



## **ASTON MARTIN DELIVERS EPIC 8 HOURS OF BAHRAIN VICTORY**

- **Aston Martin Vantage GTE records second WEC win of the 2019/20 season**
- **All three works Aston Martin Racing cars finish on the podium**
- **Aston Martin, Thiim and Sørensen take GTE Pro championship leads**
- **GTE Am crew post their third podium finish in four races with second place**

*Saturday 14 December, 2019, Bahrain.* Aston Martin Racing recorded an epic victory in the first ever Bapco 8 Hours of Bahrain, after Danish duo Nicki Thiim and Marco Sørensen came out on top of a race-long duel with FIA World Endurance Championship GTE Pro rivals Ferrari.

It was the second win of the season for the #95 Aston Martin Vantage GTE and it was enough to secure its drivers a 14-point championship lead as the series now heads into a two-month winter break. The fact that team-mates Alex Lynn (GB) and Maxime Martin (BEL) continued their run of third-place finishes at every race, also ensures that Aston Martin leads the GT Manufacturers' Championship with 153 points.

Sørensen raced through from the back of the class grid at the start and was in the hunt from the off after snatching third on the opening lap. Both he and Thiim then produced a perfect blend of car and strategy management through the race on a circuit that tested every team to the limit in terms of tyre and brake wear. There was nothing to separate the #95 Vantage GTE and the rival Ferrari for much of the second half of the race. But in the final hour, after a brilliant couple of stints from Thiim, Sørensen was able to take advantage of a mistake in the pits by his rival and take the pair's second victory together in Bahrain. The accomplishment was all the more crucial given that the event was worth 1.5x the points of a normal 6-hour round.

"It was one of the tougher ones I have to say," said Thiim. "It was one hell of a challenge to race on the limit for eight hours and racing so closely with Ferrari who kept us on our toes. It's not always the fastest one that wins but the clever one, and today we might not have had the fastest pace, but thanks to the team we are the ones sitting here with the win. What a Christmas gift!"

Sørensen added: "We started from the back of the class grid, but we got a good start and ended up P3. From that point on it was all about managing the tyres. Definitely there was not one stage where we weren't fighting with other cars. Our boys did an amazing job with the pitstops. It seemed that every time we pitted, we jumped ahead of a rival, so all in all a great clean race from the team. The strategy was on point, on the limit, but always right and in the end, everything worked out in our favour."

Bahrain has proved a happy hunting ground for Aston Martin over the years, with Thiim and Sørensen clinching title victory in 2016 with a win and the #98 GTE Am crew doing the same a year later. Indeed it was Aston Martin Racing's seventh class victory in Bahrain and Thiim's fourth!

The GTE Am crew of Paul Dalla Lana (CDN), three-time Le Mans class winner Darren Turner (GB) and works driver Ross Gunn (GB) came close to making it eight class wins in the works #98 Vantage GTE, but were forced to settle for second after a strong drive. Their third podium in four races means they have closed to 12.5 points off the championship lead in third position.

Aston Martin Racing Managing Director John Gaw added: "Having all three cars finish on the podium is a great way to round off 2019. Everything worked as it should today, and Nicki and Marco did a great job to deliver on a perfectly-executed strategy. Maxime and Alex also did well to fight back from the back of the grid to end up on the podium again. Second place for Paul, Darren and Ross means they are back in the hunt. As ever, we learned things from this weekend and we can see areas that we need to improve, but after the disappointment of China to come away with the drivers and manufacturers' championship leads is immensely satisfying."

The fifth round of the FIA WEC, the Lone Star Le Mans, takes place at the Circuit of The Americas, on 23 February, 2020.

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