



# How to win in 992

**Reigning 992 Teams' 'Europe' champion Red Ant Racing is back to defend its title in 2023. But what did it take to earn the crown in 2022, and what does the Belgian team bring to the table this year? CREVENTIC finds out with Ayrton and Yannick Redant.**

Images - Nico Mombaerts / Petr Frýba

Truth be told, the start to Red Ant Racing's title defence could have gone better in Mugello. Yes, the reigning 992 Teams' champion qualified on class pole position, and, during the opening stages at least, kept its lead #903 Porsche 992 GT3 Cup well in the hunt for 992 victory. Unfortunately, the first cracks started to appear, quite literally in fact, when the first of an incredible six punctures struck less than two hours into the 2023 Hankook 12H MUGELLO, dropping the #903 to 5th in-class and a lap behind the 992 leader before the event had even hit quarter-distance.

Incredibly, the Belgian team's final tyre woe struck with only five laps remaining and while the #903 was running 2nd in-class. By bittersweet happenstance, 992-Am leader Centri Porsche Ticino suffered a puncture of its own during the closing 10 minutes, and though this fortunately did not cost the Swiss team a well-deserved class win, it did

drop the #912 Porsche off the overall 992 rostrum behind the recovering Red Ant Racing and Red Camel-Jordans.nl, the latter of which leapfrogged both of them for the runners-up spot.

Yes, a class podium on its series return, especially after a difficult start, was hardly a disastrous result for the reigning 992 Teams' champion. With a title-winning campaign already under its belt however, a beleaguered podium finish, arguably, is no longer good enough for Red Ant Racing. Especially if the Belgian team wishes to end 2023 much as it did in 2022. On top.

"We're back for the title!" a determined Ayrton Redant explains to CREVENTIC. "Basically we're here to defend everything we achieved last year. It won't be easy, but we're going to try our absolute best."

Ironically, 3rd in 992 matches the result Red Ant Racing took at last year's Hankook 12H

MUGELLO after an accomplished performance. While the series newcomer could do nothing about eventual 992-class winner Red Camel-Jordans.nl or HRT Performance at the 2022 event, Red Ant Racing nevertheless chased the category frontrunners home to secure the final 992 podium spot after a clean run. Doubly impressive, the team's #903 Porsche led the sister #904 992 GT3 Cup to a 1-3 finish in the 992-Am class, the latter finishing less than a minute behind 2nd-placed Orchid Racing.

It was a performance that also put to bed memories of a tough race earlier that year in Dubai, in which the #903 was denied an expected 991-class win, on the team's 24H SERIES debut no less, by gearbox failure at half-distance. "Thanks for reminding us!" a smiling Ayrton interjects.

Context is key, however: in 2022, a well-deserved maiden podium that left Red Ant

Racing 3rd in the standings was cause for much celebration; in 2023, a podium finish that's already dropped Red Ant Racing to 3rd in the standings – eight points behind runaway Mugello winner Willi Motorsport by Ebimotors and four points behind closest 2022 rival, Red Camel-Jordans.nl – has put the reigning 992 Teams' 'Europe' champion on the backfoot.

"[Mugello] was not an easy race, and of course, we assume that at Spa-Francorchamps, we will be able to race without any problems," Yannick explained, post-race. "The Porsche 911 GT3 Cup ran like a Swiss watch, but it turned out once again that the level of competition is very high."

Indeed, alongside the increased weight of expectation on its shoulders, few could deny that a bolstered 992 field means the category's reigning champion will need to raise its game this season. Former 991 Teams' champion Willi Motorsport by Ebimotors for example began its 992 transition with a strong 2nd-in-class in Kuwait, and, but for brake issues and a broken steering arm, could comfortably have replicated that result in Dubai. Series staple

Red Camel-Jordans.nl will almost certainly be in the mix again this season, as will HRT Performance, itself bested by just a single point to the 992 Teams' 'Continents' crown in 2022 by Red Camel. All this, to say nothing of the returning RABDAN Motorsport, Speed Lover and PK Carsport – podium finishers one and all – that have also confirmed 992 entries for Spa.

It's a potentially colossal challenge that lies ahead, albeit one that both Redant brothers are relishing.

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Yannick – "Oh, everyone is a challenge!"

Ayrton – "Oh yeah. In fact, when we were in Dubai [in 2022], our biggest challenger was Willi Motorsport, with the same driver line-up. So we already know how fast those guys are. And we know, from last year, Red Camel [Jordans.nl] is

super quick, so it's going to be tough."

Yannick – "But this is a good thing. It's great to have such a lot of good competition. It makes us raise our game too."

Red Ant reshuffling its driver line-up ahead of Mugello is demonstrative of that. As in 2022, brothers – and reigning 992 Drivers' 'Europe' champions – Yannick and Ayrton will team together in the #903 Porsche in 2023, but will this season be joined by Belgian young gun Kobe de Breucker. Red Ant team owner Bert meanwhile, who also secured title honours with his sons in 2022, has opted to move aside from the Red Ant's 'young' car into the sister, Am-entered #904 Porsche this season.

Yannick – "This year, [Bert] will not race with us normally. We have a new driver, Kobe [de Breucker], who was driving our other car last season." – After several seasons in the Belcar Endurance Championship with Red Ant Racing, de Breucker made his GT division debut in the 24H SERIES at the 2022 Hankook 24H BARCELONA.

Ayrton – "I think we have a very strong driver line-up this year, with three young →

guys. I know we will all use our brains in the traffic and won't overuse the car. I hope so, anyway!"

**Yannick** – "Yeah, in terms of what we learnt last year, you only get points and podiums at the end, not the beginning. It's always a long race, so you don't want to push too hard in the beginning and you want to make sure you protect the car."

**Ayrton** – "Last year, everything was quite new for us. We had experience with the car, but we didn't know the tracks, we didn't know the tyres... just, everything was different. Now we can use that experience to help us succeed again."

On top of the restructured driver line-up is Red Ant's resolve to field two Porsche 992 GT3 Cups again this season. While on the surface, it's a decision that 'simply' creates more work for the mechanics and engineers, the reigning champions argue this could them the edge they need against stiffer competition...

**Ayrton** – "Oh, it's a huge advantage! You can start Free Practice with two completely different setups, and from that, you can try to maximize everything. So that's really helpful. And, of course, it's very good thing now that our dad is on the second car: he knows

the #904 on that occasion too, as a steering column failure on the Saturday – "driving straight forward with the wheel at 90-degrees is not the right way to do it!" Kurt Henson explained at the time – was followed by fuel pick-up problems on the Sunday, damning the #904 to a weekend at the back. By contrast, the #903 was in amongst the class frontrunners from the get-go, and even qualified fastest of the 992 runners on home turf, a run the Redant father-sons trio translated to 2nd in-class and an impressive 8th overall at the flag.

Turns out that wasn't the end of the story either. After it was found that provisional winner HRT Performance – placed three places higher in 5th overall – had inadvertently exceeded the maximum driver time for SEMI-PRO driver Antti Buri, the German team was served a post-race three-lap penalty, dropping the #929 Porsche to 10th. Just like that, beneficiary Red Ant Racing was a 24H SERIES class winner, and the new leader in the 992 Teams' championship standings. At home, and on only its third start in the series.

**Ayrton** – "That's something we really didn't expect at all! When we saw the pace that HRT and Red Camel had at Spa – they were maybe a

making the right call with Code 60s, because you never know in advance how long they will be out. Sometimes they can be over in two minutes, sometimes it's a barrier repair. And of course, with the limited fuel pumps [available], sometimes they're all full and you have no choice but to go back on-track."

Third time may have been the charm at Spa, but Lady Luck soon switched her allegiance at Hockenheim. Having made the swap from '992-AM' to '992,' the #903 started the 14-15 May weekend by netting the team's third category pole position in a row and a spot, remarkably, on the second row. Things went downhill quickly from there, however: after struggling to keep pace

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with eventual winner Red Camel-Jordans.nl during the opening six hours, a likely 2-3 in 992 was lost when the #903 suffered driveshaft failure and retired with just three of the 12 hours remaining.

teams, and on the Sunday, we knew there was a really small chance that we could survive the race. That was a really tough one."

**Ayrton** – "But we were happy that our sister car and its drivers drove a very good race, because that car was struggling quite a bit with power. We were pleased that the drivers on that car" – Philippe Wils, four-time Paris-Roubaix winner and 2005 World Road Cycling Champion Tom Boonen and Formula E test and reserve driver Sam Dejonghe – "at least had a good weekend."

Still, if the Hankook 12H HOCKENHEIMRING was the Redant family's most difficult weekend of 2022, the following round at Portimão was easily their day of days. In the stifling Algarvean heat, neither the #903 nor the #904 put a foot wrong and completed a "faultless" drive to finish 1st and 2nd in 992, and an excellent 4th and 5th overall on the road. On top of that, a retirement for Red Camel – heat from the punctured exhaust ended up doing irreparable damage to the underfloor and suspension – meant the European title fight had closed right back up again.

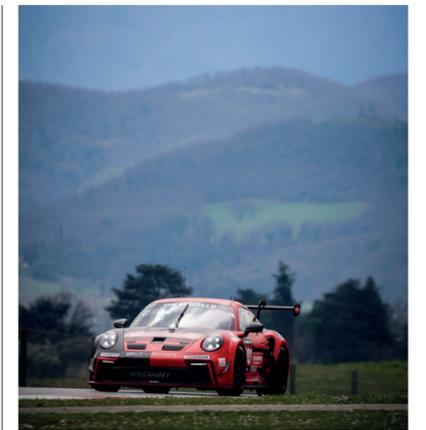
Moreover, much like Spa three months

**Yannick** – "Actually, because of that, it's more beautiful that we had an achievement like that. Nobody came in early because they couldn't complete their stint, or anything like that. Everything went as planned."

A dramatic Hankook 24H PORTIMAO meant Red Ant Racing trailed Red Camel-Jordans.nl by just a single point heading into CREVENTIC's 2022 European season finale in Barcelona. In suitably show-stealing fashion, Red Camel and Red Ant lined up 1st and 2nd in-class – split by a wafer-thin eight-hundredths of a second apart – and line-ahead on rows six and seven respectively.

Hopes that the #904 could run interference on its sister car's behalf were quickly dashed however when Kobe de Breucker was the innocent victim of a start-line crash between GTX title contenders RD Signs – Sialiai racing team and Leipert Motorsport. More than three hours, collectively, was spent repairing the Porsche's radiator and mangled front-end, meaning the #904 was in no position to help when de Breucker finally returned to the track, 83 laps down.

A disastrous start that ultimately proved immaterial to the title chase though. Just 90



the five races is also due to the fact that our two cars again experienced no technical problem in Barcelona, thanks to the perfect and meticulous preparation of our technical crew in the workshop."

Alongside the 992 Teams' 'Europe' title, the result also secured 992 Drivers' 'Europe' honours for the Redant family, as well as GT Junior Drivers' honours for then 23-year-old Yannick. It was a maiden season in the 24H SERIES that had featured soaring highs, bitter lows and many, many



12H MUGELLO 2022

10th overall and 1st in-class (992-AM)



12H SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS 2022

8th overall and 1st in-class (992-AM)



12H HOCKENHEIMRING 2022

17th overall (DNF) and 5th in-class (992)



24H PORTIMAO 2022

3rd overall and 1st in-class (992)



24H BARCELONA 2022

8th overall and 1st in-class (992)



24H SERIES powered by Hankook 2022

992 Teams' 'European' champion

what we like, and we know what he likes, so we know we can trust each other's feedback."

**Yannick** – "Definitely, when you're fighting for a title, the more cars you can have, the better!"

Though trouble found both of its cars in Mugello – an early radiator leak meant the #904 spent most of the 12 hours propping up the 992 class – Red Ant's performance this time last year should at least give the team confidence heading into the 2023 Hankook 12H SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS. Granted, poor luck blighted

second faster than us – we didn't expect to win. By the end of the race, that gap had closed, but no, we didn't think it was possible. So we were obviously very happy afterwards!"

**Yannick** – "That weekend, we learnt that you need to have a lot of luck also. I remember, last year at Spa, at those last four pit stops, we always went for fuel, tyres, a driver change... and then, the lap [afterwards], the race went Code 60! So, yeah, you really need luck with the Code 60s and it took us a while to learn that."

**Ayrton** – "We had some issues early on

Just like that, the European championship lead was gone, swinging seven points in favour of Red Camel.

Oddly though, many in the Red Ant garage were wondering why the driveshaft failure had taken so long...

**Yannick** – "I remember. I was driving at the time! But the toughest thing about that was we already knew, in the first stint, that we had a problem. Then it was just a case of waiting for the driveshaft to break! During the night, we didn't say anything to the other

earlier, further intrigue emerged once the chequered flag had dropped. Provisional 3rd-placed WTM Racing was later excluded from the results after the Ferrari's exhaust was found not to meet the 24H SERIES' technical regulations, a decision that, incredibly, elevated Bert, Yannick and Ayrton Redant, and Dejonghe – who'd been parachuted into the #903 after his Hockenheim performance – onto the overall podium. It was a weekend Bert Redant later termed "the team's greatest achievement in [its] young history."

**Yannick** – "I agree! Although we didn't have a lot of competitors in the class, I think we would have had the same result because every pit stop, every fuel, every driver change, every stint, was perfect. We had a great strategy and nobody made any mistakes. For me, [Portimão] was a perfect weekend."

**Ayrton** – "For me, it was the most horrible race we ever did!" [Laughs] "It was craazy hot! In Barcelona, we had a cooling system in the car. So, even though the fan broke(!), it stayed hot in the car but our bodies were okay. In Portimão, it was just the craziest thing I've ever done!"

minutes into the race, Red Camel's Rik Breukers suffered a terrifying, 250kph shunt into the tyre barriers at turn one when the Porsche's brakes failed. The 2019 Hankook 24H DUBAI winner, mercifully, was unhurt, but an agonising five hours ticked by before the #909 was back out on-track. Any hopes of catching the #903, now in the class lead and barring any form of calamity, was gone.

Thus, the following afternoon, and after another flawless run, it was Bert Redant, fittingly, that drove the #903 across the line – in heart-warming formation with de Breucker in the sister #904 – to secure the first international championship for his team.

Speaking at the time, a euphoric Bert said: "I am incredibly proud of my team... [We had] to finish a flawless race because the opposition was very strong all season long. The car had to be perfect, the drivers flawless and fast, and the team had to function like a well-oiled machine, with a very strong strategy the icing on the cake. Luckily we didn't miss a beat all weekend long, which resulted in a victory and a title..."

"The fact that we were able to win three of

months of meticulous work. But then, that is how you win in 992.

**Ayrton** – "Can we do it again this year? Sure. But it's going to depend on a lot of things."

**Yannick** – "In a 12-hour, or a 24-hour [race], anything is possible."

**Ayrton** – "And it's a long season. I think Willi Motorsport [by Ebimotors] and Red Camel will be the biggest competitors for us, and it depends a little on what [HRT] do this season..."

**Yannick** – "But we've got a good team. We can definitely win the title again." ■

Who are we? Redant family

