



MASERATI

*Trofeo JBF*

## **Ghanem scores a double win at Yas Marina in Round 3 of Maserati Trofeo JBF RAK**

**Abu Dhabi, 27th January 2012**

At the home of Formula One in the UAE, young Lebanese driver Joe Ghanem scored a double victory in Round 3 of the Maserati Trofeo JBF RAK. Competition in the one-make race series was intense with action across the field in both 30-minute races.

The first qualifying session took place during crisp conditions at the Formula One Circuit with ambient temperatures hovering around 18C. This meant it took a few laps for the drivers to bring their tyres up to optimum temperature before they could attack the circuit at qualifying pace.

Ghanem and Italy's Patrick Zamparini were the only drivers to break through the 1min 14sec barrier, but the field from 3rd to 8th position are separated by just 1sec so it bodes well for an exciting race. Race rookie Cheerag Arya was getting more and more comfortable in the Maserati GranTurismo MC Trofeo as the session progressed, securing himself 10th position on the grid.

At the start of the first race, Ghanem capitalized on his pole position and drove faultless for the full 30-minute session taking victory over Zamparini with a comfortable 15second margin. After intervention from the Stewards over a racing incident involving Faisal Shaker and Justino de Azacarte Riveroll in the latter stages of the race, 3rd place was awarded to Zeehog from Lebanon.

The second qualifying session saw the lap times tumble as the field improved upon their first session timings. In the second qualifying session, it was once again Ghanem and Zamparini battling it out to secure the spots on the front row of the grid. However, they came under pressure from Lebanon's Zeehog and Justino de Azacarte Riveroll from Venezuela who both scored qualifying times within the 1m 14sec barrier.

At the end of the session, Ghanem was called into the Stewards Office and had his fastest lap disallowed due to track infringement and was demoted to 2nd on the grid as a result. This meant the young driver was even more determined to win in the second race.

Again, it was a battle royale between Ghanem and Zamparini at the head of the pack with the pair swapping places a number of times throughout the race with Ghanem victorious at the fall of the chequered flag. Venezuela's Justino de Azacarte Riveroll secured a well-deserved third place finish.

Joe Ghanem was elated with his day's performance. "Two starts, two wins! I started the weekend really focused and had an advantage because I know the track a lot, so I had the chance to really experience the car. I think the Maserati Trofeo is the best racing series in the Middle East – it shows the proper image of a factory-backed series. I really can't wait for each Maserati weekend. They're very exciting!"

Further down the field, there was action between drivers fighting over every position on the grid. Kuwait's Khaled Al Mudhaf fought two hard races with KSA's Mohammed Jawa with each driver taking a moral victory over the other.



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Umberto Cini, Managing Director of Maserati Middle East & Africa, was also racing within Round 3 and secured honourable 8th and 5th positions in the races. "It was a great experience to be out on the track with the other drivers in the series as it showed me first hand not only the quality of the racing, but the camaraderie between all of the drivers in the series. It was a great opportunity to race alongside some of the region's most gentlemanly drivers, and I would urge anyone interested in some of the best racing on offer in the Middle East to contact us to try for yourself."

The next round of the Maserati Trofeo JBF RAK series takes place at the Losail International Circuit in Qatar on February 16th-17th. Fans of the series can stay up to date with all the action from the paddock by logging onto [facebook.com/MaseratiME](https://facebook.com/MaseratiME), on twitter at [@TrofeoJBFRAK](https://twitter.com/TrofeoJBFRAK) or via the dedicated section within [www.maseraticorse.com](http://www.maseraticorse.com).

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