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GROUP**

“I Love this Endurance Sh*t!”

Hey! Now that 2025 is in full swing, it is beyond time for me to kick off my racing season. Over the weekend of March 14-16, I flew to Spain and the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya for the first ever **GT Winter Series 6 Hours of Barcelona**. I am excited to report I am back with **SchnitzelAlm Racing** for another year, this weekend in



their **AMG GT4** with co-drivers Kenneth Heyer, Joel Mesch, Cedric Fuchs and Jay Mo Härtling. Some race weekends go smoothly and fully according to plan. This weekend was not one of those, but there is no quit in the **SchnitzelAlm Racing** team. We fought back from many laps down early in the race to steal second with only minutes left.

Over the winter, I spent a lot of time thinking about what I would like to accomplish in my 2025 racing season. After coming so close (yet again) to a win in the Nürburgring 24 Hour last year with **SchnitzelAlm**, I felt I had unfinished business but needed additional seat time in their **AMG GT4** to get fully up to speed. **SchnitzelAlm Racing** and all of my co-drivers were fresh off a full season in the **GT Winter Series** where they scored multiple championships and wins, so I was thrilled when they offered me the opportunity to join the team in Barcelona.

The Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya was a new track for me. A good friend and co-worker offered me a chance to run some laps in his simulator prior to flying to Spain. I am absolutely horrible in racing simulators, but it was great to

learn the track layout and gearing before ever sitting in the actual racecar.

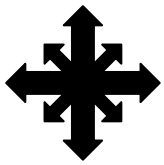
My master plan coming into the weekend was to spend three days on a nice dry track getting fully up to speed in the **AMG GT4**. Mother Nature had other plans and brought rain to Catalunya for the Friday test day. It was not a relaxing way to start, but despite the damp conditions and multiple red flags throughout the day, the **AMG GT4** and my **Pirelli** rain tires proved to be a forgiving combination. I worked through anti-lock braking and traction control settings on track and pit stop procedures while on the pit lane. All-in-all, it was a productive day.



Saturday morning dawned sunny and clear, but the track was still wet for the official practice session. Driving on a drying track is always satisfying because no matter what you do, you go faster. My fast lap in the wet on Friday was a 2:13.592. The drying track tortured my **Pirelli** rain tires, yielding a 2:04.494 when the checkered flag fell. A dry racing line was starting to develop at the end of the session, but that lap time was still a long way from the 1:58's I had run on the simulator.

Qualifying for the **GT Winter Series 6 Hours of Barcelona** was based on the total lap times set in the three qualifying sessions. Jay Mo, Cedric and Joel were nominated to qualify the #11 car. **SchnitzelAlm Racing** recognized I needed some dry running before the start of the race and went above and beyond by entering a second **AMG GT4**, #111, for the race. The #11 duly qualified quickest in the GT4 class. Kenneth had the #111 in second after the first qualifying session, but when I started the car for my session the engine felt rough and did not sound right. Further investigation indicated an injector had failed. I ran four laps, my first laps in the dry. I was by far the fastest 7-cylinder GT4 car in qualifying!

Starting from pole position in the #11 **SchnitzelAlm Racing AMG GT4**, Kenneth ran strongly throughout his stint. Jay Mo started the #111 car but was forced to retire after only two laps when the fuel injector issue returned. Near the end of the first hour, I suited up for my stint while Kenneth headed to the pit lane. During the first pit stop, we quickly discovered we could not fuel the car, not a good situation in a 6-hour race.



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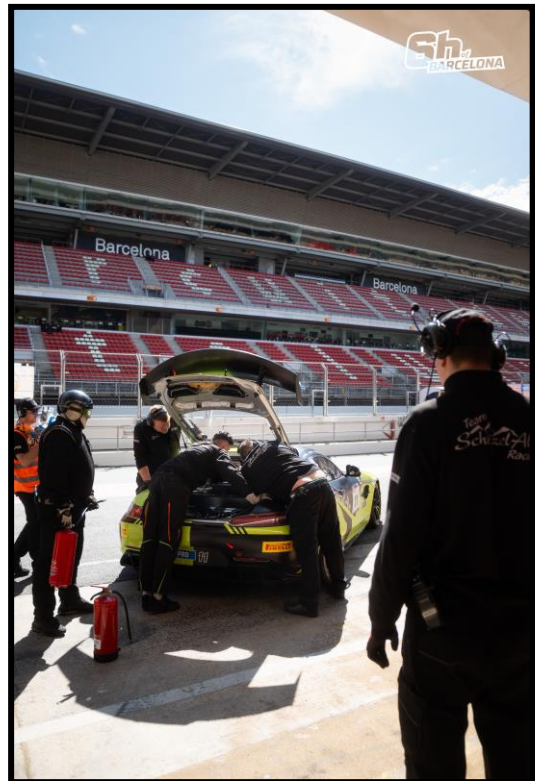


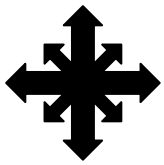
The fueling regulations for this race required each fuel stop to be a minimum of four minutes long. When Kenneth was released to the **SchnitzelAlm** pit box, the team attempted to resolve the issue while I got belted into the car. I took to the track for my first lap in the dry and then immediately pitted for fuel only to discover the issue was not resolved. Another four minutes elapsed at the fuel station before I could head to the pit box where the car was rolled back into the garage. Ultimately it was determined the safety valve on the fuel cell designed to prevent fuel from spilling in a rollover had flipped preventing any fuel from entering the cell. When the issue was resolved, I headed back to the fuel station for another four minutes and this time a full tank of fuel.

You could be forgiven if you stopped reading at this point not wanting to hear more of our misadventures. You could also be forgiven if you thought there was no way we could score a

decent result after spending a literal racing eternity in the pits. However, one of the particular rules of this race was that all teams were required to pit for a total of 35 minutes in the first five and a half hours of the race. Clearly, we massively overachieved on our 35 minutes of pit stop time, but knowing our competitors had to stop later in the race gave us a glimmer of hope.

After my second trip to the fuel station, I got to run my first complete dry laps of the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya. My first lap was in the 1:56's which confirms I am a lot better driving actual cars than I am at driving virtual race cars. During my stint I worked down to a 1:54.782. I struggled with the tires losing temperature after the fuel stops and a lot of pick-up from the tire marbles, so I ended up a bit farther off the times set by my teammates than I would have liked. On the other hand, I had a clean session without any significant drama once I sorted out the pace car procedures during a full course caution. At the end of my stint, the #11 **SchnitzelAlm Racing AMG GT4** was still last, except for the retired #111, and fourth in the GT4 class.





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I turned the car over to Cedric when I pitted for fuel and tires. Cedric was immediately quick, not surprising for a young driver that had just been crowned the champion of the Cayman Trophy class of the **GT Winter Series** a week prior. Not long into Cedric's stint, our recovery was aided when the third placed #4 PCR **AMG GT4** hit the wall hard in Turn 7 and was damaged beyond repair. It took a few laps, but Cedric soon made up the deficit to the #4 and had us back on the podium in GT4.

Joel, the previous season's **GT Winter Series** GT4 drivers' champion, took over the driving duties from Cedric. Joel had been out to the car for a while, but you could not tell from his pace. Joel was soon able to chase down and pass the GT4 class leading #60 Razoon Porsche. It was a moral victory and deserving of the rousing round of applause he received from the entire **SchnitzelAlm Racing** team.

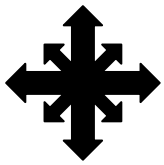
Still in third place in the GT4 class Joel handed off the driving duties to Jay Mo, our ace in the hole. Jay Mo had just finished second in the 2025 **GT Winter Series** GT4 championship after winning the GT3 championship the previous season. Jay Mo immediately ran the fastest lap of the race in the #11 **SchnitzelAlm Racing AMG GT4** while still on full tanks!

Heading into the last hour of the race, we were seven laps down to the second place #15 NM Racing **AMG GT4**. This is where things started to get interesting because the #15 had only managed to record 23 minutes of the 35 minutes of required pit stop time. With Jay Mo lapping well under two minutes per lap, when the #15 completed their required pit stop time, we found ourselves on the same lap with a 60 second deficit to second place.

The #11 **SchnitzelAlm Racing AMG GT4** was quicker than the #15 NM Racing **AMG GT4**, but even with Jay Mo in the car the gap was too large to make up before the checkered flag. We needed some divine intervention. That intervention came in the form of rain, the rain that had been forecast towards the end of the race. Initially a light mist, the rain soon came down with increasing intensity. Drawing on his many years of



endurance racing experience, **SchnitzelAlm Racing's** team owner Thomas Angerer made the call to pit for a set of **Pirelli** rain tires while the #15 stayed on track and struggled for grip in the slippery conditions. The team executed a brilliant pit stop.



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When the conditions finally forced the #15 to pit for rain tires with about 20 minutes left in the race, the gap had been reduced to 23 seconds. Often lapping five seconds a lap quicker in the tricky conditions, Jay Mo chopped away at the deficit. As the clock ticked down to five minutes remaining, the #11 **SchnitzelAlm Racing AMG GT4** caught and passed the #15 to secure second place on the podium!



“I love this endurance sh*t!” exclaimed Thomas as the checkered flag flew. It may be a bit cliché, but this result felt like a victory. Everyone on the **SchnitzelAlm Racing** team kept their head down and never stopped pushing to recover from our fueling issue at the first pit stop. It was not the easy weekend I was hoping for, but I do feel much more comfortable in the **AMG GT4**. Hopefully now we can put together a plan for the Nürburgring 24 Hour.

About THILENIUS GROUP

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