



## **The closest ever! CP Racing wins 2023 Hankook 12H KUWAIT by just half-a-second.**

- Sensational duel between CP Racing and Manamauri Energy by Ebimotors is decided by just 0.537s at the flag.
- Century Motorsport rounds out the podium on GT3 debut in the 24H SERIES.
- Red Camel-Jordans.nl takes second consecutive 992-class win in Kuwait.
- Toro Verde's 'developmental' Ginetta G56 Cup wins GTX; Vortex 2.0 overcomes fire for radiolemans.com Spirit of the Race award win.
- Simpson Motorsport victorious in GT4 and TCR, despite late-race off.

**KUWAIT (9 December, 2023) – In a sensational fight to the finish at the 2023 Hankook 12H KUWAIT, CP Racing secured its second successive overall win at the event by just half a second over Manamauri Energy by Ebimotors, the closest ever finish to an official 24H SERIES powered by Hankook race.**

After more than 11 hours of uninterrupted racing, the CP Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3 (#85, Charles Putman / Charles Espenlaub / Joe Foster / Shane Lewis) and the Manamauri Energy by Ebimotors Porsche 992 GT3 R (#93, Fabrizio Broggi / Sabino de Castro / Sergiu Nicolae / Papi Cosimo) went into the final 25 minutes split by just a few seconds, the Mercedes having fuel-saved to gain track position, the Porsche back on-track after its final pit stop. The pair repeatedly swapped the lead thereafter, and with 15 minutes left on the clock, Charles Espenlaub in the #85 Mercedes led Sergiu Nicolae in the #95 Porsche by just four-tenths of a second.

The gap rarely breached one second over the final 10 laps, and at the flag, after an extraordinary duel, Charles Espenlaub crossed the line just 0.537 seconds ahead of Sergiu Nicolae. This eclipses the 2014 Hankook 12H MUGELLO as the closest overall finish to an official 24H SERIES event.

“That is some of the best driving, by both of those guys, I’ve seen in a long time. That was just an amazing show!” CP Racing team owner Charles Putman explained to radiolemans.com’s Joe Bradley.

“The last time I was this excited, I was about to get married!” a visibly exhausted Charles Espenlaub continued. “Absolutely 110 per cent. [Ebimotors] did an awesome, *awesome* job. [Sergiu] raced me the whole way, very clean, and... it’s just amazing. I’m at a loss for words!”

CP Racing completed 363 laps en-route to victory, while Sergiu Nicolae set a new race lap record at the Hankook 12H KUWAIT – a 1m 43.065s – around Kuwait Motor Town’s shortened, 5.160km layout.

Just 45 seconds behind the top two, and despite two costly spins earlier in the day, Century Motorsport (#22, Carl Cavers / Lewis Plato / Jack Barlow) rounded out a successful 24H SERIES debut for its BMW M4 GT3 in 3<sup>rd</sup>. Aided by the fifth and final Code 60 of the event, which opened the door for the British team to make its final driver change under the purple flags, Century Motorsport looked set to make it a three-way fight for the lead, and, despite being 45 seconds adrift, was starting to close in on the leaders. A 10-second penalty for inadvertently using high beams in the refueling area however during its final splash-and-dash ultimately ended the British team’s shot at victory.

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### **Hankook 12H KUWAIT – Overall podium**

1. CP Racing (#85, Mercedes-AMG GT3) – 363 laps
2. Manamauri Energy by Ebimotors (#95, Porsche 992 GT3 Cup) – +0.537s
3. Century Motorsport (#22, BMW M4 GT3) – +45.508s

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Red Camel-Jordans.nl (#909, Ivo Breukers / Rik Breukers / Luc Breukers / Fabian Danz) completed a controlled run to take its second consecutive 992-class win at the Hankook 12H KUWAIT, but was still pushed hard to the chequered flag by Abu Dhabi’s RABDAN by FULGENZI Porsche 911 GT3 Cup (#971, Saif Alameri / Enrico Fernando Fulgenzi / Christopher Zöchling).

Series newcomer KKrämer Racing (#936, Tobias Müller / Michele Di Martino / ‘Selv’ / Karsten Krämer / Moritz Kranz) banked crucial points towards its 2023/2024 24H SERIES Middle East Trophy campaign by securing its first 992-class podium with CREVENTIC. In a sporting gesture, the German team also went the distance with its sister #937 entry

(Michele Di Martino / 'Selv' / Karsten Krämer), which spent much of the opening half of the event parked with a vibration and handling issues.

As a result, there were no official retirements from the 2023 Hankook 12H KUWAIT.

Toro Verde (#795, Lawrence Tomlinson / Freddie Tomlinson / Michael Simpson) came out on top of a fraught fight for GTX victory in the first competitive outing for Ginetta's developmental G56 Cup. This, despite the team having to replace an auxiliary belt for the power steering at two-thirds distance.

24H SERIES Middle East Trophy contender Razoon - More Than Racing (#714, Artur Chwist / Haytham Qarajouli / Daniel Drexel / Dominik Olbert) completed a stellar recovery drive to finish 2<sup>nd</sup> in GTX. The KTM X-BOW GTX lost time in the gravel – twice – early on in the day, and ultimately spent more than an hour in the garage with two, separate issues at both rear corners. Like 2022, the Austrian team managed to survive its technical woes to finish on the class podium.

What looked to be a race-ending fire for Vortex V8 (#701, Arnaud Gomez / Philippe Bonnel / Lionel Amrouche / Olivier Gomez) shortly before half-distance was overcome when the French team spent more than an hour affecting repairs to the carbon underbody. Save a moment in the gravel at turn four during the evening, the brand-new Vortex 2.0 completed its debut race to finish 3<sup>rd</sup> in-class. A performance that earned the French team radiolemans' 'Spirit of the Race' award.

The AGMC Racing team by Simpson Motorsport BMW M4 GT4 (#438, Fabian Duffieux / Andrey Solukovtsev / Vasily Vladykin) finished a strong run in Kuwait to take GT4 class honours, nine laps clear of Century Motorsport's BMW M4 GT4 (#429, Ravi Ramyeed / Charlie Robertson / David Holloway / Nathan Freke). The latter had looked on course to take the win early on only to be delayed by a tie rod issue.

Simpson Motorsport's sister TCR entry (#138, James Kaye / Ricky Coomber / Henry Neal / Jack Lemmer) sent pulses soaring in the closing stages when the Audi RS3 LMS DSG ended up stranded in the gravel at turn 16a with just 35 minutes of the race to go. The British team was able to recover and take overall TCE honours though, aided in-part by a tough race for the returning CWS Engineering (#278, Colin White / Neale Muston / Christian Broberg). Time in the gravel, a power steering failure and an alternator problem meant the Ginetta G55 was already several lap behind at half-distance, a puncture and a broken rear taillight after that – the latter of which the team was ordered to repair – costing the former SP3 and TCX Teams' champion even more time. CWS Engineering was however still able to secure TCX class victory after a gallant effort.

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## **Hankook 12H KUWAIT – Class Winners**

GT3 – CP Racing (#85, Mercedes-AMG GT3) – 363 laps

992 – Red Camel-Jordans.nl (#909, Porsche 992 GT3 Cup) – 353 laps

GTX – Toro Verde (#795, Ginetta G56 Cup) – 335 laps

GT4 – AGMC Racing by Simpson Motorsport (#438, BMW M4 GT4) – 331 laps

TCR – Simpson Motorsport (#138, Audi RS 3 LMS DSG) – 320 laps

TCX – CWS Engineering (#278, Ginetta G55) – 313 laps

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The 2023/2024 24H SERIES Middle East Trophy continues with the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Hankook 24H DUBAI – CREVENTIC's biggest event of the season – on 12-13-14 January at the Dubai Autodrome. The three-round, Middle East campaign draws to a close one week later with the Hankook 6H ABU DHABI at the Yas Marina Circuit on 20-21 January. Further details regarding the 2023 /2024 24H SERIES calendar and championship standings can be found at [24hseries.com](https://www.24hseries.com).

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