

24/09/2008

## MATCHING THE LEADERS FOR SPEED

*Place:* Imola (ITA)  
*Dates:* 20th - 21st September 2008  
*Track length:* 4.9km

### Race 1

Grid Position: 3  
Result: -

### Race 2

Grid Position: 21  
Result: 10

An exciting track, P3 in qualifying and a spectacular chase in Sunday's race: Imola came so close to providing the long-awaited success for Tim. "Things were looking so good," he says wistfully. "It's all the more annoying to know that you could have been up there with the front-runners on your own merit." But it wasn't to be.

In free practice, Tim immediately adjusted to the new track despite the wet conditions. "I felt comfortable here right from the start," he says. "I like the track. It has a good flow, it's very fast and a lot of fun to drive round." On Friday, even luck seemed to be with him this time: no mechanical faults, no problems. This earned him the third fastest time in qualifying.

Yet things didn't go quite so well in the first race. The air pressure on Tim's car was not optimally set so that the tyres didn't get up to temperature fast enough on the newly laid but very rough surface; the low ambient temperature didn't help either. Even so, he got off to a good start and held on to his third position. "But I couldn't manage to get away from the guy in fourth position during the first two laps. He then overtook me because my tyres didn't get up to operating temperature quickly enough. This robbed me of pace on the straights and I was overtaken by fifth and sixth too." When the seventh-placed driver also tried his luck, the situation became tight, he smacked into Tim's front wheel and that was the end of the race.

Consequently, Tim found himself occupying 21st slot on the grid for Sunday's race. This time, with tyre pressures properly adjusted and a reduced aerodynamic package, Tim mounted a dramatic chase to take P10. "Every time I passed someone, it was through my own efforts." His race engineer was full of praise for a strong performance with plenty of passing manoeuvres. "I was able to match the leaders for speed and put on a good display of overtaking, sometimes going round on the outside. That was the highlight of my weekend." By that stage, unfortunately, it was too late to have a say in the battle for podium spots. "It would have been great if things had gone that well in the first race. Then I could have been contesting a place in the top three."



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