

MKR closes the season triumphantly in Le Mans

Le Mans - A completely tragic beginning and an incredibly successful end. These words could summarize the events of this season's last stop of the European Truckracing Championship in Le Mans, France for the north Bohemian team of MKR Technology. Whilst Saturday's unreasonable disqualification spoilt any chances to defend their champion's title in the team competition, MKR literally squeezed all the juice of the grapes on Sunday, rising to the position of Czech number one in the team *and* the individual ranking. The time to celebrate has finally come!

„It really was an incredible weekend full of drama. Some situations are just hard to believe but that's truckracing. This holds true in life, too, one day you're high up and another you fall down. We got a few kicks but that didn't take us down. We fought hard until the very last moment and although everyone was exhausted, they didn't give up and I'm proud of my team for that,“ summed up the race the team's boss Mario Kress.

MKR Technology's podium presence in the overall team ranking was decided by a mere three millimetres, which had taken away the dream of defending the title and winning the constructors' trophy. After defeating the super pole, MKR was supposed to start from the first three positions. The following disqualification of two black-and-red trucks made them drop to the bottom of the starting grid, closing them off from competing for the deciding points. *“Unfortunately, this was our own fault. We could probably speculate about how strict the penalty is but that's the reality, nobody lets you off lightly. We repaired all cars thoroughly after Jarama. We were glad to make them ready in time. However, we didn't measure the wear-off of the wheel suspension leaf springs and so two of our trucks were a few millimetres lower than allowed,“* explained the crushed Mario Kress.

This meant that a front starting position was enjoyed only by the Čeladná native Adam Lacko, whilst his colleagues Markus Bösiger and Markus Oestreich had to put up with spots at the back after the three millimetre mishap had killed their hopes for good point positions. The main race was ruled over by Vršecký before Nittel. After a tough struggle for the remaining points Lacko took home a bronze. In the end, Bösiger and Oestreich managed to get through to positions ten and eleven.

In spite of the sixth place at the starting grid, the afternoon handicap race was controlled by Adam Lacko, who left behind even the new champion Jochen Hahn from Germany, who finished with a silver medal, the bronze going to Hungary's Kiss. Bösiger scored on the sixth and a torn airhose cost Oestreich the race. *“We all had mixed feelings. I won but many people were disappointed because we lost the team title. Yet there was still something to fight for because our junior project was up for the bronze and my overall third place,“* said the victorious Adam Lacko.

Sunday brought a new glimpse of hope for the nearly decimated team. The last racing day of the season might have reminded everyone of the adventures of Jules Verne, yet what happened here might take even the French novelist by surprise. After the very start of the main race, a mass collision stopped several 'important' pilots. Antonio Albacete crashed into Janiec, who got closed off by Vršecký, and a heavy crash followed. What's more, the last year's champion Albacete was taken to



the hospital in an ambulance after suffering a hard hit from Germany's Nittel. Fortunately, the accident left him only with two contused ribs.

Albacete, Nittel and Vršecký did not affect the further events anymore. After a re-start MKR's Renaults occupied the front. Markus Oestreich reached for the gold, leaving his bronze colleague Adam Lacko behind. The gap between the pilots in black-and-red overalls was filled by the new European champion Jochen Hahn. *"It was a sensational finish. Jochen definitely deserves the win and it was great that we could celebrate right there on the podium with him. That was the best possible moment to finish with, since I knew already that I wouldn't lose the overall podium position,"* said the happy Adam Lacko, who makes up the team of the MKR Team 14 Juniors together with his colleague Anthony Janiec, the duo moving to the third place before Roudnice's Buggyra.

Another sensational moment came in the following handicap race, when a new concert on the track was conducted by Markus Oestreich again. Technical difficulties prevented Adam Lacko from finishing the race but his team colleague Markus Oestreich managed to push through from the position eight to the lead. *"In the end, only victory could have brought me the fourth place before Vršecký. We have the same number of points but my winning score is better,"* smiled contently Oestreich, who celebrated on the podium together with his colleague Markus Bösiger. This time, Hungary's Kiss squeezed between the Czech duo.

The last two races decided that the European Champion is Jochen Hahn, the second spot goes to Antonio Albacete and the third to Adam Lacko, behind whom is Markus Oestreich. The fifth position belongs to David Vršecký and right behind him on the sixth is Markus Bösiger. The Champion's title in the team competition was taken by the couple Albacete/Nittel before our pilots Bösiger/Oestreich from MKR Technology. Bronze belongs to our junior project MKR Team 14 Juniors with Lacko/Janiec on board. *"Situations that took place in the last two weeks were unbelievable. Luck was not on our side for a second day in a row and after yesterday, for the first time, I had doubts and thought that this season was lost for us. Today I had a different feeling though. It was like somebody up there saw what was happening and turned to our side because Sunday brought some unbelievable moments again. Although we were hoping for more at the season's start, I can't say we're unsatisfied. At least there are new goals ahead of us. We'll always be aiming higher and higher,"* said the always determined boss of MKR Technology Mario Kress.

