

**ROUNDS 17 & 18 – SONOMA
RACE REPORT**

Weather: mostly sunny, with a dry track

MULLER AND HUFF ON EQUAL POINTS AFTER USA

WTCC drivers treated American fans to a breathtaking show on the occasion of the championship's first visit to Sonoma and the United States.

Both races were eventful. Yvan Muller and Rob Huff shared the victory honours and their results also made the fight for the world championship as hot as ever. The two Chevrolet drivers are now on equal points with only six races to go.

It is easy to predict that the battle will go to the wire at Macau once again.

If Huff was the happiest man in the paddock for having matched Muller's point tally on top of the Drivers' Championship, Norbert Michelisz too had reasons to rejoice. The young Hungarian was a pain in the neck for the Chevrolet cars in both races and eventually claimed two podium results and stretched his leadership in the Yokohama Trophy.

Gabriele Tarquini and Alain Menu tried their best and never gave up. However, their hopes of achieving great results vanished when they collided at the start of the first race. The Italian had the consolation of a podium in Race 2, while the Swiss saw his hopes of staying in contention for the title fight seriously jeopardized.

Among those who contributed to entertain the Californian fans a few deserve to be mentioned: Tom Coronel completed two great recoveries from 20th on the grids to eight and fifth; Alex MacDowall chased the top drivers in both races; Tiago Monteiro finished twice in the points on his last appearance with Sunred before switching to Honda; Tom Boardman scored points in both races; Franz Engstler lulled into the dream of winning Race 2 before Muller brusquely woke him up...

The championship takes a one month break, while cars and parts are being shipped to Japan. Rounds 19 and 20 will take place at Suzuka on October 21.

RACE 1 – 1-2 FOR CHEVROLET ON HOME SOIL

Yvan Muller for Chevrolet won the first WTCC race in the US. Rob Huff secured a 1-2 for the American manufacturer on the home soil and Norbert Michelisz finished third, winning the Yokohama Trophy.

The first laps were action-packed, with the contact between Alain Menu and Gabriele Tarquini at the start and the fight for the lead between the Chevrolet trio.

After Menu vanished from the top positions, Michelisz was putting the pressure on the leading duo of Muller and Huff, while Tarquini was defending his fourth position from Alex MacDowall.

Behind them a quartet of BMW drivers delivered another close fight, and Tom Coronel managed to finish in eighth after starting 20th.

In terms of Drivers' Championship, Muller made another small step towards the title.

Key moments

Start – Menu and Tarquini make contact at Turn 2, Tarquini drops from second to fifth

Lap 1 – pile up at Turn 2 involves D'Aste, Dudukalo, O'Young, Chilton, Monje and Cerqui

Lap 2 – Monteiro overtakes Engstler for seventh; Nash overtakes Bennani for ninth



WTCC Race of USA – Sonoma – 22 / 23 September 2012

www.fiawtcc.com – www.racesonoma.com

Lap 3 – Menu, Muller and Huff fight for the lead, fender to fender; Ng spins and rejoins

Lap 4 – Muller and Huff dive inside Menu at Turn 6; Menu drops to third and then slows down

Lap 5 – Menu pits for repairs; Bennani overtakes Nash for ninth

Lap 6 – Tarquini is closely chased by MacDowall; Nash drops down with technical problems

Lap 7 – Coronel hits Bennani who cuts a chicane

Lap 8 – Coronel dives inside Bennani at Turn 6, they collide and Bennani spins

Lap 11 – Oriola's car stalls on the straight, the Spaniard loses his tenth position

Lap 12 – Monteiro chases MacDowall for fifth

Lap 13 – Muller wins from Huff; Boardman scores the final point for 10th

Withdrawals

A. Dudukalo: race incident; A. Cerqui: race incident; F. Monje: race incident

RACE 2 – HUFF CLAIMS A CRUCIAL VICTORY

Rob Huff gave Chevrolet the second victory of the day. This has been also a crucial success for the title fight as enabled the British driver to match Yvan Muller's score in the point table.

Muller remained scoreless following a drive through penalty that was imposed by the Stewards after he had pushed Franz Engstler into a spin while stealing the lead from him.

Despite Muller's penalty, Huff had not an easy life in the second half of the race, as Norbert Michelisz and Gabriele Tarquini were chasing him closely. Eventually the classified second and third and the young Hungarian encored his Race 1 victory in the Yokohama Trophy.

Key moments

Start – D'Aste takes the lead from Bennani, Engstler and Michelisz

Lap 1 – Muller overtakes Monteiro for fifth at Turn 2; Huff overtakes Monteiro for sixth at Turn 6

Lap 1 – D'Aste spins off from the lead; Bennani is the new leader

Lap 1 – Menu and Huff overtake Michelisz moving up to third and fourth

Lap 1 – Tarquini overtakes MacDowall for seventh

Lap 2 – Coronel and Menu overtake Cerqui, who drops to 11th; Monje crashes at Turn 5

Lap 3 – Tarquini overtakes Monteiro for sixth

Lap 4 – Bennani spins off from the lead; Engstler is the new leader

Lap 5 – Muller hits Engstler at Turn 6; Engstler spins and Muller takes the lead

Lap 6 – the safety car takes the track while the marshals tow Bennani's car to a safe position

Lap 8 – the race resumes

Lap 8 – Coronel overtakes Boardman for eighth; Menu overtakes Monteiro for fifth

Lap 9 – Muller is given a drive through for the incident with Engstler; Huff leads

Lap 10 – Michelisz chases Huff for the lead

Lap 11 – Oriola and Ng make contact while fighting for 11th position

Lap 15 – Mg is given a black flag for not respecting a black-and-orange flag

Withdrawals

M. Bennani: race incident; F. Monje: race incident

FLASH NEWS

THE GREEN FLAG COMES FROM THE SKY

The green flag that was used to start the warm up lap of WTCC Race 1 was delivered by a sky jumper team.

Three members of the GoPro Bomb Squad jumped from a helicopter flying at about 1200 metres and landed right on the start-finish line, delivering the green flag to the race director.

THE WORD TO THE WINNERS

Yvan Muller – Race 1 winner: *“My car was fantastic and I have to thank the team for doing a great job. We knew that the first turn here could be an issue, so I was very conservative behind Alain (Menu) and Gabriele (Tarquini). They clashed and I had the opportunity to pass Gabriele. Then Alain had a technical problem and I was able to pass him too. In the final part of the race I had to keep watch on Rob (Huff) and avoid offering a gap to pass me. In the second race I made a mistake and hit Engstler. The Stewards decided to give me a penalty for this. It is not up to me to judge whether this was fair or unfair. Shame on me because I gave them the possibility to penalize me.”*

Rob Huff – Race 2 winner: *“I am very happy. It has been a great weekend for me. I was struggling a little bit with the set up of my car after the warm up. We changed something and I was very happy with the car’s race pace. It was the same old story, when I have Yvan or Alain ahead of me it’s very difficult to overtake. I was studying Yvan to see how I could make a try without taking a risk. Then he made a mistake and I found myself in the lead. From then onwards I had to control Michalisz’s moves, just like Yvan had done with me in Race 1. Now we are on equal points, Yvan and I. It’s like a fresh new start to the championship. I have been twice third and once second. I will try everything I can to win this year!”*

2012 FIA World Touring Car Championship

RACE 1 RESULT

POS	NO	CLS	DRIVER / TEAM	NAT	CAR	TIME	LAPS	GAP	KPH	BEST
1	1		Yvan MULLER	FRA	Chevrolet Cruze 1.6T	23:34.369	13		133.41	1:48.088
2	2		Robert HUFF	GBR	Chevrolet Cruze 1.6T	23:34.933	13	0.564	133.36	1:48.136
3	5	Y	Norbert MICHELISZ	HUN	BMW 320 TC	23:39.813	13	5.444	132.90	1:48.323
4	3		Gabriele TARQUINI	ITA	SEAT Leon WTCC	23:43.216	13	8.847	132.58	1:48.105
5	11	Y	Alex MACDOWALL	GBR	Chevrolet Cruze 1.6T	23:46.172	13	11.803	132.31	1:48.346
6	18		Tiago MONTEIRO	PRT	SR Leon 1.6T	23:46.791	13	12.422	132.25	1:48.571
7	6	Y	Franz ENGSTLER	DEU	BMW 320 TC	23:50.076	13	15.707	131.94	1:48.429
8	15		Tom CORONEL	NLD	BMW 320 TC	23:50.710	13	16.341	131.89	1:49.122
9	26	Y	Stefano D'ASTE	ITA	BMW 320 TC	23:51.673	13	17.304	131.80	1:48.894
10	22	Y	Tom BOARDMAN	GBR	SEAT Leon WTCC	24:00.192	13	25.823	131.02	1:48.742
11	25	Y	Mehdi BENNANI	MAR	BMW 320 TC	24:04.683	13	30.314	130.61	1:49.172
12	23		Tom CHILTON	GBR	Ford Focus S2000 TC	24:08.757	13	34.388	130.24	1:48.926
13	29	Y	Robb HOLLAND	USA	Chevrolet Cruze 1.6T	24:14.461	13	40.092	129.73	1:49.682
14	20	Y	Darryl O'YOUNG	HKG	SEAT Leon WTCC	24:20.553	13	46.184	129.19	1:48.933
15	7	Y	Charles NG	HKG	BMW 320 TC	24:22.233	13	47.864	129.04	1:49.310
16	74	Y	Pepe ORIOLA	ESP	SEAT Leon WTCC	18:26.132	10	3 LAPS	131.22	1:49.260
17	14		James NASH	GBR	Ford Focus S2000 TC	16:44.674	9	4 LAPS	130.02	1:48.997
18	8		Alain MENU	CHE	Chevrolet Cruze 1.6T	24:24.878	9	4 LAPS	89.17	1:48.224

NOT CLASSIFIED

88	Y	Fernando MONJE	ESP	SEAT Leon WTCC	24:47.334	8	N.C.F.	78.07	1:49.045
16	Y	Alberto CERQUI	ITA	BMW 320 TC	2:59.822	1	D.N.F.	80.72	
4	Y	Aleksei DUDUKALO	RUS	SEAT Leon WTCC		0	D.N.F.	N/A	

FASTEST LAP

1		Yvan MULLER		Chevrolet Cruze 1.6T	1:48.088	2	83.44mph	134.29kph
5	Y	Norbert MICHELISZ		BMW 320 TC	1:48.323	5	83.26mph	133.99kph

Sonoma

Circuit Length = 4.0320 km.

Start: 12:18 End: 12:41

Weather/Track: Sun 26C/Dry

Steward:	Steward:	Steward:	Issued at:
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2012 FIA World Touring Car Championship

RACE 2 RESULT

POS	NO	CLS	DRIVER / TEAM	NAT	CAR	TIME	LAPS	GAP	KPH	BEST
1	2		Robert HUFF	GBR	Chevrolet Cruze 1.6T	29:19.176	15		123.76	1:48.161
2	5	Y	Norbert MICHELISZ	HUN	BMW 320 TC	29:19.496	15	0.320	123.74	1:47.937
3	3		Gabriele TARQUINI	ITA	SEAT Leon WTCC	29:20.375	15	1.199	123.68	1:48.086
4	8		Alain MENU	CHE	Chevrolet Cruze 1.6T	29:22.894	15	3.718	123.50	1:48.291
5	15		Tom CORONEL	NLD	BMW 320 TC	29:26.747	15	7.571	123.23	1:48.121
6	18		Tiago MONTEIRO	PRT	SR Leon 1.6T	29:27.383	15	8.207	123.19	1:47.974
7	11	Y	Alex MACDOWALL	GBR	Chevrolet Cruze 1.6T	29:31.858	15	12.682	122.88	1:48.025
8	22	Y	Tom BOARDMAN	GBR	SEAT Leon WTCC	29:33.023	15	13.847	122.80	1:49.256
9	26	Y	Stefano D'ASTE	ITA	BMW 320 TC	29:33.396	15	14.220	122.77	1:49.261
10	6	Y	Franz ENGSTLER	DEU	BMW 320 TC	29:34.819	15	15.643	122.67	1:48.507
11	74	Y	Pepe ORIOLA	ESP	SEAT Leon WTCC	29:37.987	15	18.811	122.45	1:49.656
12	20	Y	Darryl O'YOUNG	HKG	SEAT Leon WTCC	29:40.832	15	21.656	122.26	1:50.196
13	16	Y	Alberto CERQUI	ITA	BMW 320 TC	29:41.173	15	21.997	122.23	1:50.060
14	1		Yvan MULLER	FRA	Chevrolet Cruze 1.6T	29:42.643	15	23.467	122.13	1:47.732
15	23		Tom CHILTON	GBR	Ford Focus S2000 TC	29:43.495	15	24.319	122.07	1:49.965
16	29	Y	Robb HOLLAND	USA	Chevrolet Cruze 1.6T	29:44.360	15	25.184	122.02	1:49.845
17	14		James NASH	GBR	Ford Focus S2000 TC	29:49.806	15	30.630	121.64	1:50.561
18	4	Y	Aleksei DUDUKALO	RUS	SEAT Leon WTCC	30:00.733	15	41.557	120.91	1:50.060

NOT CLASSIFIED

25	Y	Mehdi BENNANI	MAR	BMW 320 TC	5:31.551	3	D.N.F.	131.33	1:48.333
88	Y	Fernando MONJE	ESP	SEAT Leon WTCC	2:01.698	1	D.N.F.	119.27	2:01.698

FASTEST LAP

1		Yvan MULLER		Chevrolet Cruze 1.6T	1:47.732	8	83.72mph	134.73kph
5	Y	Norbert MICHELISZ		BMW 320 TC	1:47.937	2	83.56mph	134.47kph

Car 7 excluded.

Weather/Track: Sun 28C/Dry

Sonoma

Circuit Length = 4.0320 km.

Start: 13:33 End: 14:03

Steward:	Steward:	Steward:	Issued at:
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2012 FIA WORLD TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP - DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

position	driver	Monza ITALY 11 March			Valencia SPAIN 1 April			Marrakech MOROCCO 15 April			Slovakia Ring SLOVAK REP 29 April			Budapest HUNGARY 6 May			Salzburg AUSTRIA 20 May			Portimão PORTUGAL 3 June			Curitiba BRAZIL 22 July			Sonoma USA 23 September			Suzuka JAPAN 21 October			Shanghai CHINA 4 November			Macau MACAU 18 November			TOTAL
		Q2	R1	R2	Q2	R1	R2	Q2	R1	R2	Q2	R1	R2	Q2	R1	R2	Q2	R1	R2	Q2	R1	R2	Q2	R1	R2	Q2	R1	R2	Q2	R1	R2	Q2	R1	R2				
1	Yvan MULLER (FRA)	4	25	25	5	25	4	2	15	25	0	1	18	5	25	1	4	18	4	4	25	10	5	25	12	3	25	0								315		
2	Robert HUFF (GBR)	3	18	15	1	12	8	4	18	18	0	0	25	4	18	6	5	25	18	2	15	12	3	15	25	2	18	25								315		
3	Alain MENU (CHE)	2	6	18	0	10	25	5	25	15	0	15	0	3	15	18	3	15	0	0	10	25	4	18	18	5	0	12								267		
4	Gabriele TARQUINI (ITA)	5	15	0	4	18	2	0	0	0	3	25	15	2	0	8	2	12	0	5	18	0	1	12	15	4	12	15								193		
5	Tom CORONEL (NLD)	0	10	12	3	15	18	3	4	12	0	0	12	0	8	0	0	4	15	1	8	15	0	4	6	0	4	10								164		
6	Norbert MICHELISZ (HUN)	0	2	4	0	6	12	0	2	0	5	8	8	0	6	25	0	2	10	3	12	1	0	2	10	1	15	18								152		
7	Pepe ORIOLA (ESP)	0	8	0	2	8	6	1	12	6	0	0	10	0	4	12	0	6	12	0	2	18	0	0	0	0	0	0								107		
8	Stefano D'ASTE (ITA)	0	0	10	0	0	15	0	10	10	0	10	0	0	0	4	0	0	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2								88		
9	Tiago MONTEIRO (PRT)	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	10	10	0	10	0	0	6	4	0	0	2	0	8	8								63		
10	Alex MACDOWALL (GBR)	0	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	8	0	0	1	6	0	8	0	0	10	6								52		
11	Mehdi BENNANI (MAR)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	6	1	12	15	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0								47		
12	Franz ENGSTLER (DEU)	0	0	8	0	4	10	0	8	4	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	6	1								47		
13	Alberto CERQUI (ITA)	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	4	0	0	0	0	6	0	4	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0								37		
14	Aleksei DUDUKALO (RUS)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0								23		
15	Michel NYKJÆR (DNK)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	10	8	-	-	-								20		
16	Darryl O'YOUNG (HKG)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0								17		
17	Rickard RYDELL (SWE)	1	12	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-								14			
18	James NASH (GBR)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0								12		
19	Tom BOARDMAN (GBR)	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4								9		
20	Tom CHILTON (GBR)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0								7		
21	Gábor WÉBER (HUN)	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-								3		
22	Fernando MONJE (ESP)	-	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	1	0	0	0	0								1		

2012 FIA WORLD TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP - MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

position	manufacturer	Monza ITALY 11 March			Valencia SPAIN 1 April			Marrakech MOROCCO 15 April			Slovakia Ring SLOVAK REP 29 April			Budapest HUNGARY 6 May			Salzburgring AUSTRIA 20 May			Portimão PORTUGAL 3 June			Curitiba BRAZIL 22 July			Sonoma USA 23 September			Suzuka JAPAN 21 October			Shanghai CHINA 4 November			Macau MACAU 18 November			TOTAL
		Q2	R1	R2	Q2	R1	R2	Q2	R1	R2	Q2	R1	R2	Q2	R1	R2	Q2	R1	R2	Q2	R1	R2	Q2	R1	R2	Q2	R1	R2	Q2	R1	R2	Q2	R1	R2				
1	CHEVROLET	7	43	43	6	37	37	9	43	43	3	23	43	9	43	26	9	43	28	6	40	37	9	43	43	8	43	37									761	
2	BMW Customer Racing Teams	2	20	27	3	23	33	4	22	27	5	22	20	3	27	40	2	18	40	4	22	25	1	18	22	3	25	28									486	
3	SEAT Customer Technology	6	25	18	6	28	18	2	23	18	7	43	25	3	18	22	4	27	20	5	26	26	5	27	23	4	20	23									472	