



Haas RT holds slim lead at half-distance at 2023 Hankook 12H MUGELLO

- *Antigua's Haas RT just 34 seconds ahead of Saintéloc Junior Team heading into overnight intervention.*
- *Shock retirement for GT polesitter Herberth Motorsport; erstwhile leader CP Racing and Kessel Racing Ferrari both hit the barriers.*
- *Willi Motorsport by Ebimotors on top in incredibly close 992 battle.*
- *RD Signs survives clash to lead GTX; GT4 leader AtlasBX loses wheel on last lap.*
- *Primus Racing currently heads all-BMW podium in TCE.*

MUGELLO (25 March, 2023) – Haas RT is the overall leader of the 2023 Hankook 12H MUGELLO after the opening six hours, and is set to take tomorrow's restart on the same lap as nearest rival Saintéloc Junior Team.

The HAAS RT Audi R8 LMS GT3 EVO II (#21, Mathieu Detry / Stéphane Perrin / Frédéric Vervisch), which starts only its third-ever race this weekend, has thus far completed 172 laps of the 5.245km Autodromo Internazionale del Mugello, and crossed the finish line just 34.991 seconds ahead of the Saintéloc Junior Team Audi R8 LMS GT3 EVO II (#26, Erwan Bastard / Paul Evrard). This, despite Haas RT, the first team to ever represent Antigua on the international motorsport stage, at one point dropping out of the overall top 20 thanks to a mistimed pit stop, an anticipated Code 60 having failed to materialize.

Saintéloc Junior Team, one of seven overall leaders thus far this afternoon, is now running 2nd after pitting for fuel and tyres just 10 minutes before the end of 'part one.' Like Haas RT, the French team was forced to work its way back through the field after a collision early on with the NKPP by HRT Performance Porsche 911 GT3 Cup (#928, Gijs Bessem / Harry Hilders), the impact of which sent the latter into the gravel trap.

Land Motorsport monopolizes the second row of tomorrow's grid on its first start in the 24H SERIES powered by Hankook since 2016. The #34 Audi (#34, Dr. Johannes Kirchhoff / Ingo Vogler / Tim Vogler) will start ahead of the sister #55 R8 LMS GT3 EVO II (Stefan Wieninger / Tim Müller / Christopher Mies).

In a grandstand finish, the #34 Audi lost a second lap to the overall leader in the final moments of 'part one,' in spite of the former's robust efforts. Impressive early pace from Christopher Mies meanwhile meant the #55 Audi, from 6th on the grid, was already into the overall lead by lap eight, and thus far has led 40 laps overall, more so than any other team bar Haas RT. A 60-second penalty for overtaking another car under Code 60 though proved costly.

The Hofor-Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3 (#11, Michael Kroll / Chantal Prinz / Alexander Prinz / Carsten Tilke) is the highest-placed non-Audi in 5th, a superb recovery following a heavy collision for team owner Michael Kroll during Friday's Free Practice. In the true spirit of competition, Hofor-Racing was gifted spare parts and services from Land Motorsport, the AKKODIS ASP Team, and CP Racing to get the #11 Mercedes race-ready again.

Having started on the front row, the Heart of Racing by SPS Mercedes-AMG GT3 (#27, Ian James / Gray Newell / Roman De Angelis) brought out the event's first Code 60 caution period – of six so far – shortly after the opening hour with a moment in the Palagio gravel trap. The American team has since recovered to 6th overall.

Overall GT polesitter Herberth Motorsport (#91, Daniel Allemann / Ralf Bohn / Alfred Renauer / Robert Renauer) was the first of the event's high-profile retirements, the Porsche 911 GT3 R suffering terminal gearbox failure after just 23 laps. Three hours later, the CP Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3 (#85, Charles Putman / Charles Espenlaub / Shane Lewis), which led 76 of the completed 172 laps and was already two laps clear of the field, suffered a heavy impact against the tyre barriers, the rear-end snap mirroring a similar incident the reigning GT Continents Trophy winner suffered during qualifying.

Charles Putman fortunately emerged unscathed, and while the Mercedes was unable to complete 'part one' of the event, the team owner was confident repairs could be completed overnight in time for tomorrow's restart.

Kessel Racing (#8, 'L.M.D.V.' / Alessandro Cutrera / Marco Talarico / Marco Frezza / David Fumanelli), which has entered this weekend's sole Ferrari 488 GT3, was another early podium contender to hit trouble, the Ferrari sluicing into the barriers at Correntaio just over three hours in whilst running 3rd overall. Quick repairs, including a new front end

and front fenders from the Swiss team's second (blue) 488 GT3 means the Swiss team is still running in 21st. The similarly numbered AKKODIS ASP Team Mercedes-AMG GT3 meanwhile (#88, Mauro Ricci / Jean-Luc Beaubelique / Jérôme Policand / Benjamin Ricci), which was also in contention for the podium early on, has slipped back to 12th after a team-to-car radio gremlin meant Mauro Ricci had to pit twice on successive laps: once for tyres, another for fuel. Unfortunately, the French driver then picked up a 36-second penalty for speeding in the pitlane.

992-class leader – the Willi Motorsport by Ebimotors Porsche 911 GT3 Cup (#955, Fabrizio Broggi / Sergiu Nicolae / Sabino de Castro) – is currently an impressive 7th overall, and even ran for much of the fifth hour in 3rd place. The progress is particularly fitting for Fabrizio Broggi, who got married in Tuscany this weekend ahead of the race!

Behind the class leading Willi Motorsport by Ebimotors Porsche, long-time 992 leader Neuhofer Rennsport (#985, Felix Neuhofer / Markus Neuhofer / Michael Birkner / Martin Ragginger) is now 2nd in-class and has slipped one lap down after delays in the refueling area during the penultimate Code 60. The pair continue to be chased by Enrico Fulgenzi Racing (#923, Shintaro Akatsu / Enrico Fernando Fulgenzi / Kikko Galbiati), which crossed the line just 46 seconds behind Neuhofer. Demonstrating the pace of the 992-generation Cup car, the top four in 992 are currently running 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th overall.

Reigning 992 Teams' champion Red Ant Racing (#903, Ayrton Redant / Yannick Redant / Kobe de Breucker) was running comfortably in the top three in-class before losing time to a left rear puncture two hours in. The Belgian team is now 4th in-class, albeit just 29 seconds behind Enrico Fulgenzi Racing. Fittingly, the #903 crossed the finishing line an amazingly close 0.090s ahead of the Red Camel-Jordans.nl Porsche 911 GT3 Cup (#909, Ivo Breukers / Rik Breukers / Luc Breukers / Fabian Danz), the Belgian team's main rival for the 992 championship last year.

Italy's Ebimotors Porsche 911 GT3 Cup (#973, Paolo Venerosi / Paolo Gnemmi / Gianluigi Piccioli / Gianluca Giorgi) is the highest placed 992-AM runner so far. Like the 992 class, 992-AM remains incredibly close: RPM Racing (#907, Tracy Krohn / Niclas Jönsson / Philip Hamprecht) has hauled itself back into podium contention after an early collision with RD Signs - Siauliai racing team at Scarperia, and was less than a second behind Ebimotors at the line.

Despite its collision with the RPM Racing Porsche, and a left rear puncture, the RD Signs - Siauliai racing team Lamborghini Huracán Super Trofeo (#720, Audrius Butkevicius / Nicola Michelin / Paulius Paskevicius) is on top of the GTX field heading into the overnight intervention, ahead of early leader Vortex V8 (#701, Lionel Amrouche / Philippe

Bonnel / Philippe Gruau) and the French team's sister #702 1.0 lightweight sports car (Laurent Misbach / Lucas Sugliano / Pierre Fontaine). After losing time earlier in the race with a spin at San Donato, 9und11 Racing (#719, Georg Goder / Ralf Oehme / Martin Schlüter / Leonard Oehme) is now 4th in GTX after a smoking left rear wheel brought the Porsche 911 GT3 Cup MR back onto pit road in the closing 20 minutes.

Sadly, on-track contact early on, the impact of which cracked an oil pipe, means the PB Racing Lotus Exige V6 Cup R (#726, Stefano d'Aste / Vito Utzleri / Luca Littardi / Pietro Vergnano / Costantino Peroni) has completed just 24 laps at Mugello.

South Korea's Atlas BX Motorsports (#403, Steven Cho / Roelof Bruins / Jongkyum Kim) has led the majority of GT4 after problems befell both of its main rivals. The Simpson Motorsport BMW M4 GT4 (#438, David Holloway / Carl Cavers / Vasily Vladykin) was well within striking range before coming to a halt on pit exit just over an hour before the overnight intervention. The British team has thus slipped behind the Buggyra Racing Mercedes-AMG GT4 (#416, Aliyyah Koloc / David Vrsecky / Adam Lacko), which lost time early this morning to a precautionary brake change.

Atlas BX Motorsports though has also suffered problems. Alongside damage to the passenger-side door, the left rear wheel on the Mercedes-AMG GT4 detached itself completely at San Donato on the final lap.

TCX class leader, and series debutant, Primus Racing (#251, Peter Larsen / Johan Rosen / Hampus Hedin) currently leads TCE overall after a clean run with its BMW M2 CS Racing. Hofer-Racing by Bonk Motorsport holds an impressive 2nd (#332, Volker Piepmeyer / Martin Kroll / Hermann Bock / Michael Bonk) and 3rd (#331, Martin Kroll / Felix Partl / Michael Bonk / Max Partl) overall in TCE with its TC-entered BMW M2 CS Racing, suggesting a podium lockout for the German brand tomorrow.

Primus Racing's nearest category rival – the SK Racing Ligier JS2 R (#215, Franck Eburderie / Franco Lemma / Jérôme Dacosta / Alain Ferté) – led the division early on from pole position, but has now slipped back to 5th overall after recurrent electrical and alternator issues. The AIKOA Racing Audi RS3 LMS DSG (#147, Sandro Pelatti / Nicola Baldan / Francesco Cardone / Filippo Barberi / Franco Girolami) also led TCE in the early going, but the Italian team, having lost more than an hour in the pits with ABS and engine problems – plus multiple time limit infringement time penalties – is now 4th and looking to recover to the overall TCE podium.

The 2023 Hankook 12H MUGELLO will resume tomorrow – Sunday 26 March – at 09.00 hrs local time, with the remaining six hours to be run uninterrupted until 15.00 hrs. The

action will be live with commentary from radiolemans.com on the official 24H SERIES YouTube channel. Regular updates will also be published on Twitter (@24HSeries), Facebook (24H Series) and Instagram (24H Series). Further information can be found at www.24hseries.com.

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