

Disappointing race result at Spa Francorchamps

This weekend, Thomas Krebs took part in the fourth round of the GT4 European Series at the Belgian Formula 1 circuit, Spa Francorchamps. Leading the Reiter Young Stars championship upfront, Thomas was eager to score some good points on a track he knows very well from the previous years. For this weekend, the GT4 European Series had joined the British GT series, meaning 16 GT3 and 41 GT4 cars would start in a 2-hour endurance race on the 7 km long circuit.



Friday

The race weekend started with two practice sessions of 50 minutes each, before the two important qualifying sessions on Friday afternoon.

Thomas were only able to do a couple of laps in the first practice session, which was shortened due to multiple incidents and crashes between other cars on the track. However, he was able to show great pace, setting the 4th fastest time of the 41 GT4 cars, 2nd fastest of the KTM X-Bow's in the Reiter Young Stars. The good speed carried on in the second practice session, where Thomas ended up on an overall 3rd place, still 2nd of the Reiter Young Stars, but with a minimal gap of 2 tenths of a second to the front.



With good pace, hopes were high for a successful qualifying session in the afternoon. For the 2-hour endurance race, a special qualifying system is taken into use. The two drivers on the car would each have 12 min to set their fastest time, wherefrom the combined average of their best time would count for the overall start position.

Just as the qualifying was about to start the rain started pouring down, but only on half of the circuit. The other half was still completely dry. Nearly all teams made a quick decision, and put on rain tyres just seconds before the session started. Teammate Rebecca Jackson drove out on the track for the first 12 minutes, but was struggling to set a fast lap in the tricky conditions. She set a time of 2:58,7 min. Thomas jumped in the car next, and was able to continue the great pace from the practice sessions. He set a time of 2:46,6 min even on a lap with traffic, which alone would count for an overall 5th position and 2nd in the Reiter Young Stars.

As the times were combined, the duo would start the race from 20th position.



Saturday

The race was scheduled to begin at 12:35 pm, and Thomas was chosen to drive the start. Mandatory for the 2-hour race are two pit stops, which would mean that Thomas would drive two stints of total 70 min, and Rebecca one stint of 50 min.

Misfortune stroke already on the starting grid, when the engine suddenly couldn't switch on. Instead of driving around on the formation lap and start the race from 20th position, Thomas was pushed back into the pits where the mechanics finally got the engine going. He had to start from the pit, waiting for the whole field to pass before getting the green light. Quickly catching the slowest drivers in the back of the field, Thomas had to do numerous overtaking manoeuvres in the first couple of laps, making it impossible to set fast lap times for the Reiter Young Stars Championship. Because of the circumstances in the starting procedure, he had to serve a drive-through penalty, which destroyed another two lap times and made him fall behind the 10-15 cars he just overtook. To get out of the traffic, the team decided to make an early pit stop and drivers change, giving Thomas a better opportunity later in the race. Rebecca re-joined the track,

but after only 1,5 lap the worst case scenario happened. She had crashed with two other cars and ended in the barriers. Rebecca were okay, but the car was completely damaged and unable to continue.

Thomas: *"I am extremely disappointed over this race, especially the effect it has on my championship standings. With the few laps in heavy traffic I did in the beginning of the race, I finish only on a 7th place in the Reiter Young Stars today. This means almost no points for the championship, and me losing the overall lead. Unarguably, the speed was there for an easy 1st or 2nd place this weekend. We had found a good set-up for the car, and I was really enjoying to drive on this circuit. It is really important to score good points at each race, but today I just didn't have the chance. However, I have not given up my hope of winning this championship, and I can not wait for the next race in Hungary the 25th of September."*

With 89 points, Thomas is currently sitting on a 3rd place in the Reiter Young Stars championship. With the leader just 3 points ahead, the championship is still open. 115 points are still on the line in the last two race weekends, Hungaroring (H) and Zandvoort (NL).



Places to follow in 2016



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