele Torelli. The Italian seized the opportunity to overtake the Frenchman for the win in the last corner. Challenger Alessandro Brigatti completed the podium after his hard-fought duel with Tomas Pekar. Anthony Jurado (Milan Compétition) battled his way up the order from ninth place on the grid and caught the Czech on the final lap to finish fourth. Alexandre Finkelstein came home in sixth place ahead of Adrian Schimpf (AST Competition), Alexandre Albouy (GPA Racing), Nicolas Milan (Milan Compétition). Initially tenth, Jerzy Spinkiewicz (Uniq Racing) received a post-race penalty for pushing a competitor off the track. Pierre Bredeaux (Comte Racing Team) inherited the position ahead of Luca Franca, first among the Racers.

With his sixth podium this season, David Pouget extends his lead at the top of the Clio Cup Series ahead of Nicolas Milan and Alexandre Finkelstein while Gabriele Torelli moves up to sixth place with his third triumph of 2023.

CLIO CUP EUROPE

As in the Clio Cup Series, Gabriele Torelli took advantage of David Pouget's mistake to take his third win in three races. Anthony Jurado, who put in a fine comeback drive, completed the podium with Tomas Pekar. Fourth-placed Adrian Schimpf became the third different winner of the season in the Challengers Cup, beating Pierre Bredeaux (Comte Racing Team), Nikola Miljkovic (Tempo Racing Team) and Mattia Lancellotti (Faro Racing), still in command of the category. Meanwhile, Luca Franca extended his lead in the Racers Cup with his second win of the year, ahead of Rene Steenmetz (Chefo Sport) and Stephan Polderman (Chefo Sport).

CLIO CUP FRANCE

Despite his disappointment in the overall classification, David Pouget won ahead of Alexandre Finkelstein and Alexandre Albouy on a Clio Cup France podium monopolised by GPA Racing. The Frenchman took the standings lead from Nicolas Milan, who finished fourth on Saturday. His team also won the Challengers Cup with Alexandre Finkelstein's fifth consecutive victory, ahead of Florian Venturi (GM Sport) and Aurélien Renet (JSB Compétition). In the Racers Cup, Jérémy Bordagaray (Milan Compétition) also increased his lead with his fourth win of the season after holding off Lionel Viguiet (T2CM) and Raphaël Cuadrado (GM Sport).

CLIO CUP ITALIA

Leading from start to finish, Alessandro Brigatti claimed his first Clio Cup Italia win of the year ahead of Luca Franca and Mattia Lancellotti, the new leader of the general classification. Alessandro Brigatti also won the Challengers Cup ahead of Mattia Lancelotti and Giacomo Trebbi (MC Motorsport), whilst Luca Franca notched up his second Racers Cup triumph with a clear victory over his rivals led by Sandro Cutini (Faro Racing) and Due (Oregon Team).

CLIO CUP MID-EUROPE

Unbeaten this year, Gabriele Torelli also continued his winning streak with a third consecutive Clio Cup Mid-Europe victory. The Italian won ahead of Anthony Jurado and Tomas Pekar, who finished on the podium for the first time this season. Fourth-placed Nikola Miljkovic opened his Challengers Cup account by overtaking category leader Julien Baziret (Baziret Sport) and Henrik Seibel (Carpek Service). Lastly, Rene Steenmetz claimed his first Racers Cup win ahead of teammate Stephan Polderman and Sébastien Gehin (T2CM), who is still top of the classification.



The competitors will be back in action tomorrow for the second qualifying session at 9:55 a.m., followed by the second race of the weekend at 4:30 p.m., which will be streamed live on the Renault Clio Series [Facebook page](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

ABOUT CLIO CUP

Since the introduction of the R8 Gordini Cup in 1966, Renault has maintained a constant presence on tracks worldwide. Since 1991, several thousand Clio Cups have been sold, with all five generations recognised for their performance, reliability and affordability. With its experience in promotional formulas and one-make series, Renault offers its savoir-faire and expertise to experienced and amateur drivers by providing them with a product adapted to their needs. For 2023, Clio Cup will race through the Clio Cup Series, bringing together Clio Cup Europe, Clio Cup France, Clio Cup España, Clio Cup Italia and Clio Cup Mid-Europe with a calendar offering numerous opportunities to competitors from all backgrounds.

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.