

Saturday, August 15, 2015

Kozarov Doubles Up at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course. Grahovec Wins in TCA, Schwartz Sweeps in TCB

Written by Series Staff



LEXINGTON, Ohio -- Vesko Kozarov, of Salt Lake City, Utah, scored his second straight Pirelli World Challenge TC win and fourth of the season in Round 12 at the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course, part of the OPTIMA Batteries Grand Prix presented by MOMO. Toby Grahovec, of Little Elm, Texas, scored his first career Pirelli World Challenge win in TCA while Johan Schwartz, of Huntersville, N.C. swept the weekend in TCB winning his third straight race and eighth of 2015.

From the standing start, pole sitter John Weisberg, of Webster, N.Y., in the No. 50 REDCOM Laboratories/Red Line Berg Racing Mazda MX-5 launched into first through turn 1 and the Keyhole but was passed on the back straight and into turn 4 by second-on-the-grid Alex Welch, of Englewood, Colo., in the No. 16 HPA Motorsports VW Jetta GLI. Welch's teammate Jeff Altenburg, of Ellicott City, Md., in the No. 15 HPA Motorsports VW Jetta GLI also passed Weisberg. At the end of lap 1 Welch led Altenburg, with Kozarov, in the No. 3 Skullcandy Team Nissan Altima up into third after starting 5th, and Ernie Francis Jr., of Davie, Fla, in the No. 98 Breathless Racing/Time4Learning Mazda MX-5 in fourth. Weisberg slotted into 5th.

In TCA, pole sitter Grahovec launched cleanly off of the standing start to lead Rounds 10 and 11 winner Jason Wolfe, of Mount Vernon, Ohio, in the No. 36 Kinetic Motorsports Wolfe Trucking Kia Forte Koup, and Patrick Seguin, of Ottawa, Ont. in the No. 39 helpkevinproject.com Team Ost Racing Honda Civic SI.

In TCB, pole sitter Schwartz, in the No. 25 TechSport Racing/ZERO Cancer/CAS Group Chevy Sonic led Tom O'Gorman, of Mason, Ohio, in the No. 94 Black Armor Helmets/Full Throttle Indoor Karting/SCCA Track Night In America/Kutney Motorsports/HPD Honda Fit, and Andrei Kisel, of North Vancouver, B.C. in the No. 57 Racing.ca/LaptopScreen.com MINI Cooper.

On lap 3, Altenburg passed Welch for the lead through the Carousel, with Kozarov pulling up on Welch's bumper to challenge for second. Grahovec maintained his lead over Wolfe and Seguin in TCA, while Glenn Nixon, of Mission, B.C., in the No. 58 LaptopScreen.com/ClubRacing.com/Nixon Prosports/HPD Honda Fit passed his teammate Kisel for third.

On lap 5, Welch repassed Altenburg for the lead and soon after on lap 6 the No. 15 car would pull off track with a mechanical issue. Francis Jr. moved up to third.

A full course yellow occurred on lap 9 to remove Altenburg's No. 15 car. During the yellow, Wolfe's No. 36 machine suffered a mechanical issue and he pulled off the course retiring from the race.

On the lap 14 restart, Fred Emich, of Denver, Colo., in the No. 87 Emich Volkswagen Volkswagen Jetta GLI moved boldly up from six to third, with Adam Poland, of Mount Vernon, Texas, in the No. 33 EASTEX Motorsports/RPM Motorsports Mazda MX-5 moving up into 4th. Welch and Kozarov maintained first and second in TC off of the restart. Emich was awarded the Cadillac ATS-V

Move of the Race for gaining the positions off of the restart.

In TCA, Grahovec remained in first. With Wolfe's retirement, Seguin moved into second, with Tony Rivera, of Vista, Calif., in the No. 86 Tiburon Motorsports Brass Monkey Racing Scion FR-S in third. In TCB, Schwartz maintained his lead over O'Gorman and Nixon.

On lap 16, Kozarov closed in on Welch and passed for the lead, quickly building up an eight-car buffer on the driver of the No. 16 car. Poland moved into third as Emich's No. 87 machine encountered a mechanical issue and came into the pits.

On lap 18, O'Gorman and Nixon engaged in a battle for second with Nixon momentarily gaining second, only to have O'Gorman repossess for the position on lap 19. O'Gorman soon after ran into the gravel through turn 1 as TC, TCA and TCB drivers jockeyed for position through the turn. Jay Salinsky, of New Port Richey, Fla., in the No. 66 IDLife/Race2IDLife.com Shea Racing Honda Fit moved into third in TCB.

On lap 21, Welch and Poland engaged in a battle for second with Poland passing through turn 6 only to have Welch repossess through Thunder Alley.

At the checkered, Kozarov took the win over Welch and Poland, while Grahovec led the entire race to win over Seguin and Rivera. Schwartz won over Nixon and Salinsky.

Of note, Grahovec won the StopTech Brake Late, Finish First Award. The Optima Batteries Best Standing Start Award went to Marc Sherrin, of Lucas, Texas, in the No. 27 Steadfast Funding Ford Fiesta for gaining five positions when the lights went out. Poland won the Invisible Glass Clean Pass of the Race Award for his pass of Welch on lap 21. Salinsky was awarded the VP Racing Fuels Hard Charger Award for gaining 10 positions during the race.

"We started fifth, so we had to work our way up," said Kozarov. "The guys ahead of me were super strong. Alex (Welch) did a great job. It was tough work, but it was fun."

"I'm so happy to win here at Mid-Ohio for the first time in Pirelli World Challenge," said Grahovec. "Ten years ago I won first my first national championship here driving the same BMW Z4 for Classic BMW. It feels awesome to be on the podium for all three races. I can't thank the guys from Classic BMW enough."

"My race went extremely well," said Schwartz. "I had a good start. The Pirelli tires did an awesome job through all three races, because they are so consistent, they don't go away."

Results are provisional until posted final. In TC, Corey Fergus, of Columbus, Ohio in the No. 00 USLED/Axis Roofing/AERO/RSS/Motul Motorsports Promotions Porsche Cayman regains the Drivers' Championship points lead over Poland (1166-1112). In TCA, Wolfe moves into the lead over Seguin (1132-1102). In TCB, Schwartz leads over Nixon (1525-1400). TC, TCA and TCB competitors now head to Miller Motorsports Park for Rounds 13, 14 and 15, August 21 to August 23.

LEXINGTON, OH - Results from Saturday's 23-lap 51.934 mile Pirelli World Challenge Championship TC/TCA/TCB Round 12 race, part of the OPTIMA Batteries Grand Prix presented by MOMO at Mid-Ohio Sportscar Course, with finishing position, class, starting position in parentheses, driver, hometown, car, laps and reason out (if any).

1. TC, (5), Vesko Kozarov, Salt Lake City, Utah, Nissan Altima, 23.
2. TC, (2), Alex Welch, Englewood, Colo., Volkswagen Jetta GLI, 23, -.787.
3. TC, (9), Adam Poland, Mt. Vernon, Texas, Mazda MX-5, 23, -1.042.
4. TC, (4), Ernie Francis_Jr, Davie, Fla., MAZDA MX-5, 23, -5.373.

5. TC, (6), Corey Fergus(R), Columbus, Ohio, Porsche Cayman, 23, -6.904.
6. TC, (1), John Weisberg, Webster, N.Y., Mazda MX-5, 23, -7.062.
7. TC, (13), Austin Snader, Sealy, Texas, Mazda MX-5, 23, -7.406.
8. TC, (11), Nicolas Hammann, Elkhart Lake, Wis., Nissan 370Z, 23, -7.990.
9. TC, (12), Paul Street(R), Anniston, Ala., Honda Accord, 23, -19.281.
10. TC, (10), Jeff Ricca, Milford, Conn., Hyundai GenesisCoupe20T, 23, -19.582.
11. TC, (8), David Baum, Hasting, Mich., Porsche Cayman, 22, -1 lap.
12. TC, (7), Fred Emich, Denver, Colo., Volkswagen Jetta GLI, 21, -2 lap.
13. TC, (3), Jeff Altenburg, Ellicott City, Md., Volkswagen Jetta GLI, 6, -17 laps.
14. TC, (14), Cory Friedman, Charleston, S.C., Porsche Cayman, 0, DNS.
15. TCA, (15), Toby Grahovec, Little Elm, Texas, BMW Z4, 23.
16. TCA, (16), Patrick Seguin, Ottawa, Ontario, Honda Civic Si, 23, -1.648.
17. TCA, (24), Tony Rivera, Vista, Calif., Scion FRS Coupe, 23, -5.916.
18. TCA, (19), Emilee Tominovich(R), Clarksville, Md., Honda Civic Si, 23, -14.488.
19. TCA, (18), Steve Kohli, Iowa City, Iowa, Honda Civic Si, 23, -17.179.
20. TCA, (22), Ron Yarab, Youngstown, Ohio, Honda Civic Si, 23, -20.000.
21. TCA, (20), Kris Wright(R), Pittsburgh, Pa., Kia Forte Koup, 23, -20.387.
22. TCA, (25), Chase Pelletier, Brampton, Ontario, Honda Civic Si, 23, -20.689.
23. TCA, (21), Samantha Tan(R), Gormley, Ontario, Kia Forte Koup, 23, -21.448.
24. TCA, (17), Jason Wolfe, Mt. Vernon, Ohio, Kia Forte Koup, 10, -13 laps.
25. TCA, (23), Kevin Anderson, Huntington Station, N.Y., Mazda RX8, 1, -22 laps.
26. TCB, (26), Johan Schwartz, Huntersville, S.C., Chevy Sonic, 21.
27. TCB, (32), Glenn Nixon, Mission, British Columbia, Honda Fit, 21, -2.302.
28. TCB, (35), Jay Salinsky, New Port Richey, Fla., Honda Fit, 21, -2.553.
29. TCB, (31), Van Svenson(R), Hyde Park, N.Y., Chevrolet Sonic, 21, -2.980.
30. TCB, (36), Jason Fichter, Jupiter, Fla., MINI Cooper, 21, -4.287.
31. TCB, (33), Jeff Barrow, Santa Clarita, Calif., Honda Fit, 21, -4.783.
32. TCB, (30), PJ Groenke, Toronto, Canada, MINI Cooper, 21, -15.917.
33. TCB, (27), Andrei Kisel, N. Vancouver, British Columbia, MINI Cooper, 21, -18.925.
34. TCB, (37), Marc Sherrin(R), Lucas, Texas, Ford Fiesta, 21, -30.313.
35. TCB, (29), Nick Lougee, Minneapolis, Minn., MINI Cooper, 21, -36.216.
36. TCB, (34), Wei Lu(R), Richmond, British Columbia, MINI Cooper, 20, -1 lap.
37. TCB, (28), Tom O’Gorman, Mason, Ohio, Honda Fit, 19, -2 lap.

Time of race: 40 minutes, 27.158 seconds.

Average speed: 77.029 mph

Margin of victory: .787 Seconds

Lap leaders: Laps 1-2, #16 Alex Welch; laps 3-3, #15 Jeff Altenburg; laps 4-14, #16 Alex Welch; laps 15-23, #3 Vesko Kozarov

Fastest race lap: #16 Alex Welch, 1:34.577 (85.949 mph)

Fastest qualifier: #50 John Weisberg, 1:34.468 (86.048 mph)

