

Saturday, March 07, 2015

Ellsworth, Rivera, and Schwartz Double-up in TC, TCA, and TCB at Circuit of The Americas

Written by Series Staff



Austin, TX - The Nissan Grand Prix of Texas brought to you by Motul saw repeat winners in Rounds 1 and 2 for the TC, TCA and TCB classes. In TC it was Cody Ellsworth of Jupiter, FL taking the wins while Tony Rivera, of Vista, CA. took TCA wins, and in TCB it was Johan Schwartz of Huntersville, NC, standing on top of the box.

Round 1

In TC, pole sitter Ellsworth driving the No. 04 Mac Papers/Hastings Fiberglass, Autometrics Motorsports, Porsche Cayman was pushed wide in turn one by the No. 98 driven by Ernie Francis Jr. of Davie, FL. in his Breathless Racing/Time4Learning Mazda MX5.

Coming out of turn 1 Ellsworth was able to consolidate his position up front while Corey Fergus, from Columbus OH. in the No. 00 USLED/Axis Roofing/AERO/RSS/Motul, Motorsports Promotions slipped past Francis Jr. to take over second.

After the initial challenge Ellsworth went on to lead flag to flag recording his first career Pirelli World Challenge win in his fourth career series start.

“We had an awesome run this morning I can’t thank the Autometrics boys enough, they gave me a phenomenal car,” said Ellsworth. “I was lucky enough to gap the guys with some traffic and all I had to do was hold it and we were lucky enough to keep it.”

Second in TC came down to the final two laps with Adam Poland, of Mount Vernon, TX., driving the No. 33 Edge Addicts/Texas Track WorksEASTEX Motor SportsMazda MX5 leading the No. 03 driven by Cory Friedman, of Charleston, NC., in his Mac Papers/Hastings Fiberglass Autometrics Motorsports Porsche Cayman. Friedman made a great move to get by Poland only to be re-passed. But that is where Poland’s luck came to an end as he suffered mechanical trouble and faded to finish 4.6 seconds behind Friedman at the flag. Friedman was awarded the StopTech, Brake Late Finish First Award for the pass.

In TCA, Paul Holton in the No. 71 Children’s Tumor Foundation/Honda Performance Development/Racing4Research.org Compass360 Racing Honda Civic Si made an opening lap move to take the lead over pole sitter Robby Foley of Randolph, NJ driving the No. 23 Techsportracing.com, Techsport Racing Mazda RX-8 to fall to fourth by the end of the first lap.

Ultimately the race was between Foley and Rivera in the No. 86 Eurotech, Brass Monkey Racing Scion FR-S. The battle was on between the two until the final lap when Foley’s Mazda ran into mechanical woes.

At the flag it was Rivera, followed by Holton and the No. 67 of Shea Holbrook of Orlando FL. in her Lucas

Oil/BUBBA Burger/Hendrick Honda Civic SI driving her way to third from last at the start.

"The race was pretty interesting," said Rivera. "I knew that Foley's RX-8 could pull me down the back straight and it would be really tough to get ahead of him. On the first lap I played aggressive and went on the outside of a couple of corners and got ahead of Foley. Put some cars between us but once the field started to thin out he started to catch me. Then I caught traffic and when he got by I figured I just needed to stay in his draft down the back straight to do all I could do. Traffic was just not working in my favor. Towards the end I finally caught him however it seemed like he had an engine issue as I could suddenly run with him on top end. I knew it was my opportunity with a couple of laps to go. I started braking early, and trying to get runs off of the corners. I finally got him on the left hander before the back straight and then I saw him pull off and I saw smoke coming from the car. I feel really bad for him, he really did drive a great race, we went side by side and never touched, he gave me room and I gave him room."

TCB saw the No. 25 of Johan Schwartz, in his ZERO Cancer/CASgroup/CustomDieCasts Tech Sport Racing Chevy Sonic go flag to flag for the victory.

I'm proud to be writing history today," said Schwartz. "To be the first Chevrolet to win in the TCB class and also bringing ZERO Cancer in victory lane as the charity we support this year."

Second and third were also settled fairly early with the No. 58 of Glenn Nixon, Mission, BC., driving his Racing.ca/Nixon, Prosports/laptopScreen.com/Miniusa.com MINI Cooper moving into P2 on lap four and the No. 2 Van Svenson Hyde Park, NY. driving the Hack Racing Chevy Sonic into third on lap five.

Of note, Vesko Kozarov, of Salt Lake City, UT won the Optima Batteries Best Standing Start gaining 11 positions, Andrew Aquilante, of Chester Springs, PA, in the No. 32 Calvert Dynamics/Phoenix Performance was awarded the Invisible Glass Clean Pass of the Race and Glenn Nixon, of Mission, BC, in the No. 58 Racing.ca/LaptopScreen.com/Nixon Prosports MINI Cooper won the VP Racing Fuels Hard Charger gaining 18 positions during the race.

Race 2

Unlike Round 1, Round 2 for TC/TCA/TCB race began with a standing start. With more than 40 cars making up the combined grid things would get quite crowded at the top of the hill in turn one.

Starting third, Cory Friedman's No. 03 Porsche Cayman took the lead with the No. 98 of Francis Jr. following him past race one winner Ellsworth. On lap four the two race leaders came together when Francis Jr. tried an inside move retiring both cars on the spot.

A full course yellow came out to remove the damaged No. 98 car from the edge of the track.

On the restart the No. 3 of Vesko Kozarov, from Salt Lake City, UT. in his Skullcandy Nissan Altima got the jump followed by the No. 32 driven by Andrew Aquilante, from Chester Springs, PA. in his Calvert Dynamics/Phoenix Performance Ford Mustang V6 followed closely by Ellsworth.

Contact between Kozarov and Aquilante the following lap opened the door for Ellsworth to record his second win

of the day. Ellsworth though was challenged by a hard charging Poland who ultimately finished second and he was followed across the line by the No. 00 of Cory Furgas, Columbus OH. in the USLED/Axis Roofing/AERO/RSS/Motul, Motorsports Promotions Porsche Cayman.

“I was running for my life in that one from Poland,” said Ellsworth. “He was coming hard, those last five laps we had a great battle. More than most people can say we had clean cars, there were a couple of wrecks in front of me and it was all about the patience and not about making stupid moves which quite a few people did.”

In TCA, Holton in the No.71 Honda Civic Si took the early lead followed by Jason Wolfe, of Mount Vernon, OH., in his No.36 Wolfe Trucking Kia Forte Koup with race one winner Rivera in hot pursuit.

After the restart things settled down with Rivera assuming the top spot putting him on the top step of the podium for the second time in the first two races of 2015.

“Great way to start out a season,” said Rivera. Even though I was the quickest starting the race I knew I was going to be run hard and I spun the tires really badly on the start and everybody passed me. I think I was fourth coming out of turn one. I remained patient, made sure not to get into anybody, things always seem to sort themselves out. The TC car that was in front of me was just absolutely killing me on the one section that my car is really quick. The only section I had an advantage against my competition I was not able to use that to my advantage, so I had to be patient and it paid off. Jason ran really well, it kept me honest and it also kept me from making a low percentage pass on the TC car in front of me that would take myself or both of us out.

The second race for TCB ended just as race one with the No. 25 of Schwartz taking the win over Nixon’s No.58 and Van Svenson’s No. 2.

“It was exciting out there. We had a good battle Glen (Nixon) and I,” said Schwartz. “I probably have a little bit of a stronger motor and he has a little bit better handling car so there were certain corners that he was faster than me and certain places that I was faster than him so it made for a good race. I hope it was fun to watch.”

Of note, Felipe Merjech, of Bejota, Columbia was awarded the Optima Batteries Best Standing Start with nine positions gained, while Jay Salinsky, of Tampa, FL, in the No. 66 Shea Racing Honda Fit was awarded the VP Racing Fuels Hard Charger Award for gaining 16 positions during the race. Ellsworth won the StopTech, Brake Late Finish First Award for his restart and Aquilante won the Invisible Glass Clean Pass of the Race for passing the 00 Fergus on Lap 6 of the race.

TC, TCA, and TCB Round 3 at the Circuit of The Americas is scheduled for Sunday, March 8 at 3:10 pm central. Watch the live stream of the race at www.world-challenge.com and at <http://www.torque.tv/>



Like Be the first of your friends to like this.

