

ATTACK BY VX Racing

THE DUNLOP MSA BRITISH TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP 2007

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2007 CHAMPIONS

BTCC MANUFACTURERS CHAMPIONSHIP WINNERS
BTCC DRIVERS CHAMPIONSHIP WINNER

RACE REPORT



VAUXHALL CONTINUES TITLE SUCCESSES

Vauxhall is celebrating its 17th and 18th Dunlop MSA British Touring Car Championship titles after securing the 2007 driver and manufacturer honours at Thruxton this weekend.

In a nail-biting finale to the season Fabrizio Giovanardi clawed back a nine-point deficit to former championship leader Jason Plato after some exceptional driving in the Vauxhall Vectra.

With eight touring car titles to his name, Giovanardi is now firmly recognised as one of the greatest touring car drivers of all time, and Vauxhall is delighted the Italian will be coming back in 2008 to defend his title.

"This is great for Vauxhall, for VX Racing and for all the people who have helped me get here," said Giovanardi. "Roberto Ravaglia has seven titles so I think now I have more than any other driver! It's very special because it was very big effort to win this one. Working hard for something makes it more special."

After two 1-2 finishes for Giovanardi and Plato early in the day, 2007's BTCC racing culminated in a dramatic final round as the two title protagonists started side-by-side on the grid with just one point separating them in the title table.

Giovanardi launched off the line and into third by the first corner as Plato found himself locked in a gruelling battle with VX Racing's Tom Chilton.

"For me it was very stressful before the start and then again in the end," said Giovanardi.

"I thought I was in trouble with my tyres so when I saw Jason try to make everything to try and catch me it was very stressful. One lap more might have been a different result."

The team was full of praise for Chilton and the instrumental role he played in the third race following his great pass on Plato in the opening stages. His Vauxhall Vectra remained under intense pressure, however, with Plato getting alongside at one point, raising a gasp around the packed Hampshire circuit.

"It's mega: couldn't have been any better!" said Chilton, who held off Plato's advances for a hard-won third place. "It's been a perfect weekend for me except for the puncture in race one. I've had pole position, registered fastest lap and ended on the podium."

"I've helped my team-mate out on several occasions and I'm really pleased for him and for Vauxhall. They deserved it and it feels fantastic to be part of that."



FINAL CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS

BTCC DRIVERS CHAMPIONSHIP	
1 FABRIZIO GIOVANARDI VAUXHALL VECTRA	300
2 JASON PLATO SEAT LEÓN	297
3 GORDON SHEDDEN HONDA CIVIC	200
4 MATT NEAL HONDA CIVIC	195
5 COLIN TURKINGTON BMW 320SI	184
BTCC MANUFACTURERS CHAMPIONSHIP	
1 VAUXHALL	637
2 SEAT	623
BTCC TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP	
1 SEAT SPORT UK	446
2 VX RACING	421
3 TEAM HALFORDS	345

CHAMPIONS APPLAUD A CLASS ACT

The Dunlop MSA British Touring Car Championship is one of the most sought after by drivers around the world.

Here, some of the past champions give their reactions to the BTCC's latest champion Fabrizio Giovanardi, and the team effort that helped him to his eighth touring car title.

John Cleland, Vauxhall BTCC Champion 1989, 1995

"It went down to the wire and it was a bit nip and tuck but I think Fabrizio was probably cooler and calmer than Jason. I was happy Vauxhall won it and I was happy Fabrizio won it. He's an international champion and it's good for the championship that it's got an international flavour."

Jason Plato, Vauxhall BTCC Champion 2001, 2007 BTCC runner-up

"It's been a great championship and Fabrizio is a great champion. We've had some great battles all year and it was down to the best two drivers. He's a worthy winner."

James Thompson, Vauxhall BTCC Champion 2002, 2004

"It's a fantastic championship to win and I think the two guys fighting at the end were great drivers and both would have been deserving champions."

"I've been team-mates with Fabrizio and I've raced with him so I'm really pleased for him. You can't win as many titles as he has without being one of the best drivers around. He's won more championships than I think anybody else."

Alain Menu, BTCC Champion 1997 and 2000. Vauxhall's guest third driver at Thruxton this weekend

"To win BTCC means a lot to any driver and I'm very pleased for Giovanardi because I've known him for 16 years. We used to race in F3000 in Europe and in 2005 in the World Touring Car Championship. He is one of the best touring car drivers there is. This title is well deserved."

Matt Neal, BTCC Champion 2005, 2006 2008 BTCC Vauxhall works driver

"You only know how much it means when you see the trophy that they present. The list of names like Franck Gardner and Win Percy: you reel off the names and it's very special to have your name on the end. Fabrizio has been a massive name over the last decade in touring cars and fully deserves his place on that special trophy."

VXR RACING DRIVER OF THE YEAR: FINALISTS IN THE FAST LANE



Some of Vauxhall's VXR Racing Driver of the Year finalists got their first insider-view of a racing paddock after being shown around Thruxton by Vauxhall's Dunlop MSA British Touring Car Championship (BTCC) works team last weekend.

The competitors were trackside Saturday and Sunday, learning the ropes as the prestigious team battled to secure BTCC title honours.

"It was the busiest meeting of the year for us," said Giovanardi, after winning the BTCC Driver title. "They got a very good taste of what racing is like; something different to do every minute!"

"I had a good talk with a few of them and they all want this prize very much. I don't blame them; this kind of thing could be very helpful to someone wanting to get into racing today."

During the day the finalists had an official portrait taken with VX Racing, had lunch with the team and watched qualifying from the pit garage.

The VXR Racing Driver of the Year contenders will now concentrate fully on preparing their fitness for the Grand Final, a two-day boot camp where they will face intense media and fitness training.

VXR FACT

DID YOU KNOW?

Since first entering the BTCC in 1989 Vauxhall's works team has won 18 titles

ALAIN COMMENTS

Alain Menu is one of the most successful touring car drivers of the modern era, having won the BTCC in 1997 and 2000 and recording an incredible 36 wins during his tenure.

Now driving for Vauxhall's sister company, Chevrolet, in the FIA World Touring Car Championship, the Swiss driver was the obvious choice for VXR Racing's guest drive in last weekend's season final at Thruxton.

How does it feel to be back racing in the BTCC?
"It's really great to be back! I've been away for 17 years and just today I ran into so many friends I hadn't seen for years."

Is Thruxton a good circuit for you to return to the championship?
"Thruxton is actually my favourite circuit in the UK. I have many, many very good memories from here. In 1998, Thruxton was hosting the season opener and I was racing for victory against Rickard Rydell. We overtook each other over and over again and in the last lap it started to snow, and I won the race."

How did you get on with VX Racing?
"I know many people in the team as I raced for the Renault Williams touring car team in 1992 and with some of the same operational staff, so it's great to be back in the championship with the team!"

What's your best memory of the BTCC?
"The best memory is definitely winning my first title as I came second in the previous three years and it was a long time coming."

You have competed in so many Le Mans. Which in your opinion is the best?
"The BTCC in the early 90s was definitely the best championship ever around. It was like a mini world championship as we had so many experienced drivers and nine manufacturers. It was great racing!"

What's next on your agenda? Would you like to return to the BTCC for a full season?
"If the offer came up I would definitely like to do it again, however, I will probably stay in World Touring Cars next year as I'm still missing the world title."

AN INSIDE LOOK BACK AT 2007

Victory in one of the toughest British Touring Car Championship seasons of all time is all the sweeter for Vauxhall and Fabrizio Giovanardi's eighth title ranks him with the best of all time.

Here, some of the people closest to the action give their reflections on what has been a glorious year for manufacturer and driver alike.

Patrizia Giovanardi, Fabrizio's wife

"I'm very happy for Fab! I'm so happy he is champion because I have never seen him put so much into a championship than this one. He never let go all season. That is his character, but on this particular occasion he never let go!"

Alex Somers, Fabrizio's Race Engineer

"There was so much pressure because you're representing one of the biggest manufacturers in the business."

Fabrizio has been a class act. He's beaten the best in the world and now he's added arguably one of the best touring car titles in the business. It's been a pleasure working with him!

"The high point was the second round at Brands Hatch. We struggled there the first time around and we were a bit apprehensive about going back, but we dominated the whole weekend! That was fantastic."

Ian Harrison, Team Principal

"There are times where we've made it difficult for ourselves. It could've cost us today but we've just managed to tick it in injury time. It's been a great effort by the guys. We got our heads down and kept fronting it out. When we had a bad weekend we came straight back and smashed them at the next race, which speaks loads about the blokes and their fortitude."

Alan Gow, BTCC Series Director

"It's been a great championship; Fabrizio is

a great champion and has provided the crowds with some of the most exciting moments in this year's racing. Many congratulations to him and Vauxhall and we very much look forward to seeing them return in 2008 to defend their title."

Ian Titchmarsh, BTCC commentator since 1975

"This is one of the best seasons of all time! We started off with two top drivers and it went all the way as we hoped it would. There was no unpleasantness, just hard and fair driving between two class acts."

"Fabrizio is one of the top touring car drivers of all time and he's made the most amazing recoveries this season. He just seems able to get through no matter what. His car always seems to be in just the right place."

THE YEAR IN PICTURES



QA & FANZONE

ADAM STYLES, 10, FROM DEYON

Q: HAVE YOU BEEN FOLLOWING THE BTCC ALL SEASON?
A: "Yes I have and I really love watching Fabrizio race as he is really going for it all the time."

Q: IS FABRIZIO YOUR FAVOURITE DRIVER?
A: "Yes he is and I still can't believe I met him today. He was so nice and I got very nervous sitting next to him."

Q: WOULD YOU LIKE TO BECOME A RACING DRIVER?
A: "I think so. I'm very short for my age but I would like to start karting soon. I have already told my dad I want to do it and I think he is happy for me to start it."