

Monday, 11th May 2009

Powerboats - Malta Grand Prix of the Sea

Aaron Ciantar steers Team Seagull to overall victory

Double delight for Chaudron as Audrienne Ciantar places third on Iko Casa

Valhmor Camilleri, Valletta Waterfront



Conquering the waves... Seagull Chaudron rounds the buoy ahead of Team 26 during yesterday's endurance race in Sliema. Photo: Darrin Zammit Lupi.

Aaron Ciantar and Angelo Tedeschi claimed overall victory in the Malta Grand Prix of the Sea for the second year in a row as the current world champions, aboard Team Seagull, were declared winners of yesterday's endurance race in Sliema.

Ciantar and Tedeschi, who last year topped the charts at the end of the season-opening Malta GP aboard Conam Yachts, had finished second behind Team 26 in yesterday's race. However, the race jury imposed a four-minute penalty on the British duo for overspeeding, meaning that Ciantar and Tedeschi were awarded victory ahead of Baia Attolini.

Audrienne Ciantar and Shelley Jory completed a podium double for Chaudron and the Ciantar family yesterday as their Iko Casa team were promoted to third place.

In the Evolution class, victory went to Giancarlo Ciangiano and Hannes Bohinc aboard OSG Racing Team. Bullet Racing Team, of Jan Falkowski and Drew Langdon, placed second. Lucas Oil and Cigarette Smash Poker had to retire while Cranefield failed to start the race.

Inevitably, much of the attention of the thousands of local watersports enthusiasts was focused on the Supersport class where a keenly-contested fight ensued along the Sliema seafront with Team 26, Team Seagull and Baia Attolini fighting neck-and-neck for victory.

The Donzi boat of Team 26 sped to victory when taking the lead with three laps to go but were adjudged to have exceeded the speed limit and were subsequently penalised. Thus, victory was assigned to Ciantar and Tedeschi.

"It's a great feeling to be on top of the podium once more," Aaron Ciantar told The Times yesterday.

"We knew at the start of the season that we had a very competitive boat and I think that our performances here show that we are among the top teams in the Supersport class. Still, winning the world championship will not be easy but we're ready to fight to keep the title."

"Team 26 will be disappointed with the outcome but race rules on speed limit are very clear and all the teams know well that when the rules are broken, penalties are imposed immediately," Ciantar said of the punishment handed out to Team 26.

"It's important that everyone competes within the rules so that safety is maintained in all the races of the P1 world championship."

For his part, Tedeschi said the weather conditions in Malta last weekend did not suit their Chaudron boat.

"When the sea is calm, as it was today, it's always very difficult for us to race to our full potential. Our rivals have smaller boats and that makes them very strong in mild conditions," Tedeschi said.

"The race for the world championship is certainly going to be very interesting this year. Baia Attolini and Team 26 are very competitive while another Donzi boat is expected to enter the championship in the next round in Turkey.

"But, this is healthy for the sport as it makes it more interesting. We have always enjoyed competition and in the coming weeks, we intend to work on making our boat even faster as our target is to defend our Supersport title."

Audrienne Ciantar, making her competitive return to the Powerboat World Championship after a year's break, was delighted with her podium finish.

"A top-three position was my main objective ahead of the first race," Audrienne Ciantar said.

"To finish third aboard a boat I had never driven before in a race and with a new partner, is a great achievement. We have made a very encouraging start and I believe we can only get better as the season progresses. Our goal is to challenge the leading teams and I think we have the package to stay in the top positions this season."

The 2009 Powerboat P1 championship continues on the weekend of June 19- 21 when the Turkish Grand Prix of the Sea is held in Istanbul.

Yesterday's results

Evolution class: 1. SNAV OSG (Italy) 1:00:25.15; 2. Silverline (Britain) 1:04:47.00; 3. Lucas Oil Budweiser (US) retired after 11 laps; 4. Cigarette Smash Poker (Italy) retired after three laps; 5. Cranefield Wines (Germany) did not start.

Supersport class: 1. Seagull Chaudron (Ukraine) 1:04:40.70; 2. Baia Attolini (Italy) 1:05:44.27; 3. Iko Casa (Italy) 1:05:49.43; 4. Big Sergio (Italy) 1:07:11.14; 5. MasForce (Belgium) 1:08:03.89; 6. Team 26 Racing (Britain) 1:08:14.19; 7. Blue Shaft (Italy) 59:06.10 (retired after 10 laps).

Overall standings

Evolution class: 1. SNAV OSG (Italy) 181; 2. Lucas Oil 171; 3. Silverline 163; 4. Cigarette Smash Poker 100; 5. Cranefields Wines 66.

Supersport class: 1. Seagull Chaudron 190; 2. Baia Attolini 163; 3. Team 26 160; 4. MasForce, Iko Casa 147; 6. Blue Shaft 115; 6. Big Sergio 73.

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