

## FIA European Truck Racing Cup Round 2 – Misano, Italy

### Strong Showing From Castrol Drivers in Italy Podium for Oliver – Rymer Collects his First Points

The second round of the 2002 FIA European Truck Racing Cup saw impressive performances from the Castrol-supported Stuart Oliver and Terry Rymer – with both drivers finishing in the points in all four races during the weekend in Italy (May 25/26).

In Saturday's practice Oliver set fourth fastest time – to line up on row two behind 'pole' position man Noel Crozier (MAN) and Castrol Austria-backed Egon Allgauer (MAN). Rymer was still unhappy with the performance of his machine and lined up back on row four – some four seconds off the pace.

In Saturday's Qualifying race Allgauer set the early pace to hold off Crozier at the front of the field. But the Frenchman moved ahead mid-race and went on to win while Allgauer fell back to fourth after a short trip through the gravel traps! Stuart Oliver was charging hard – running a close third to Lutz Bernau (MAN) for the first three laps. But the British driver then came under pressure from Jochen Hahn (Mercedes) and while battling for position touched a couple of corner marker posts – resulting in a Stop & Go penalty which dropped him down the order, to finally be classified 8<sup>th</sup>.



After a strong start Terry Rymer was engaged in a battle for sixth with the Czech driver Frankie Vojtisek (Renault) and the Foden of Ross Garrett. At the finishing line the Castrol Team Atkins MAN was splitting this pair – but Rymer also was penalised for running wide and touching cones and with 10 seconds added to his race time was finally classified 7<sup>th</sup>.

The Saturday Cup race saw a good start Lutz Bernau blasting his MAN ahead at the first corner with Crozier in hot pursuit. This pair pulled clear and battled hard until the last lap – when Crozier ran wide, dropping him to 8<sup>th</sup> while his German rival collected the silverware.

Allgauer therefore inherited second placed after an untroubled run. The real action was going on behind him as Vojtisek, Oliver and Hahn fought for third.

Unfortunately mid-race Stuart again was flagged into the pit lane for a Stop & Go penalty; his over-ambitious start – with two wheels off the tarmac on the straight – had attracted the officials' attention and they decided to penalise him. Rejoining after the stop Stuart had to fight his way through the field, back up to sixth at the finish.

Rymer had been battling well in the early laps with Hahn's Mercedes – but finally had to watch the German pull away as his engine temperature soared in the Italian sunshine. After Oliver's compulsory stop it was Rymer who moved ahead on the track to inherit an encouraging fifth.

"The truck is performing much better than in Spain – but when I'm pushing hard the engine is getting too hot and losing power. When it's got no response it's impossible to fight for position – but I'm sure we'll get it sorted for Sunday!" said Terry.

Sunday's practice saw Bernau securing 'pole' ahead of Crozier with Hahn and Oliver lining up on the second row, just 0.5 secs splitting the four. Allgauer was fifth fastest with Rymer sixth – although his time was still two seconds off the pace-setters.

Bernau made good use of his starting slot to hold the lead into the first corner – and despite Crozier's best efforts the German driver held on to win by just 0.9 seconds. Oliver had made an excellent start to push his MAN into third and he worked hard to defend his position from Hahn for seven laps. But with just two laps remaining the German finally found an opportunity to slide inside, dropping Oliver to fourth at the chequered flag. Allgauer had also been in contention for a top four finish – but the Austrian was annoyed to get a black flag (corner marker cones) and after his pit lane visit had dropped to seventh at the finish.

Some late evening efforts by Castrol Team Atkins saw the overheating problems of the previous day overcome – and with improved throttle response Rymer was enjoying a race-long battle with Vojtisek's Renault. Despite the best efforts of the experienced Czech driver it was Rymer who emerged ahead by 1.1 seconds to take a well deserved fifth.

The Sunday Cup race was expected to produce another Bernau/Crozier battle – but the German driver suffered mechanical trouble on the very first corner and retired immediately.

That left Crozier out in front with Hahn and Oliver disputing second.

Oliver drove well – but couldn't match the pace of the Mercedes driver and finally had to be content with a very welcome third place, the British driver holding off a late charge from Allgauer to take the final podium position. Vojtisek had a fairly lonely run to fifth but Rymer was in the heat of the action. Running fifth on the first lap, a hefty bump on the back in the opening stages saw his engine cut-out activated and Terry had to pull over and re-set the safety switch before rejoining in eighth. He soon found his way ahead of

Orsini (Renault) and then closed in and passed the MAN of Dominique Seiler to cross the finishing line a strong sixth.

“It’s a good end to a weekend of hard racing – and we’re still in the top three in the overall championship” said Oliver as he collected his third place trophy on Sunday afternoon.

Rymer – after collecting points in all four races - was also pleased with the progress Castrol Team Atkins had made during the weekend. “I didn’t expect to be running at the front in the first few events – but it’s good to be getting into the top six already and we’ve still got a lot more to come from the truck. We had some problems on Saturday – but the team cured the overheating and the throttle response was much better on Sunday making it easier to drive in close company.”



#### POINTS STANDINGS AFTER TWO ROUNDS

|    | Driver        | Make               | Points    |
|----|---------------|--------------------|-----------|
| 1  | Crozier       | MAN                | 101       |
| 2  | Bernau        | MAN                | 88        |
| 3  | <b>Oliver</b> | <b>Castrol/MAN</b> | <b>59</b> |
|    | Hahn          | Mercedes           |           |
| 5  | Allgauer      | MAN/Castrol        | 53        |
| 6  | Vojtisek      | Renault/Castrol    | 38        |
| 7  | <b>Rymer</b>  | <b>Castrol/MAN</b> | <b>24</b> |
|    | Hernandes     | Mercedes           |           |
| 9  | Garrett       | Foden              | 21        |
| 10 | Rodrigues     | Mercedes           | 20        |

Next race: A1-Ring, Austria – June 8/9