BOEM by Kessel Racing Ferrari snatches pole for 10th Hankook 12H MUGELLO in closing moments from Team GP Elite

- BOEM by Kessel Racing becomes tenth different overall polesitter for Hankook 12H MUGELLO at 10th edition.
- Team GP Elite pipped to pole despite commanding Q1 performance.
- Event record holder Herberth Motorsport takes GT3-Am pole. Starts 4th.
- Former class champion Red Ant Racing on 992 pole; Centri Porsche Ticino looking to extend undefeated streak from 992-Am top spot.
- WRC GOAT Sébastien Loeb, FIA WEC champ Romain Dumas to start 4th in 992.

MUGELLO (22 March, 2024) – BOEM by Kessel Racing has taken outright pole position for the 10th edition of the Hankook 12H MUGELLO, fittingly becoming the tenth different team to do so at the event.

Since the inaugural Hankook 12H MUGELLO in 2014, no team has taken a repeat outright pole position for the 24H SERIES powered by Hankook's traditional European season opener. The BOEM by Kessel Racing Ferrari 296 GT3 (#8, L. M.D.V / Alessandro Cutrera / Marco Talarico / Marco Frezza / David Fumanelli) thus becomes the latest team in the chain after a sensational, grandstand fight for pole with the Team GP Elite Porsche 992 GT3 R (#32, Lucas Groeneveld / Jesse van Kuijk / Daan van Kuijk / Max van Splunteren).

The Dutch team looked to have provisional pole in the bag after a decisive start to Q1: Max Van Splunteren's 1m 47.937s was a full 1.6 seconds quicker than the rest of the GT3 field. Though this advantage slipped to 'just' nine-tenths of a second during Q2, GP Elite was still on course to take the top spot heading into Q3.

All that changed however when David Fumanelli, still the overall race lap record holder at the Hankook 12H MUGELLO, posted a 1m 47.912s for BOEM by Kessel Racing early on in Q3. Having left his final run until very late in the session – as Team GP-Elite did

throughout qualifying – Daan van Kuijk ultimately could not match his Italian rival's pace, and the #32 Porsche will thus start 2nd overall, just 0.88s off outright pole.

This marks the best start for a Ferrari at the Hankook 12H MUGELLO since two-time event winner Scuderia Praha took outright pole in 2017.

"It's a great feeling!" David Fumanelli explained post-session to radiolemans.com's Diana Binks. "To be honest I didn't have a reference in the car, so when I did the first lap I didn't expect to see a 47! I was expecting us to be top three overall, so to be P1 [on the grid] is amazing!

"My thanks to my team and my teammates, they did an amazing job. I didn't have high expectations because we've struggled with the car over the last two days. The conditions have changed massively, and the rain came last night, so the track was very different today. The car, to be honest, was not easy to drive at all. But we gave it everything – [L.M.D.V.], Marco and myself – and with our Pro/Am line-up, to get overall pole position is great!"

A late charge from Casper Stevenson saw the Juta Racing Audi R8 LMS GT3 EVO II (#71, Lukas Sundahl / Casper Stevenson / John Corbett / Arunas Geciauskas) vault from 5th on the grid to 3rd during Q3. The Lithuanian team will thus start ahead of the Porsche 992 GT3 Rs of three-time overall event winner Herberth Motorsport (#91, Ralf Bohn / Scott Noble / Jason Hart) and Car Collection Motorsport (#12, 'Hash' / Alex Fontana / Ivan Jacoma / Yannick Mettler). The former also secured GT3-Am class pole.

Hankook 12H MUGELLO – Overall top 3 in Qualifying

1. BOEM by Kessel Racing (#8, Ferrari 296 GT3) – 1m 49.416s*
2. Team GP Elite (#32, Porsche 992 GT3 R) – 1m 49.504s
3. Juta Racing (#71, Audi R8 LMS GT3 EVO II) – 1m 50.447s

*Average of best laptimes across three, 15-minute qualifying sessions.

Despite finishing Q2 a strong 2nd overall, the Heart of Racing by SPS Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo (#27, Gray Newell / Ian James / Roman de Angelis), which took its maiden outright podium in the 24H SERIES last year in Mugello, slipped back to 6th on the grid during Q3. Similarly, the Hofor Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3 (#11, Michael Kroll / Chantal Prinz / Alexander Prinz / Maximilian Partl / Kenneth Heyer), which finished Q1 with the

second fastest time, will start one spot further back in 7th. This is the first race of the Swiss team's first full European program with CREVENTIC in more than four years.

A rapid 1m 48.405s lap by Felice Jelmini during Q3 – the second fastest time of the session – means Kessel Racing's sister Ferrari 488 GT3 (#5, Alexandre Bochez / Mikaël Bochez / Murat Cuhadaroglu / Felice Jelmini) moved up to 8th spot on the grid in the closing stages of qualifying, albeit just a tenth ahead of the returning Poulsen Motorsport BMW M4 GT3 (#14, Roland Poulsen / Kristian Poulsen / Christoffer Nygaard).

Reigning GT3-AM Teams' champion CP Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3 EVO (#85, Charles Putman / Charles Espenlaub / Joe Foster / Shane Lewis) rounds out the overall top 10 on the grid after a solid session, and starts ahead of the Ferrari 488 GT3 of series debutant Pellin Racing (#29, Lisa Clark / Kyle Marcelli / Jeff Westphal). Tellingly, the three Ferraris were the only GT3 cars to dip below the 1m 49s mark in Q3.

Having survived a spin at turn 7 during Q2, Italy's MP Racing (#58, Thomas Gostner / David Gostner / Manuela Gostner / Corinna Gostner) will start its home endurance event with the Mercedes-AMG GT3 EVO from 15th on the overall grid.

Hankook 12H MUGELLO – Overall top 3 in qualifying (992)

1. Red Ant Racing (#903, Porsche 992 GT3 Cup – 1m 53.982s
2. Red Camel-Jordans.nl (#909, Porsche 992 GT3 Cup) – 1m 54.440s
3. Centri Porsche Ticino (#912, Porsche 992 GT3 Cup) – 1m 54.812s

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As it did last year, 2022 992 Teams' 'Europe' champion Red Ant Racing (#903, Ayrton Redant / Yannick Redant / Kobe de Breucker) will start the Hankook 12H MUGELLO from class pole position. Series stalwart Red Camel-Jordans.nl (#909, Ivo Breukers / Luc Breukers / Fabian Danz) lines up 2nd in-class with its brand-new – and uncharacteristically silver-liveried – Porsche 992 GT3 Cup.

Looking to secure its fourth consecutive class win at the Hankook 12H MUGELLO, Centri Porsche Ticino (#912, Valerio Presezzi / Max Busnelli / Ivan Jacoma / Francesco Fenici) will start this year's event 3rd in 992 and from 992-Am class pole position.

On their 24H SERIES debuts, nine-time World Rally Champion Sébastien Loeb – who ran during Q3 – and 2016 FIA World Endurance Champion Romain Dumas will start 4th aboard the Orchid Racing Team Porsche 992 GT3 Cup (#963, Sébastien Loeb /

Romain Dumas / Laurent Misbach / Loic Villiger / Alexandre Mottet), just ahead of Red Ant Racing's second entry (#904, Peter Guelinckx / Brent Verheyen / Michiel Haverans) which rounds out the overall '992' top five.

Further back in 992, last year's Overall GT Teams' champion – now racing as Hankook Competition (#911, Dr. Ma / Recardo Bruins / Steven Cho / Jongkyum Kim) starts its first endurance racing program with the Porsche 992 GT3 Cup from 12th in-class, two spots ahead of reigning 992-Am Teams' champion RPM Racing (#907, Tracy Krohn / Niclas Jönsson / Philip Hamprecht).

In an extraordinarily close fight for GTX pole position, 9und11 Racing (#719, Georg Goder / Ralf Oehme / Tim Scheebrarth / Martin Schlüter) sealed the top spot with its Porsche 991.2 GT3 Cup MR by just over half a second from last year's GTX class winner Vortex V8 (#701, Lionel Amrouche / Philippe Bonnel / Gilles Courtois / Lucas Sugliano). The French independent is running just one of its established 1.0 sports cars this weekend. So close was the scrap, the pair were split by just 0.078s after Q2.

Last year's GT4 Teams' runner-up Buggyra ZM Racing (#416, Aliyyah Koloc / David Vršecký / Adam Lacko) got its second European season with CREVENTIC off to a good start with pole position in GT4, its second in succession at the Hankook 12H MUGELLO. The Mercedes-AMG GT4 posted an average best just over half a second quicker than the rest of the class, with David Vršecký the only GT4 driver to dip below the 2m barrier with a 1m 59.353s during Q1.

The other GT4 front row slot had looked set to go to the BMW M4 GT4 of 2018 Overall TCE Teams' champion Hofor Racing by Bonk Motorsport (#431, Martin Kroll / Michael Bonk / Rainer Partl), only for the Lionspeed GP Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 RS Clubsport (#424, José Garcia / Daniel Miller / Patrick Kolb / Dennis Bohn) to move ahead during the closing moments of Q3, courtesy of a succession of fast laps by Patrick Kolb. An impressive start for Lionspeed GP's first endurance racing program as a standalone entity

Spain's PCR Sport meanwhile (#418, Vicente Dasi / Josep Parera / Harriet Arruabarrena) bounced back from a heavy accident during private testing, and rounds out this weekend's grid with its back-up, day-glow yellow-liveried Mercedes-AMG GT4.

The grid for the 10th edition of the Hankook 12H MUGELLO is set to form at 11.40 hrs local time tomorrow, Saturday 23 March, with the green flag scheduled to drop at 12.30 hrs that afternoon. After the first 6.5 hours have been completed, and following the event's

traditional overnight intervention, the 2024 Hankook 12H MUGELLO will run to completion between 09.00 hrs and 14.30 hrs on Sunday 24 March.

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

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