

Difficult race weekend in the GT4 European Series - Red Bull Ring

The third round of the GT4 European Series took place at Red Bull Ring in Austria, together with the ADAC GT Masters weekend. The legendary circuit is used for Formula 1 and other great motorsport events during the year, and creates a fantastic scene for motor racing. With sunny weather and temperatures around 30 degree all weekend, a lot of spectators has found their way to the track.



For the race weekend, Thomas was joined by new teammate, Carsten Struwe, a former DTM driver and experienced Ferrari pilot from Germany. The two drivers made their first appearance on the track already Thursday, where two practice sessions of one hour each were planned. The PROsport Performance team had brought some updates to the car, which was supposed to be tested. Unfortunately, the team ran into a bit of trouble, when some of the Porsche's wiring system was destroyed due to the high temperatures from the brakes. This meant that the car lost engine power, the gear box did not function correctly and the ABS system failed. The testing sessions were therefore cancelled, and the team used the rest of the day Thursday as well as Friday to fix the problem. To make sure the electrical system was working correctly, the car was brought to the nearest Porsche center in Graz, where it was controlled with some special equipment.

The official practices continued Saturday, where both drivers did many laps in the car. The practices were used to test different set-up's and maximizing the potential of the car. Later on the day, the two qualifying sessions took place. Carsten drove the first qualifying session, ending on a 13th grid position for the first race. Thomas could improve the lap time of the car significantly in the second qualifying sessions, but ended on an 11th place, giving him a slightly better starting position for the second race.

The first race of the weekend took place Sunday morning. Carsten made a good start, overtaking a few cars in the first corner. Unfortunately, only moments later a competitor hit him from the back, spinning the car around. Carsten managed to get the car back on track, trying to hunt down the lost ground. After 20 min of the race, the team chose to make an early pit stop and driver change, giving Thomas the chance to catch the competitors. Thomas got in the car and pushed the maximum every lap, making significantly faster lap times. With a half lap up to the competitors there was not much he could do, and he ended the race on a 4th place in the AM class and 9th overall.



In the second race, it was Thomas turn to sit in the car from the start. He tried to catch up with the competitors in the front, but was lacking pace in order to do so. In the first part of the race a few competitors received drive through penalties or had problems with their cars, giving Thomas a current 3rd position in the AM class. Just before the pit window closed, the driver change was made and Carsten went in the car. He could finish the job, ending on a 3rd place in the AM class and 7th overall.



Thomas: *"I am very disappointed with this race weekend. I was looking forward to this race for a long time, as Red Bull Ring is one of my favorite circuits, and I feel like I have the potential to go really fast around here. Unfortunately, we were far behind on pace compared to the other cars. We are lacking a lot of power in the engine, which means we are missing around 20 km/h on the straights. This gap is impossible to catch up through the corners. I am satisfied with my own performance, especially in the first race where I managed to drive very constant lap times maximizing the car's potential. We managed to get a consolidating 3rd place in the end, but I am not satisfied before we are able to fight for the win. I know that the team will work hard to increase the performance of the car for the next race at Spa-Francorchamps in two weeks' time. I am optimistic that we can succeed.*

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