

Falken Polo Cup provides superb action

The Falken Polo Cup totally lived up to its reputation as the most competitive and exciting series when it delivered a superb show to the fans who attended Round 2 of the Extreme Festival at Zwartkops Raceway to the west of Pretoria.

After three action-packed races, defending champion Jeffrey Kruger walked away as the big winner with two race-wins and a close second place finish to his name.

The drivers of the 25 identical Polo GTIs were in high spirits before the Friday practice sessions, but minutes before the green flag was waved the heavens opened. In fact, most of the Friday practice sessions were affected by wet weather, so pundits had to wait until the Saturday morning qualifying sessions to paint an accurate picture. It was no surprise to see the names of the usual suspects near the top of the standings after the initial session before the start of Super Pole.



Source: <https://motorpress.co.za>

To add to the excitement of Falken Polo Cup racing, the six fastest drivers after the initial qualifying session each gets one flying lap to determine the starting grid for race one. Bradley Liebenberg set the initial pace by topping the standings, but he was pipped by Delon Thompson who managed to go one tenth of a second faster to claim the top spot. Volkswagen Motorsport's Jonathan Mogotsi set the third fastest time, just ahead of Jeffrey Kruger who in turn was followed by Matt Shorter and Jason Campos.



Round 1 of the 2019 GTC and Falken Polo Cup

Naresh Maharaj 5 Mar 2019



In Falken Polo Cup racing, qualifying is of extreme importance and often plays a huge role in the overall outcome, but race one this time around yielded a different result. Defending champion Jeffrey Kruger made a great start and quickly moved to the front of the field while pole setter Delon Thompson got swallowed by the pack.

There was also a huge scare further down the field when Stiaan Kriel and Simon Need came together on the back straight, causing Kriel's car to roll several times. Fortunately, they were both able to escape without any injuries. When the chequered flag was waved, it was Kruger who took a fairly comfortable victory of four seconds over the car of Clinton Bezuidenhout with Bradley Liebenberg completing the race one podium. The Campos brothers Jason and Keegan finished fourth and fifth respectively with former champion Chris Shorter rounding out the top 6.

Battle for track position

Race two saw much of the same with a full field all battling it out for track position. Kruger once again made an early dash for the front, this time with Jason Campos leading the chasing pack. There was nothing that anyone could do to stop Kruger from taking his second victory of the day, two seconds ahead of Jason Campos with Clinton Bezuidenhout hot on his heels in third. Chris Shorter just missed out on a podium finish in fourth with Jonathan Mogotsi and Bradley Liebenberg taking the points for fifth and sixth respectively.



Source: <https://motorpress.co.za>

Kruger had every intention to make it a full house with three out of three, but the starting order of the final race was determined by the second fastest lap time set during the early morning qualifying session. This meant that Bradley Liebenberg would be the first off the line with Kruger starting the race from second place. Liebenberg had an extremely busy day behind the wheel as he contested both the GTC category as well as the Falken Polo Cup which meant that each time he had to jump out of his Golf GTI and straight into the driver's seat of the Polo GTi. In the final race of the day, his efforts paid off as he managed to fend off a fierce attack from Kruger. In the end, just three tenths of a second separated the two with Kruger just missing out on a third successive victory.

When the three times were added up to determine the overall result, it was no surprise that Kruger walked away as the big winner on the day. Bezuidenhout got second overall just ahead of Jason Campos and Bradley Liebenberg. It was a good day at the office for the Campos brothers with Keegan taking fifth ahead of Chris Shorter.

On the other hand, it was a testing weekend for Volkswagen Motorsport's Jonathan Mogotsi and Raais Asmal. Mogotsi had a good qualifying session, but a technical infringement forced both him and Asmal to the back of the grid. This put them on the back foot for the entire weekend while a punctured tyre in race two didn't help Asmal's cause either.



Source: <https://motorpress.co.za>

But at the end of the day, it was all smiles for Jeffrey Kruger who dominated proceedings. "It was nearly perfect, but we scored some good points today so I'm really happy. The car is one piece and I am now looking forward to Cape Town," he said shortly after finishing the third race.

There was more good news in the pits this weekend with fuel giant Total announcing its involvement with the series. "Total joined the Falken Polo Cup as the official fuel supplier through their Excellium brand for the rest of the season," said Mike Rowe, head of Volkswagen Motorsport. "It really is great news and it will help to further ensure that the Falken Polo Cup remains such a successful series in the years to come. We would like to welcome Total to our family. All in all, it was good weekend for motorsport," he concluded.

Round three of the championship will take place on the weekend of 10 and 11 May. The venue will be Cape Town's fast and furious Killarney circuit where all the protagonists will once again try and influence the outcome of the championship fight.

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