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LIVERPOOL TWO UP AFTER OPENING FRENCH RACES

28/06/2009 - Liverpool FC came out on top in the new "Weekend Winner" contest when Adrian Vallés comfortably won the Super Final at the opening rounds of the 2009 Superleague Formula by Sonangol at Magny Cours in France today (28 June).



The British club also heads the championship standings courtesy of the Spaniard claiming a victory and sixth place in the opening two 45-minute races of the exciting single-seater series. Reigning GP2 champion Giorgio Pantano took honours for AC Milan in the second race watched by a crowd of 12,000 in hot and humid weather conditions.

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[Media Kit SF Round 1 France - Magny-Cours](#)

Olympique Lyonnais, the first French soccer club to compete in the SLF, head for the third and fourth rounds of the 12-race series at Zolder in Belgium (18-19 July) placed 14th in the standings. Frenchman Nelson Panciatici, from Reims, making his SLF debut, registered 13th place in both races on "home" soil – the 17-corner, 4.41km Circuit de Nevers circuit having hosted the French F1 Grand Prix between 1991-2008. Le Chesnay-based Tristan Gommendy, the only other French driver, netted 16th – having been involved in a first lap accident and then picking-up a puncture in race one – and seventh for FC Porto, the Portuguese club he drove for in SFL's inaugural season.

Race 1 – Liverpool claim first blood

Liverpool claimed first blood when Vallés won the opening race at ease. Vallés overtook the pole-starting SC Corinthians car of Antônio Pizzonia (BRA) on lap five and even retained his lead during his mandatory pit-stop for tyres.

Dutchman Yelmer Buurman in the Anderlecht car, despite being involved in a multiple car opening lap accident that brought out the Safety car briefly, recovered to finish second – staving off the hard-charging Tottenham Hotspur car of Britain Craig Dolby who set the race's fastest lap.

Pizzonia salvaged fourth at the chequered flag when Pantano –who had stormed up from 16th on the grid to fifth in the opening laps – dropped from fourth to 12th place after first spinning his AC Milan car with less than five minutes remaining and then retiring with fuel issues.

Liverpool FC: Adrian Vallés (SP)

"It was a good race – pretty comfortable. My only problem was that at the start I had to switch the gearbox to manual mode so for the opening laps I was getting used to that. But I got in to a rhythm, caught the Corinthians car and overtook it – it was a great way to start the SLF season."

Anderlecht: Yelmer Buurman (NED)

"I lost some places at the start and was then hit further around the opening lap, causing me to spin and with damaged bodywork. I recovered and then enjoyed a good fight with the Tottenham car in the closing stages. I'm very happy with second place."

Tottenham Hotspur: Craig Dolby (GB)

"I didn't stop correctly in my pit box for the tyre change. But on new tyres I was able to push hard and recover the places. I pressed the Anderlecht car hard for second place but came up short. Nevertheless I'm very proud to give Spurs a rostrum finish on my debut for the London club."

Magny Cours, France – [Round 1 Results available](#)

Race 2 – AC Milan to the fore

The Olimpiacos car of reigning SLF champion Davide Rigon (ITA) started from pole-position with the Glasgow Rangers machine of SLF rookie John Martin (AUS) alongside on the front row courtesy of the reverse grid order after both were victims of race one's opening lap accident.

But it was the fourth row starting AC Milan machine of Pantano who cruised to victory, finishing 2.2secs ahead of Rigon. Pantano took the lead from Rangers when Martin pitted on lap nine and was back in front by lap 17 after the pit-stops. The Australian went off at Adelaide corner on lap 18 when just outside the top-10.

FC Basel's Max Wissel came through from ninth to claim third place and the final slot through in to the Super Final with Al Ain's Miguel Molina (ESP) just missing out on a rostrum in fourth place having fended off the advances of AS Roma's Jonathan Kennard – the Briton retiring with a clutch problem three laps from home after the pair touched.

Race 2 Quotes:

AC Milan: Giorgio Pantano (IT)

"Qualifying had not gone well and it was a case of just doing my best in the two races so to win the second one is an amazing bonus. The [Azerti] team have worked really hard. It was a straightforward victory."

Olympiacos: Davide Rigon (IT)

"I had gearbox problems immediately from the start resulting in me losing the lead. But after the big accident damage after the opening lap accident in race one, this result is good for the team."

FC Basel: Max Wissel (D)

"A good race and good pit-stop – it was a big move forward. The team did a good job – it's a good start to my season."

Magny Cours, France – [Round 2 Results available](#)**Super Final – Liverpool claim another victory**

Liverpool triumphed in the non-point scoring eight-lap shoot-out run immediately after Race 2 that only featured the top-three finishers from both races – Vallés becoming the first recipient of the new “Weekend Winner” award and a purse of €100,000.

AC Milan finished runner-up to bag €70,000 with Corinthians taking third and the corresponding €40,000 purse. Tottenham's Craig Dolby cruelly non-started – the Briton dropping from fifth to 10th on the last lap due to system pressure failure resulting in no gears – allowing Corinthians in to the sprint race. Vallés led throughout from Pantano with Pizzonia moving the Corinthians car up from fifth on the six-car grid.Ç

Super Final Quotes:**Liverpool FC: Adrian Vallés (SP)**

“I pushed very hard on the opening two laps to make a gap. It was a little strange with just six cars in the race and a race lasting just eight laps. It's been a very good weekend. I lead the championship and I aim to have extended that lead after the next races and stay on top.”

AC Milan: Giorgio Pantano (IT)

“I didn't expect to be in the Super Final. For sure we'll be better prepared at the Zolder races.

Corinthians: Antonio Pizzonia (BRA)

“It was a surprise to get into the Super Final when the Spurs car had a problem and couldn't take the start. The entire weekend has been pretty good for us. However, in race one I lost time at my pit-stop when a wheel gun malfunctioned. In race two, I struggled on my first set of tyres. Qualifying had been good – we just need to make sure these little problems don't happen”

Magny Cours, France – [Super Final Results available](#)**Race 3 Super Final- SF Round 1 France - Classification**

POS	No	RACING TEAM	DRIVER	TIME	GAP
1	21	Liverpool FC SF Racing Team	A. Vallés	11:49.172	8 laps
2	3	AC Milan SF Racing Team	G. Pantano	11:53.985	4.813
3	14	Corinthians SF Racing Team	A. Pizzonia	11:55.946	6.774
4	8	RSC Anderlecht SF Racing Team	Y. Buurman	11:58.574	9.402
5	10	FC Basel SF Racing Team	M. Wissel	12:13.557	24.385
6	9	Olympiacos SF Racing Team	D. Rigon	12:15.418	26.246

Next races: Zolder, Belgium (July 18-19) – Rds 3 & 4.

FURTHER INFORMATION :

Additional briefing information, video and images are available at:

<http://www.superleagueformula.com/superleague/News-Media>

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