



WESTBROOK DENIED A WIN IN CZECH REPUBLIC

British Porsche star Richard Westbrook was denied a win in the FIA GT Championship at Brno by an engine failure, caused by a first-lap collision suffered by a spinning Maserati.

Westbrook was flying around the challenging circuit in the Czech Republic, which nestles in the rolling forested Moravian hills about 15 minutes outside the city of Brno. He comfortably set the fastest lap, but knew he was living on borrowed time.

The Londoner set second fastest time in qualifying in the Prospeed Competition Porsche 997 GT3-RSR, despite carrying 82.5kg of ballast – 47.5 for previous successes and 32 because Westbrook and co-driver Emmanuel Collard both qualify as professional drivers.

“That was a nice surprise,” said two-time Porsche Supercup champion Westbrook. “The car was good and seemed to work superbly. Brno is such a technical circuit and you can really get on top of the car there, so we learned a lot.”

But things started to go wrong at the start, for which Collard was driving. “Manu got the lead into the first corner, but all the cars from the GT1 class up ahead were spinning. He clipped a Maserati and it punctured the radiator, and from then on it was spilling a little bit of water.”

When Westbrook took over, the team refilled the radiator with water, as well as refuelling, changing tyres and installing the new driver. “The stop was excellent, and when I got in the car it was just fantastic,” said Richard. “I was lapping over one second quicker than anyone else at that point. At first Toni Vilander in the leading Ferrari was 12 seconds in front of me, and I got the gap down so I was just 1.5 seconds behind.”

Then came the engine blow-up. “It was like a disco in the cockpit! Every single alarm was going off and I was telling the team over the radio, but eventually I just had to ignore all the lights. It was inevitable that the engine was going to go pop, but it was really disappointing when it

happened.

“The car was fantastic and we would have won this race for sure, but we’re pleased with the pace we showed.”

Westbrook now looks ahead to the next FIA GT round, on October 5, at the Nogaro circuit in France’s rural Gascony region. The good news is that the non-finish at Brno means 20kg of success ballast are shed, but the bad news is that Gascony is a food lover’s paradise (especially if you like duck) and the drivers’ biggest challenge will be not to add 20kg in the restaurants.



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