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Jurado and Maio strike first at Nogaro



The 2024 Clio Cup Series season kicked off with Anthony Jurado's victorious debut with Rangoni Corse and Guillaume Maio and GM Sport's maiden win in the photo-finish at the Circuit Paul Armagnac in Nogaro. Following the hotly contested opening two races, the campaign looks set to be a rollercoaster, with some established names confirming their status, several young talents emerging and some of the big names already lagging heading to round two at the Autódromo Internacional do Algarve in Portimão (25-28 April).

The opening round of the calendar took place in Nogaro, where 43 drivers and their Clio Cups with a more assertive look for the new season. Rain was in store in the Gers for the competitors' first laps on Friday. Gabriele Torelli (Rangoni Corse) and Pierre Bredeaux (Comte Racing) made their presence felt in these tricky conditions before Nicolas Milan (Milan Compétition) took over at the head of the field the following morning on a drying track. However, Pierre Bredeaux regained the upper hand a few hours later in full dry conditions.

Race 1: winning transfer for Jurado

Pierre Bredeaux confirmed his excellent form in qualifying, stealing the fastest time from Anthony Jurado by 0.089s. However, the Frenchman lost pole position when scrutineering revealed that the exhaust silencer on his car did not respect the mandatory weight.



Anthony Jurado started ahead of Gabriele Torelli, David Pouget (GPA Racing), Nicolas Milan (Milan Compétition) and Florian Venturi (GM Sport). Despite the race starting behind the safety car as the rain returned, several competitors got caught out before the action got underway on lap five. Anthony Jurado kept the lead over his teammate, followed by David Pouget and Nicolas Milan. The three chasers engaged in a stirring battle, sometimes three abreast, but Gabriele Torelli managed to hold off his rivals. Meanwhile, Nicolas Milan dropped down the order in favour of Florian Venturi when he made a mistake while trying to get past David Pouget.

The safety car returned to the track after contact further back in the field, causing Alexandre Barcet (Milan Compétition) to retire. The red flag cut short the race with 34 seconds remaining. The finishing order was set at the end of lap eight, sealing Anthony Jurado's first victory with his new team, while Gabriele Torelli completed a one-two for Rangoni Corse. David Pouget joined them on the podium ahead of best Junior Florian Venturi, Nicolas Milan and Alexandre Finkelstein (GPA Racing). Mickaël Carrée (T2CM) and Lorenzo van Riet (Rangoni Corse) were first amongst the Gentlemen and Challengers. Jack Byrne (GPA Racing), who started 16th, finished ninth in a top ten completed by Thomas Compain (Milan Compétition).

Race 2: Maio in a photo-finish

Guillaume Maio came out on top in the second qualifying session on a dry track surface, but the session was prematurely interrupted after Stephan Polderman (AST Competition) went off. The Frenchman was followed by Jack Byrne, Nicolas Milan (Milan Competition), and Kévin Jimenez (GPA Racing), while race one winner Anthony Jurado had to settle for 27th place.

Jack Byrne, a newcomer to the Clio Cup Series, got the better of the poleman right after the lights went out. However, several incidents in the first corners led a safety car period to evacuate the four competitors stranded. The Irishman controlled the field on his first restart at the front, while Nicolas Milan surprised Guillaume Maio before attacking the leader, but to no avail. However, their duel enabled their rivals to stay in contact, and Guillaume Maio took advantage of this to regain second place before the suspension of the race due to a sudden downpour.

The competitors switched to Michelin rain tyres before two laps behind the safety car. Jack Byrne once again held the lead on the restart, closely followed by Guillaume Maio and Nicolas Milan, who overtook his countryman before taking advantage of a slight error by Jack Byrne to take the lead at the end of lap two. Once in the lead, the Frenchman dictated the pace, while the Irishman came under attack from Guillaume Maio, Kévin Jimenez, Florian Venturi and David Pouget, who lost out in this close battle when he made contact on the pit straight.

With two laps remaining in the race, Guillaume Maio got the better of Jack Byrne and then started a duel with Nicolas Milan, ending on the final straight between the two driver-team owners. Tucked in the slipstream of his rival, Guillaume Maio pulled out of the draft at the perfect moment to take his first overall victory, 0.045ss ahead of the driver with 15 titles in Clio Cup. The first Junior, Florian Venturi, completed the podium thanks to a audacious overtake on Jack Byrne. Kévin Jimenez finished fifth, ahead of Gabriele Torelli, who started 15th, Thomas Compain, Pierre Brédeaux and Anthony Jurado, who moved up 18 positions in the race. Aurélien Renet (JSB Compétition) finished tenth while Laurent Dziadus (Team Lucas) was first among the Gentlemen.

CLIO CUP SERIES

Among the competitors competing in all nine rounds of the Clio Cup Series, Anthony Jurado leaves the Gers atop the general classification. On the strength of his Sunday victory, the driver from Montpellier has a five-point lead over



Gabriele Torelli and Nicolas Milan and a ten-point advantage over Guillaume Maio, co-leader of the Challengers category with Lorenzo van Riet. Fifth-placed Jack Byrne takes the lead in the Junior category thanks to his double victory, as does Mickaël Carrée in the Gentlemen category.

CLIO CUP FRANCE

Gabriele Torelli and Nicolas Milan share the top spot in the classification with a win and fourth place each. They have a five-point lead over Florian Venturi, who leads in the Junior category thanks to his double success in the Gers. Kévin Jimenez, who scored a double win in the Challengers category, takes command of the category and is fourth overall. Lastly, Mickaël Carrée and Laurent Dziadus are level on points at the top of the Gentlemen category after monopolising proceedings in this class at Nogaro.

CLIO CUP ESPAÑA

Clio Cup España also began its season at Nogaro. Italy's Damiano Puccetti (Rangoni Corse) finished second on Sunday and first on Monday, to take command of the group with a 14-point lead over Gaël Rostant (GPA Racing), who claimed two podium finishes and leads the Gentlemen category. Samuel Chaligne (T2CM) completed the top three at the end of the Gers event ahead of Andrea Chierichetti (MC Motortecnica) and race one winner Rene Steenmetz (AST Competition). 2023 Clio Cup España runner-up Alejandro Schimpf (AST Competition), follows in sixth place.

Clio Cup Series competitors will now focus on round two of the calendar at the Autódromo Internacional do Algarve in Portimão (25-28 April). The Portuguese circuit will also host the second rounds of the Clio Cup France and Clio Cup España.

ABOUT THE 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 2024, the Clio Cup Series will bring together Clio Cup España, Clio Cup France, 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.