



PRESS RELEASE

Fifth for Niklas Krütten after fantastic fightback at ELMS opener in France

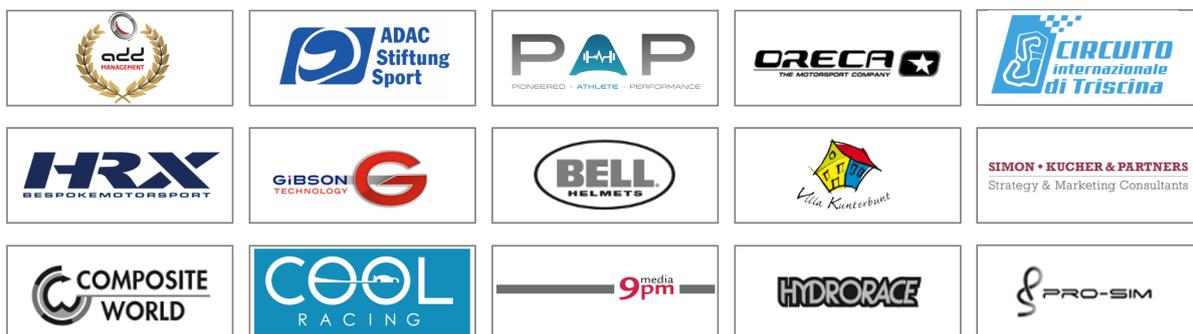
Trier, 18th April 2022. This was not a race weekend for the faint-hearted. Trier's Niklas Krütten and the COOL Racing team produced a magnificent fightback at the opening round of this season's European Le Mans Series (ELMS) at Circuit Paul Ricard. Together with Yifei Ye (CHN) and team owner Nicolas Lapierre (FRA), Krütten climbed a total of 35 places in the #37 Oreca 07 Gibson to finish fifth after four hours of racing.

Having set the fastest time in three of the five practice sessions, the team was optimistic ahead of Saturday's first ten-minute qualifying of the new ELMS season. However, with China's Ye at the wheel, there was a crash elsewhere on the circuit during the all-important flying lap, resulting in qualifying being prematurely aborted. Having not posted a timed lap, the team was forced to start the race on Easter Sunday from 40th on the grid.

Ye made a very strong start, cutting through the field of GTE LMP3 and LMP2 cars and gaining many positions. After almost one and a half hours, the Chinese handed over to Niklas Krütten in third place overall. The 19-year-old immediately showed his class and climbed into second place on his first lap. Krütten defended this fine position for many laps. Shortly before his second pit stop, the COOL Racing LMP2 car suffered a puncture and Krütten could do nothing more than roll slowly back to the pits. Lapierre took over at the wheel after 39 laps and was able to battle his way back to fifth place and secure the team some valuable points in the title race.

Niklas Krütten: "The race itself was actually quite okay today. Starting from the very back was obviously a big challenge for the team. Yifei made up a lot of ground in both his stints. When I took over, I was able to maintain the pace and was always in the top three. Unfortunately, the puncture really slowed me down, as all I could do was drive slowly back to the pits. We lost time and positions as a result. Considering where we started from, fifth place is actually a good result. However, you could see that there was more in it for us today. We want to show that in the next race in Imola, and challenge at the front from a better starting position."

The second ELMS race of the season takes place on 15th May in Imola, Italy. However, Krütten is back in action this coming weekend (22nd to 24th April). The former ADAC





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Stiftung Sport driver is set for his ADAC GT Masters debut in Oschersleben. Krütten will line up alongside Ben Green for Schubert Motorsport in a brand-new BMW M4 GT3.

European Le Mans Series 2022 calendar:

17 April – France / Le Castellet
15 May – Italy / Imola
03 July – Hungary / Budapest
28 August – Spain / Barcelona
25 September – Belgium / Spa-Francorchamps
16 October – Portugal / Portimão

24H Le Mans – 11/12 June

