

Smolensk mixes up the Championship's ranking

Smolensk - Since round two the Czech MKR Technology team have managed to win at least one race at each of the European Truckracing Championship events. The same holds for the Russian Smolenskring circuit, where the victory was celebrated by Markus Bösiger. However, his colleague Adam Lacko had to cope with a great deal of misfortune culminating with an accident which not only had the spectators stop breathing for a while but also significantly influenced the Sunday part of the event. Moreover, the incident could have an impact the overall Championship ranking, too.

MKR Technology opened the second half of the European Championship series with a win at the very beginning of the Russian stop. The victory came in the afternoon handicap race. First the pilots started in the main race, which usually decides the trucks' positions for the starting grid. This time it was Norbert Kiss who gradually worked his way through to the front, sending Antonio Albacete and Jochen Hahn, respectively, to guard his back from second and third and boldly going towards the gold. Kiss was the only one to stir the placings. The field behind him did not change and so the elite ten drivers repeated their positions from the super pole. Adam Lacko crossed the finishing line on sixth, closely followed by his colleague Bösiger. *'The first race was not so bad for us although towards the end I had a small problem with tire wear so I was losing a bit more time to my main competitors,'* said MKR Technology's pilot Adam Lacko.

A sensational drive was produced by Markus Bösiger in the afternoon handicap race. Taking the lead from Finland's Mäkinen, the Swiss pilot gradually increased his margin and drove solo to victory unrivalled. Eventually, Mäkinen was beaten by Jochen Hahn and had to settle for bronze. *'David Vršecký contributed to my downfall at the start of today's second race, he hit the back of my truck twice in turn two of the first lap. I could only re-join the circuit in seventh place, the position I held until the finish,'* commented the disappointed Adam Lacko.

Sunday was substantially affected by Lacko's dramatic accident. An incident that made the spectators along the track hold their breath occurred in the main race. Instead of taking a turn at the end of the home stretch, Lacko's truck uncontrollably crashed in full speed into the Hungarian pilot Norbert Kiss, ending up in a deafening bang. *'When I heard the crackle in the radio it almost made me nauseous. Adam was in a shock and didn't answer, and so I ran to the damaged truck,'* described the dramatic situation our team's electro-engineer Miloš Schmied, who's got Adam on the radio during races.

A huge relief for everyone came as the two pilots pulled out of the wrecked trucks. However, it was a never-ending wait. *'I guess I'm alright. I pulled my arms to my body but it's hard to keep your head still under the impact. It was a terrible bang and the pressure my seat-belts had to endure was enormous,'* commented Adam, who complained about some neck pain.



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How did the accident actually occur? Adam was on fifth in lap four of the main race and planning to brake at the end of the stretch, but suddenly his suspension cracked, sending him into a clockwise turn and hitting Norbert Kiss directly into the side. *'As I stepped on the brake, something cracked and the car was impossible to control at that moment. I could neither brake nor turn. I ran into Norbert literally in full speed,'* described Adam the circumstances of the crash.

The race was immediately stopped and an emergency car rushed to both pilots. Although the Hungarian driver had to see red at the moment, he could certainly put himself into Lacko's place. He suffered almost an identical accident last year when his brake disc snapped. His crash looked the same to a hair. *'Norbi hurried to ask me whether I was ok. I'm really sorry about what had happened and once again, I want to apologize to him. It wasn't his fault at all but the situation was out of my control,'* commented Adam with regret.

After the race was restarted, the pilots were trying to go much more carefully. Antonio Albacete triumphed in a start-to-finish manner followed by Vršecký and Hahn. Lacko's team mate Markus Bösiger finished on fourth.

Neither Adam nor Norbert started in the afternoon handicap race and could do nothing but support their colleagues. Highly attractive for the spectators, the last battle was won by the Fin Mäkinen before the young Hungarian pilot Major and Oestreich on third. Markus Bösiger gained points for seventh position. *'This was an incredibly tough and unsuccessful weekend. We're in hurry to go home. It's gonna be a long journey but we've got almost a month-long break ahead. We all need to stop to take a breath and regain our strengths,'* summed up on the Russian mission our boss Mario Kress.

In Russia the Spanish Antonio Albacete (255) managed to secure the lead, moving away from Hahn (238). Kiss and Lacko lost valuable points. In the overall ranking this means that Vršecký (185) pushed Kiss (175) down to fifth place. Lacko (126) is currently on sixth and his colleague Bösiger (117) seventh.

The truck racers are about to enjoy a much deserved month-long rest. The seventh event of the Championship is planned for the turn of August and September (31/08 – 01/09), when the closely observed fight at the home Most track will take place. *'I must admit the results are not what we had imagined but we're not giving up, we'll fight until the very end. Let's see how well we can prepare for the domestic event,'* concludes MKR Technology's boss Mario Kress with resolve.



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