

Wet race weekend in the GT4 European Series – Spa Francorchamps

The fourth round of the GT4 European Series took place at the Belgium Formula 1 circuit, Spa Francorchamps, together with the ADAC GT Masters weekend. The Ardennes area is known for fast changing weather conditions, giving an extra challenge for the racing teams and drivers.

For the race weekend, the PROsport Performance team had brought some upgrades to the engine in the Porsche 981 Cayman GT4 racecar. In the two practice sessions on Saturday morning, the engine upgrades as well as some different set-up's of the car was tested, all under dry conditions. The new components seemed to work well, and everything was set for the qualifying sessions later on the day.



Thomas Krebs took part in the first qualifying session, setting the overall 5th fastest lap time of the field, and 2nd of the AM category drivers. Teammate and Ex-DTM driver, Carsten Struwe, managed to put the car on an overall 11th place in the second qualifying session, and thereby 6th in the AM category.

Thomas: *“Overall I am pleased with my own performance in the qualifying session. 5th is a good starting position for the races, and I am ready to attack the front runners. We have got some more horsepower in the car, which helps a lot on this type of circuit. However, I had a few minor mistakes in my fastest lap, and more was possible. But that’s how it is when you are pushing the limits of the car.”*

The first race of the weekend took place Sunday morning. Just about 10 min before the beginning of the race, the rain started pouring down on the circuit. Slick tires were quickly changed to rain tires, but unfortunately, the team did not have time enough to change the set-up of the car for wet conditions. Without any laps on a wet circuit in the previous sessions, the drivers were set for a difficult challenge. Thomas made the start, holding on to the 5th place into the first corner. On the way down to the famous Eau Rouge corner on the first lap, Thomas could overtake the 4th place. Unfortunately, he carried too much speed through the corner, which resulted in a spin on top of Eau Rouge. To everyone’s relief, all the other cars avoided contact and he could continue the race, without losing too much distance to the field. Thomas fought his way back up, making one overtaking after another.

When the pit window opened for the drivers change, he could turn over the car to Carsten on a 9th place. Struggling with the set-up in the last part of the race, Carsten drove over the finish line on an overall 11th place, 5th in the AM category.



For the second race of the weekend, the weather conditions had changed back to dry, with the sun shining down on the circuit. This time, only 5 min before the start of the race, the dark clouds appeared from the back of the hills, and seconds later, the rain was pouring down. Carsten took the start, holding on to the current 11th place without any mistakes. Unfortunately, the speed was not there, and he was struggling to keep up with the front runners. The team decided to make an early pit stop, giving Thomas the chance to catch up with the front. In the last 30 min of the race, the circuit started drying up again, giving a hard time for the soft rain tires. Thomas gave it his best, overtaking a large number of other cars. In the last two laps, Thomas managed to defend his position and keep one of the BMW's behind, giving the team a 3rd place and a podium in the AM class.



Thomas: *"I am disappointed with how the race weekend unfolded. We had good speed in the car under dry conditions, and we found a great set-up with less tire degradation compared to our competitors over the distance. I think we could have fought for the win, but on the wet track, we were struggling a lot today."*



THOMAS
KREBS

Because of the last-minute changes in the weather conditions, we did not have time enough to change the car to rain set-up for neither of the two races. On the Porsche, this makes a huge difference, and it handicapped us a lot. On the bright side, we did get a podium in the last race, so it was not too bad of a weekend after all. I must say that the last laps of Race 2 were incredible difficult, as the soft rain tires were overheating on the drying track. It felt like I was driving on chewing gum, while I was fighting my best to keep the 3rd place in our favor."

Follow Thomas on www.facebook.com/ThomasKrebsOfficial or www.krebsracing.dk

