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Pellerey victorious in the battle of the Causses



The 2024 Clio Trophy France Terre season is shaping up to be highly competitive, as confirmed by the intense battle right up to the final kilometres in the opening round at the Rallye Terre des Causses. Tom Pellerey and Hervé Faucher scored their maiden win in the trophy in their CHL Sport Auto-prepared Clio Rally5 ahead of Benjamin Boulenc - Chloé Barozzi-Gauze and Faniry Rasoamaramaka - François Heer. Also victorious in the Juniors category, the driver from Vaucluse takes command of the general classification and the race for an official programme heading to the next round at the Rallye Castine Terre d'Occitanie (3-5 May).

The Rallye Terre des Causses opened the Clio Trophy France Terre for the third successive year, but the service park featured glorious sunshine on Friday after the snow and showers of the last two editions. After the shakedown and scrutineering, Jean Paul Monnin, Faniry Rasoamaramaka, Tom Pellerey and Christophe Truchet each won a Michelin LTX Force TXL92 tyre in addition to their starter's bonus in a draw organised by Ceerta, the official Michelin Motorsport distributor for the French Rally Championship.

The skies were overcast on Saturday as the 28 crews set off after their recce runs. For a season marked by the introduction of Jean Ragnotti Performer points for the five fastest drivers on each special stage, the action promised to be fiercely contested and was so from the outset. Tom Pellerey took the early lead by a tenth of a second in the first timed sector, but Mika Rasoamaramaka moved into first place after winning the next stage by two-tenths. The first



loop ended with the longest timed sector on the rally, where Benjamin Boulenc set the pace by just four-tenths on the 23.87 km special stage.

With a lead of 4.6s halfway through the first leg, Tom Pellerey saw Mika Rasoamaramaka take three-tenths of a second on the second run of Foissac - La Bouyssière. With three second places in the afternoon, the leader however finished the day with a 5.1s margin on Benjamin Boulenc, who once again set the fastest time on Mas de Cance - Gelles. Mika Rasoamaramaka slipped to third place, 12.7s further back but 13.3s ahead of twin brother Faniry while Alexandre Gransagne completed the top five, followed by several competitors in an extremely compact chase group.

On Sunday, Tom Pellerey doubled his advantage by winning the day's first special stage, as Mika Rasoamaramaka and Alexandre Gransagne lost a lot of time due to punctures. Benjamin Boulenc managed to claim some ground back before the final loop, then in the penultimate timed sector to narrow the gap to 3.5s before the decisive stage. Determined to secure his lead, Tom Pellerey went on the offensive again in the second run of Villeneuve - Gelles to win the stage, relegating his rival to 10.2s and sealing his first Clio Trophy France and Junior category victory in style.

Benjamin Boulenc and Madagascar's Faniry Rasoamaramaka matched their best results in the trophy to join him on the podium. 2023 Clio Trophy France Asphalte title winner Benjamin Stirling made a promising debut on gravel, finishing fourth, closely followed by Switzerland's Aurélien Devanthery and SS8 cowinner Bastien Bergounhe. Jean-Michel Da Cunha took top honours in the Gentleman category and finished seventh, ahead of Corsican drivers Yannick Francisci and Anthony Rovina, as well as Jean Lavigne. Clio Trophy France Asphalte leader Arthur Pelamourgues finished just outside the top ten, less than two minutes behind the winner in his first outing on gravel. Jean Paul Monnin and Mika Rasoamaramaka, who respectively scored three and two fastest times, finished 13th and 18th after suffering punctures during the weekend.

Tom Pellerey scored 55 points thanks to his victory, to which 31 Jean Ragnotti Performer points must be added. The Orange native is firmly in the driving seat of the Clio Trophy France Terre ahead of Benjamin Boulenc and Faniry Rasoamaramaka, whose performances see Fun Meca Sport climb to the top of the teams' standings. Jean-Michel Da Cunha is the early leader in the Gentlemen category, as is Déborah Marie in the Women's category, while Agence De Luca leads the Renault Network Challenge.

Round one of the French Gravel Rally Championship also saw the first appearance of Matteo Chatillon at the wheel of the official Castrol Clio Rally3 following his Junior category title last year in the Clio Trophy France Terre. The young talent and co-driver Maxence Cornuau took advantage of the event to continue their four-wheel drive apprenticeship and confirm their huge potential. Despite a puncture on SS6, the 3P Racing by ARL Sport crew won nine of the ten stages to win in Rally3, where the model monopolised the top ten places and finished just outside the overall top ten.

Based in Bréténoux, the Rallye Castine Terre d'Occitanie will host the next Clio Trophy France Terre round from 3 to 5 May.

Tom Pellerey: "Last year, we struggled sometimes to convert our pace into results, but we know mental strength is fundamental in our sport. We've been working on this since I arrived at CHL Sport Auto, and that has helped me to come confident, without any unnecessary pressure. We saw throughout the weekend that we were right up there at the front, even when we were managing our pace. We led for most of the rally. We never had a big lead, but we didn't need to push hard, apart from the final stage to hold off Benjamin. I didn't think about Performer points as they can quickly become a catch. I took the stages one after the other, and the times followed, so this is a solid result. I am delighted and proud of this first victory in this superb feeder series for the team, our partners and my co-driver, Hervé, who gives so much



without always being rewarded for his efforts. I'm very much looking forward to the Rallye Castine Terre d'Occitanie, the only round I've already done on the calendar. We'll try to build on this, and I'm confident after this first round, which I came into with a bit of trepidation."

Clio Trophy France Terre – Rallye Terre des Causses*

1. Tom Pellerey – Hervé Faucher (J) 1h48m08.9s
 2. Benjamin Boulenc – Chloé Barozzi-Gauze +10.2s
 3. Faniry Rasoamaramaka – François Heer (J) +42.8s
 4. Benjamin Stirling – Florence Stirling (J) +1m04.1s
 5. Aurélien Devanthery – Gaël Delasoie +1m09.5s
 6. Bastien Bergounhe – Mathieu Descharne (J) +1m13.1s
 7. Jean-Michel Da Cunha – Valentin Augé (G) +1m25.5s
 8. Yannick Francisci – Carla Gaffayoli +1m35.2s
 9. Anthony Rovina – Jean-Baptiste Bacchiolelli (J) +1m50.4s
 10. Jean Lavigne – Arnaud Cubizolles (J) +1m53.7s
 11. Arthur Pelamourgues – Bastien Fontaine (J) +1m59.0s
 12. Christophe Truchet – Barbara Truchet +2m40.6s
 13. Jean Paul Monnin – Franck Gilliot +3m05.3s
 14. Alexandre Gransagne – Loïc Maurel +3m34.6s
 15. Thomas Eustaquio – Pauline Compozieux (J) +3m44.9s
 16. Tristan Pieri – Léo Cantalops (J) +3m59.5s
 17. Ludovic De Luca – José Boyer +5m15.1s
 18. Mika Rasoamaramaka – Bastien Pouget (J) +7m12.0s
 19. Dimitri Felices – Clochette (G) +7m13.9s
 20. Zosimo Hernandez – Jose Ignacio Ramirez (G) +8m06.7s
 21. Xavier Pruvot – Nathalie Pruvot (G) +8m44.4s
 22. Lilian Vialle – Manuel Ghirardello (G) +10m13.8s
 23. Marius Anglade – Jean-François Anglade (J) +14m25.7s
 24. Gaël Bertrand – Fabien Adenot +16m50.9s
 25. Joan Font – Eduard Ferran (G) +16m59.2s
 26. Déborah Marie – Amandine Houry (F) +19m00.3s
 27. Vincent Favre-Miville – Maelle Casays (G) +52m18.5s
- Ret. Baptiste Panissié – Gaël Lavernhe (J)

**provisional results, pending final technical scrutineering*

ABOUT CLIO TROPHY FRANCE ASPHALTE AND TERRE

Since its launch in 2020, Clio Rally5 has succeeded on all surfaces, including in France with the Clio Trophy France Asphalt and Clio Trophy France Terre. The two trophies contest five rounds of the FFSA French Tarmac and Gravel Rally Championships, with the two calendars deliberately independent and complementary to maximise opportunities for each competitor. Several internal rankings and the Renault Network Challenge enable all the actors to be involved and to benefit from an unique level of fairness and technical support at this level. As a springboard for the most promising hopefuls, both competitions reward their best Juniors win an official programme.



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.