

Xavier Gavory Debrief - Jarama

After the extreme heat and excitement of Jarama for the third round of the FIA ETCR eTouring Car World Cup, Series Director Xavier Gavory gives his overview on the event in Race SP and the state of play in FIA ETCR.

What is your overview of the Jarama Next Generation Festival as an event?

For the very first time a promoter put together a 100% electric event, showing the dynamism of the Comunidad de Madrid and an intention for this very historic circuit to bring new technologies to the front of the stage. It was a success as attendees were able to not only see fantastic racing, but also sample the latest mobility options on track too.

How did the cars and drivers cope with the heat?

The heat was a challenge, but cars, drivers and the event ran well. It was certainly notable running in such high temperature in Madrid in June, but we could see much of Europe had extreme temperatures and this really highlights the acceleration of the need for sustainable events, and the need for greenhouse effect reduction, and giving credibility and legitimacy to electric racing.

How much evolution do you see in the battles so far this season?

We can see that use of the Power Up is evolving a lot as the drivers use it in a more and more clever way. Obviously, they take the advantage of this reserve additional power to overtake and we have seen very, very clever moves on the track in Hungary but more particularly in in Spain. The massive jump in power that the Power Up gives means overtaking can be done in very unexpected places so the drivers are getting more and more creative with this. It really is a new way of racing.

Some of the drivers were more conservative in their approach at the start of the season and then we have seen more extreme approaches to its use; some that work, some that don't give the desired effect.

On thing we saw at Jarama, due to its layout, was that the first corner lent itself to extreme battles with incredible tension. Coming into the first corner, we could see that the fight was very tight with the three cars on track.

Also we have seen that the drivers are making use of the opportunity to speak to each other between the cars. This is something they are they are doing much more frequently now to exchange and give their feedback - whether good or otherwise - to their rivals. There's potential for some very interesting exchanges here in the second half of the season.

It was a dream weekend for CUPRA - how good an illustration of the potential of ETCR are they?

For CUPRA it was a dream weekend. They were at their home race and they had their CEO and President Wayne Griffiths in attendance. What a way to celebrate than with the King of the Weekend at the top of an all-CUPRA 1,2,3 on the podium?

It's a great example for a manufacturer programme, showcasing their electric car capabilities, especially as CUPRA is a brand with an all-electric future. FIA ETCR has the potential for many manufacturers to communicate on their on their brand and their product and CUPRA is a fantastic illustration of this.

Do you expect more of a fight for CUPRA in future events?

Absolutely. Certainly Pau and Jarama were very kind to CUPRA and the characteristics of their car and perhaps less kind to Romeo Ferraris and Hyundai Motorsport. But we saw that CUPRA does not always have its own way and their rivals are pushing them hard. In Hungary the fight was much closer and looking to the next event, Maxime Martin has been showing strongly and will be racing at Zolder, his home track that he knows by heart. Then we go to Romeo Ferraris home, Italy. Hyundai Motorsport are always in the hunt and with just a few corners going their way over a weekend they have great potential too.

Nicky Catsburg made a strong debut; how appealing is the series to drivers?

For Nicky Catsburg it was a very good debut by taking a battle win in his first weekend and he clearly has great potential for the rest of the season.

The way drivers see the series is extremely positive as they are extremely enthusiastic. When you talk with the drivers, they all like the series and often it is them that contacted the teams and manufacturers to get in and be a part of it. Drivers are knocking at our door. They knocked at the door because FIA ETCR is a unique and exciting challenge. It's different. It's a different series with a different approach with a different sporting format with the different technology and drivers want to have fun! They want to fight on track and they want to enjoy it. This is what is happening on track we can see and feel that they are having fun with these cars which are so powerful and so different to anything racers would drive elsewhere. This is a strong asset of the series.