

Alinghi, INEOS Rebels UK take 2nd and 3rd places respectively

Team Oman Air get their new racing campaign off to winning start

MUSCAT, May 27: Team Oman Air got their first ever GC32 Racing Tour season off to the best possible start with victory at the opening event of 2019, the GC32 Villasimius Cup in Sardinia.

Racing in sometimes tricky and difficult conditions the Oman Air crew showed their mettle in a highly competitive 10-strong fleet of high-speed foiling

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catamarans to claim the first round by a clear nine points in front of the pursuing pack.

The win marked a successful debut for the new-look Oman Air crew, which has seen established team members Pete Greenhalgh, Nasser Al Mashari and Stewart Dodson joined by the highly-rated New Zealand helmsman Adam Minoprio as skipper and the experienced British sailor Adam Piggott.

"We are a new team and trying hard, and we have been able to find some areas that are definite strengths," said Green-



The Oman Air team crowned first place

halgh, Oman Air's project manager, mainsail trimmer and tactician. "We had a great team on paper and it all came good for us.

"We are really good downwind and our manoeuvres have also been good, and we have been competitive upwind as well.

"It's also been working really well between Adam Minoprio and I, calling the tactics and getting the boat going in the right direction, so we are really pleased that that's worked out as well as it has - we are just nicely in synch which is how it should be."

After sharing the early lead with defending GC32 champions Norauto, led by French ace Franck Cammas, the determined Oman Air team built the foundations for their ultimate success with a hat trick of race victories on the third of four days of racing.

Going into Sunday's final races the crew held an eight point advantage, a lead they were able to maintain despite persistent pressure from the chasing pack, notably Ernesto Bertarelli's Swiss team on Alinghi and multiple Olympic gold medal winner Ben Ainslie's crew on INEOS Rebels UK, who took second and third places respectively on the overall podium. Victory was sealed with a second place in the 16th and final race of the regatta.

"It has been solid, relentless rain for

the last few days and we have had a lot of wind at times, with it being quite shifty - difficult conditions but we somehow managed to get the racing in," said Greenhalgh of the unseasonal conditions.

"We struggled in a couple of races today and slipped back a little, but we held on for a really good result and we are of course happy with that."

Also delighted was Al Mashari, a regular with the Oman Sail organised team. He said: "It has been good to have done so well at the start of our GC32 Racing Tour campaign. The other teams are very competitive and we know they will come back strongly throughout the season."

"There is a long way to go, but we are a good team and we will be trying our hardest to get a good result at every event."

Team Oman Air - also supported by EFG Private Bank Monaco - will be back in action at the end of June with the second event on the GC32 Racing Tour schedule in Lagos, southern Portugal, from June 26-30.



Oman Air boat is foiling during the last race of act 1



Simon Pagenaud, of France, celebrates after winning the Indianapolis 500 IndyCar auto race at Indianapolis Motor Speedway on May 26 in Indianapolis. (AP)

Truex overcomes early flat tire to win NASCAR'S Coca-Cola 600

Larson hits Bowyer to start a wreck that collect 7 drivers

CONCORD, North Carolina, May 27, (AP): Martin Truex Jr gave team owner Joe Gibbs another reason to celebrate at Charlotte Motor Speedway.

Truex overcame an early flat tire after hitting the wall, then broke to the front on a wild final restart and won the Coca-Cola 600 for the second time in four seasons.

It was the perfect cap to a landmark week for Gibbs and his race team. The three-time Super Bowl champion coach was voted into

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the NASCAR Hall of Fame on Wednesday, along with two of his race team's championship drivers in Bobby Labonte and Tony Stewart. But according to Gibbs, it was Truex, in his first season with JGR, who delivered the program's biggest moment.

"What was Wednesday?" Gibbs responded when asked if the race victory was bigger than the Hall of Fame.

Gibbs broke into laughter when reminded about his honor. "Obviously, I'm excited about tonight," he said with a smile. And Truex provided much of the excitement.

He slid into the Turn 4 wall during the first stage of NASCAR's longest event, damaging his tire and seemingly putting his chances in serious jeopardy. But crew chief Cole Pearn radioed his driver that things were not that bad and to stay calm and remain focused.

"I thought, 'We're done. How we going to fix this thing?'" Truex said. "I didn't know how bad it was, (but) the guys worked hard, fixed it up."

That steered Truex the rest of the way, especially near the end when he drove low during a four-wide fight for the lead on the final restart



Martin Truex Jr poses with the trophy at Victory Lane after winning the NASCAR Cup Series auto race at Charlotte Motor Speedway in Concord, North Carolina on May 26. (AP)

at Charlotte Motor Speedway. He had an easier time in the 2016 race when he led 392 of 400 laps.

Truex sprang out low and shot into the front past Kyle Busch, Ryan Newman and David Ragan, who stretched four across the track. "You just never know what can happen," said Truex, who led 116 laps this time.

Truex held off defending series champion and Team Penske driver Joey Logano - and again prevent owner Roger Penske from becoming the first to helm winners at the Indianapolis 500 and Coca-Cola 600 on motorsports biggest day.

Truex was happy to provide his boss another win. "To think a guy can be in the Pro Football Hall of Fame and the NASCAR Hall of Fame just tells you how special (Gibbs) is and I'm super honored to drive for him," Truex said.

Pearn said the car was seriously

damaged by the early run into the wall and it took several trips to the pits to fix the issues. Still, in Victory Lane, Pearn couldn't believe his team came out on top. "It was crazy to see the car be that good and be that banged up," he said.

Penske driver Brad Keselowski won the first two stages and appeared to have the strongest car. But he slipped to the middle of the pack during the third 100-lap segment and never challenged for the victory. He finished 19th.

Busch was third, Chase Elliott fourth and Ricky Stenhouse Jr fifth. Logano said Truex had the faster car in the race. If Logano had gotten to Truex's outside, he may have a chance to move in front, he said. Truex "knew the same thing," Logano said. "He did a good job defending his position."

There were 16 cautions in the Coca-Cola 600, the most at this event in

14 years. The slowdowns included breaks between stages, but slowed things enough that the event took more than five hours to complete.

All-Star race winner Kyle Larson had hoped to build off his \$1 million-winning run at Charlotte a week ago in the 600. Instead, he lost grip in the final stage, hit Clint Bowyer to start a wreck that collected seven drivers. Larson said the fault was his. "Up and down day for us," Larson said. "I finally put myself in a good spot for about a lap and I screwed that up."

Larson has not won a NASCAR points race since Richmond in September 2017, a span of 59 races.

It wasn't a completely perfect week for Joe Gibbs Racing. While Gibbs made the NASCAR Hall of Fame this week (along with two of his championship drivers in Bobby Labonte and Tony Stewart), their Toyotas had some on-track problems. Erik Jones was out of the race after just 22 laps when his car slid hard into the wall and damaged his right front tire. Truex hit the wall on lap 74 while out front with a two-second lead.

It was Denny Hamlin's turn in the second stage as he hit the wall while near the front. Hamlin spun out again on the final lap to finish 17th.

In the Xfinity race Saturday, Gibbs' racer Christopher Bell won the pole and led 33 of the first 49 laps when he brushed the wall, hit tire caught fire and he couldn't continue.

NASCAR held a moment of remembrance for military personnel who lost their lives in service as cars were led into the pits and halted. Drivers turned off their engines and fans stood quietly during 30 seconds of silence as part of the Memorial Day solemn ceremonies.

The Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series goes to Pocono next Sunday.

Curse continues for Andretti

Pagenaud holds off Rossi to win Indy 500, Sato takes 3rd

INDIANAPOLIS, May 27, (RTRS): Simon Pagenaud steered clear of trouble on the track and in the pits, then out-duelled Alexander Rossi in a final lap shootout to win the Indianapolis 500 on Sunday and give team owner Roger Penske a second consecutive victory in the "The Greatest Spectacle in Racing".

The win might have saved the charismatic Frenchman's job with rumours circulating up and down pit lane that Pagenaud's seat with powerhouse Team Penske was in jeopardy.

It would be hard, however, to find any fault in Pagenaud's performance in the month of May as the 35-year-old son of a grocery shop owner from Montmorillon recorded the Brickyard double following his victory at the Indianapolis Grand Prix two weeks earlier.

"What do you think? Absolutely," said Penske, when asked if Pagenaud would be back. "He's on our team. He's one of our drivers."

"That was scuttlebutt." US President Donald Trump tweeted his congratulations to the Frenchman and Penske, inviting them and the team to the White House.

"I got a call from the President as

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we were in the winner's circle and he congratulated me, he said, 'I must have been your good-luck charm,'" smiled Penske, who increased his record total of Indy 500 wins to 18.

"He was in Japan and Simon had a chance to talk to him, so hopefully he'll be invited to the White House."

Pagenaud's clinically cool display was in stark contrast to a fired-up Rossi, who used a bit of road rage and pit stop frustration to fuel his last-laps challenge.

An exasperated Rossi was left pounding his steering wheel as his pit crew wrestled to engage an uncooperative fuel hose that dropped him from first to 12th, then vented his anger on Oriol Servià, shaking his fist at the Spaniard as they raced down the front straight at 230 mph when he would not give way despite being a lap down.

"When you come here four times and three of the times you can't get fuel in the car, I think you can understand why I was upset," fumed Rossi.

"It wasn't a human error, it was a mechanical problem but still, it's not something that we can have here. It's the biggest race in the world, and 75 percent of the time we can't get fuel in

the race car."

The winner of the 100th Indy 500 in 2016 was not nearly as understanding about his battle with Servià.

"I think it was one of the most disrespectful things I've ever seen in a race car, to be honest," added Rossi. "He's a lap down and defending, putting me to the wall at 230 miles an hour. It's unacceptable."

A five-car pile up with 23 laps to run, triggered when Graham Rahal and Sebastian Bourdais came together, brought out a red flag that set up a mad dash to the finish with Pagenaud and Rossi swapping the lead over the final laps.

It was a dominant performance by Pagenaud, who started from pole and led for 116 of the 200 laps, then held his nerve when he needed it most by fighting off two former 500 winners in Rossi and Japan's Takuma Sato, who completed the podium.

"It's hard to believe right now," beamed Pagenaud, who becomes the

first Frenchman since Rene Thomas in 1914 to win the Indy 500. "It's a dream come true. A lifetime of trying to achieve this."

"When you have a car like this, a team like this you just work your way."

"It is all about achieving and executing at the end and we did execute perfectly today."

"No mistakes, here we are Victory Lane." While Pagenaud cruised, two of his Penske Team stablemates, defending champion Will Power and three-times winner Helio Castroneves, both had difficult days.

Castroneves's quest for a record-equalling fourth Indy 500 win suffered an early setback when the Brazilian was slapped with a drive thru penalty after running into Australian James Davison during the first pit stops. He finished 18th. Power also had problems in the pits, bumping one of his crew and triggering a penalty that sent the Australian to the back of the field before battling back for fifth place.

Jordan King also added to the mayhem when he knocked over a crew member who was transferred to hospital with a leg injury.



Rossi