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## CATCH-UP IN THE RAIN

Race weekends are a law unto themselves and every race track has its own peculiarities. Just two of the lessons that Tim will be taking away with him from the opening Formula Master event in Valencia. During the winter tests, Tim was up with the front-runners right from the start. Even when he briefly got behind the wheel for the first test in Monza, he was amongst the leading group. The same was true of the tests at Magny Cours.

But Valencia came as a rude awakening: as soon as tests began, it was apparent that something was wrong with the setup. Tim had to wrestle with a car that seemed strangely reluctant to cope with the characteristics of the Circuit Ricardo Tormo. "They have a very special rough sort of surface here," explained Tim. "It's hard on the tyres. It was a struggle for us." He could only manage two fast laps with the new tyres.

Tim also had more than his share of bad luck: during free practice, his oil pump failed, and in qualifying, his gearbox packed in after three laps. So it was that he had to line up at 26th on the grid - not the most auspicious of starts. Despite this, Tim managed to work his way up to 18th. "I was so far back on the grid, I couldn't even see the track lights," he complains. "All the same, I got off to a good start but wasn't able to make any real progress after the mid section of the race." His pursuit tactics had taken too much out of the tyres. "We could have used a bit of rain."

That came during the second race. "This helped me move up from 18th to seventh," says Tim. "That was perfect from our point of view." Not quite so perfect, however, were a few collisions that Tim was involved in during his chase of the leaders. When he was hit from behind just a few laps from the finish, his hopes of getting in amongst the points vanished. "Someone drove into my rear right wheel." That brought an early end to his race.

### What did you enjoy most about the weekend?

Tim Sandtler: No doubt about it. Playing catch-up in the second race. Going from 18th to seventh was fantastic. In the wet conditions, I was able to cut through the rest of the field. In fact, I could have done with a bit more rain. These were perfect conditions from our point of view. We had already proved that during the tests at Magny Cours where we were out ahead on a wet track.

### What are the positives that you will take from Valencia?

Tim Sandtler: Overall, we had a hard time of it here. But the setup problem was probably something that is unique to the special characteristics of this particular track. Things didn't go too well for us here - we see it as a missed opportunity to score points but we're going to learn lessons from it. It's no good moping after the event. In two weeks, we'll be back with a vengeance. During the tests, we could always match the leaders for speed and sometimes we were even setting the pace. So there are plenty of good reasons for optimism.

### Where do you see yourself relative to the opposition?

Tim Sandtler: The competition are really good. I'm up against the likes of Michael Ammermüller and Chris van der Drift. But when our car is on song we are a force to be reckoned with. We showed our true potential during the tests and we know we can be up there with the leaders. It's not going to be a cakewalk, though.



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