

# 10<sup>+1</sup> talking points ahead of the 12H SPA.

Heading into the second European round of this year's 24H SERIES powered by Hankook, many are wondering who will emulate Car Collection Motorsport, the Eastalent Racing Team, and Team GP Elite as CREVENTIC's fourth outright winner of 2024. Across what is sure to be a frenetic 12-hour endurance event though, there are several other notable talking points. Such as...

## Can Audi or Ferrari take a record-breaking third win...?



Going into the sixth edition of the Hankook 12H SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS, Ferrari and Audi are tied with two overall event wins apiece, courtesy of Bohemia Energy racing by Scuderia Praha (2018 and 2019), and Phoenix Racing (2022) and the Saintéloc Junior Team (2023) respectively. It's entirely possible one or the other could leave Belgium as the event's new record holder. That Audi has the last two outright event wins to its name, plus victory at the 2024 Hankook 24H DUBAI courtesy of Eastalent Racing Team, might suggest Ingolstadt has the edge. There's also strength in numbers to consider: six examples of the Audi R8, from four different teams, are on Spa's provisional entry list, compared with just two Ferrari 296 GT3s. And bear in-mind, those teams include Saintéloc, last year's event polesitter Haas RT, 2009 24H DUBAI winner Land-Motorsport (a GT3-Am class podium finisher in 2023), and Lithuania's Juta Racing, Audi's highest-placed entrant last time out in Mugello. That Audi also holds the joint-record for most overall podium finishes – four, together with Mercedes – is pretty damning for Ferrari's chances as well.

Don't be too quick to count out the prancing horse just yet though.

The Ferrari 296 is the newest GT3 on the grid, took a dominant win first-time out the blocks last year in Estoril, and is an overall polesitter already in 2024 courtesy of BOEM by Kessel Racing in Mugello. Up front for much of the opening stint, the Swiss team eventually took the GT3-Pro/Am win, and, but for a Code 60-related delay in the pits, might well have fought for an overall podium too.

The chances of either brand taking a record-breaking third win then is quite high.

### Hankook 12H SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS – Previous winners

- 2017 - LMS Racing by Bas Koeten (#125, SEAT LCR TCR)
- 2018 - Bohemia Energy racing by Scuderia Praha (#11, Ferrari 488 GT3)
- 2019 - Bohemia Energy racing by Scuderia Praha (#11, Ferrari 488 GT3)
- 2022 - Phoenix Racing (#18, Audi R8 LMS GT3 EVO II)
- 2023 - Saintéloc Junior Team (#26, Audi R8 LMS GT3 EVO II)



## Can Herberth take a long overdue win?

With an overall series championship, four class titles, 17 outright wins and five more category victories already to its name, Herberth Motorsport is one of the most successful teams in 24H SERIES history. But, incredible as it sounds, the Hankook 12H SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS is one of the very few 24H SERIES events the Bavarian squad has yet to win outright.

There have been podium finishes of course, including overall runners-up spots in 2019 and 2023, plus that A6-Am win in 2019. Many will likely remember that 2019 race instead for Scuderia Praha leapfrogging Herberth for the overall win, in true grandstand fashion, on the penultimate lap. Even so, the overall top step at Spa has evaded Herberth Motorsport thus far.

What better time to scratch that itch than 2024? One year on from its first official event with the 992-gen GT3 R, Herberth has racked up six 24H SERIES races with Porsche's GT3 flagship, half of which have ended with an overall podium. And while the team went into last month's Hankook 12H MUGELLO with neither Renauer brother nor the recently retired Daniel Allemann on the #91's driver line-up, that didn't stop team staple Ralf Bohn and American teammates Scott Noble and Jason Hart taking a fighting 2nd overall.

Throw in the Ardennes' notoriously changeable weather conditions, Herberth's typically bullet-proof strategic game, and that, incredibly, it's been nearly three years since Herberth Motorsport won a 24H SERIES race outright, this is surely an event the former series champion will want to conquer. Finally!

### Hankook 12H MUGELLO – Overall top 3

1. Team GP Elite (#32, Porsche 992 GT3 Cup) – 327 laps
2. Herberth Motorsport (#91, Porsche 992 GT3 Cup) – 325 laps
3. CP Racing (#85, Mercedes-AMG GT3) – 323 laps



## ...or could Porsche bag its first?

Then again... Yes, like Herberth Motorsport before it, the idea that Porsche has yet to win the Hankook 12H SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS seems scarcely credible. Still, the 992-gen Porsche is currently two-for-three in this year's 24H SERIES, having started 2024 with a win in Abu Dhabi and a 1-2 finish in Mugello. Counting forward from last year's Hankook 24H BARCELONA, that stat goes up to three wins from five starts.

Moreover, of the nine overall podium spots up for grabs so far in 2024, five have been secured by a 992 GT3 R, or – again, from Barcelona onwards – eight from 15. More than double that of any other manufacturer.

Momentum then is squarely on Porsche's side, especially when you consider that perpetual series frontrunner Herberth Motorsport, Abu Dhabi winner Car Collection Motorsport, and 'EBM' – the eponymous outfit of two-time 24 Hours of Le Mans winner Earl Bamber – have each registered 992 GT3 Rs for Spa.

It's not unreasonable to assume then that, rather than Audi or Ferrari, the brand to beat in Belgium could be Porsche.



## The GT3-Pro/Am and GT3-Am title fights have begun!

Though CP Racing already has a class win and an overall podium to its name at the event (both in 2022), the Hankook 12H SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS has been a fickle beast for the 24H SERIES' 'American team' over the years.

In 2018, a spin at La Source on the opening lap almost proved disastrous for the Overall GT Drivers' hopes of Charles Putman, Charles Espenlaub and Joe Foster (then competing with PROsport Performance). Fortunately a recovery drive to 6th overall, minus a terrifying spin out of Raidillon for Espenlaub, was enough to secure the title.

Trouble found Putman and Espenlaub (now driving with Shane Lewis) once again in 2023, when a rare on-track mistake saw the CP Racing Mercedes make contact with Juta Racing's Audi R8 at, of all places, La Source. With just 35 minutes left to run, a GT3-Am class podium had gone up quite literally in smoke.

After a typically measured drive to 3rd overall at last month's Hankook 12H MUGELLO, CP Racing, now second only to Herberth Motorsport in the GT3-AM Teams' standings, will hope lady luck will be on its side this year at Spa.

Fellow Mercedes runner Hofer-Racing will be looking to kickstart its own GT3-AM Teams' title campaign in Belgium after driveshaft failure cost the former Overall GT Teams' champion almost two hours in the garage, and a shot at the GT3-Am podium, in Mugello. Like CP Racing, however, fate has rarely been kind to Hofer-Racing at Spa.

One year on from an encouraging 4th overall at the event, an accident during Free Practice meant Hofer's 2019 race was over

before it had even begun. Four years later in 2023, and had it not been for a race-ending collision with E2P Racing 20 minutes earlier, the Swiss team would, ironically, have been the beneficiary of the CP Racing-Juta shunt. No doubt Hofer Racing will welcome a clean run in the Ardennes.

Speaking of E2P Racing, the Spanish team was left ruing a disappointing end to its Hankook 12H MUGELLO weekend: fortunately Antonio Sainero, caught out by standing water on the main straight after the heavens opened in Tuscany, walked away unscathed from a heavy collision. Having demonstrated frontrunning Pro-Am pace with new PRO Álvaro Parente, the Spanish team will hope to close the gap to current GT3-Pro/Am standings leader BOEM by Kessel Racing with a first category podium of the season for the #90 Porsche 991.2 GT3 R.

### Hankook 12H MUGELLO – GT3-Pro/Am

1. BOEM by Kessel Racing (#8, Ferrari 296 GT3)
2. Juta Racing (#71, Audi R8 LMS GT3 EVO II)
3. (DNF) E2P Racing (#90, Porsche 991.2 GT3 R)

### Hankook 12H MUGELLO – GT3-Am

1. Herberth Motorsport (#91, Porsche 992 GT3 Cup)
2. CP Racing (#85, Mercedes-AMG GT3)
3. Poulsen Motorsport (#14, BMW M4 GT3)



## RD Signs looking to recover from tough GT3 debut.

Reigning GTX Teams' champion RD Signs – Siauliai racing team would have been hoping its first full-time GT3 campaign in the 24H SERIES got off to a better start than it did in Mugello: having qualified a solid (if slightly humbling) 12th overall and last-but-one of the GT3 runners, the Lamborghini Huracán GT3 was one of three spinners at turn two on the opening lap, and suffered heavy front end damage after suspected contact with the wall. More than two hours were lost to repairs straight out the box, from which the Lithuanian team could only recover to 29th at the flag, 75 laps behind outright winner Team GP Elite.

That this should come one year after RD Signs lost a near-

certain GTX win with an oil-assisted trip into the gravel at three-quarter distance was almost painfully ironic.

Sadly, misfortune has a habit of finding RD Signs at Spa too. The team's Huracán Super Trofeo suffered a puncture and was collected on-track – twice! – en-route to a hard-earned 3rd in-class in 2023. This was an improvement at least on the team's 2022 race, which ended against the barriers at Raidillon after just 16 laps.

A clean run at Spa, if not a maiden GT3-Pro/Am podium, will go a long way towards getting RD Signs' championship campaign back on-track.



## Red Ant Racing vs HRT Performance in '992.'

Among the most compelling rivalries to have emerged at the Hankook 12H SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS in recent years is that between former 992 Teams' champion Red Ant Racing and 24H SERIES staple, HRT Performance.

The pair fought tooth and nail for 992-Am victory in 2022, impressively pulling themselves several laps clear of the chasing pack as they did so. HRT Performance ultimately came out on top, though a post-race scrutineering penalty cost the German team two laps and dropped the #929 Porsche back to 2nd in-class. First blood to Red Ant Racing.

HRT Performance would strike back the following year with an astonishing drive to 992 class victory, one lap clear of Red Ant, and an impressive 5th overall. During part one's changeable conditions, team PRO Adam Christodoulou – on loan from AMG – even went toe-to-toe with Herberth Motorsport's Ralf Bohn for the overall lead. That HRT and both Red Ant Porsches would both lead several laps of the 2023 Hankook 12H SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS outright spoke volumes as to the 992's straight-line speed.

With both the German and Belgian teams on the grid once again, there's every chance their rivalry will continue into 2024, with Red Ant Racing – fresh from a commanding victory in Mugello, three laps clear of the Orchid Racing Team – no doubt keen to take a second win of the season, and a third win on the bounce at Spa.

### Hankook 12H MUGELLO – 992 Top 3

1. Red Ant Racing (#903, Porsche 992 GT3 Cup)
2. Orchid Racing Team (#963, Porsche 992 GT3 Cup)
3. Centri Porsche Ticino (#912, Porsche 992 GT3 Cup – 992-Am)



## Will RPM Racing and Neuhofer Rennsport bounce back from a tough Mugello weekend?



**M**uch like RD Signs, RPM Racing and Neuhofer Rennsport will hope for a fruitful Hankook 12H SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS after a difficult weekend in Mugello.

Among the 992 frontrunners early on, Neuhofer's Tuscan jaunt came to a premature end in the gravel trap at Bucine with less than three minutes of 'part one' left to run. RPM Racing had made similarly good headway from 14th on the 992 grid and was well in the hunt for 992-Am victory after five hours. Sadly, a left rear puncture on the main straight sent team patriarch – and reigning 992-AM Drivers' champion – Tracy Krohn heavily into the wall. Though nursing a few bruises and some tender ribs, Krohn was adamant he would be back in the #907 Porsche for Spa, ready, like Neuhofer, to kickstart his European season.

For RPM, every point from here on out will be vital as the German

team looks to successfully defend its 992-AM Teams' crown against 2024 rivals Orchid Racing Team (2nd in Mugello), NKPP by Bas Koeten Racing (3rd), and HRT Performance (5th). Neuhofer meanwhile, still chasing its first 24H SERIES win, will hope for some solid on-track running at Spa, the German team having registered two entries for the inaugural Michelin 992 Endurance Cup on 6/7 September (page 20).

### Hankook 12H MUGELLO – 992-Am Top 3

1. Centri Porsche Ticino (#912, Porsche 992 GT3 Cup)
2. Rimo Adero by Ebimotors (#974, Porsche 992 GT3 Cup)
3. NKPP Racing by Bas Koeten Racing (#992, Porsche 992 GT3 Cup)



## Can the G56 Cup continue its winning ways in Europe?



**T**he 2023 / 2024 24H SERIES Middle East Trophy proved very successful for Ginetta's 'developmental' G56 Cup: an engine-related retirement in Abu Dhabi aside (the cause of which was a brutally unlucky bird strike during qualifying, according to brand CEO Lawrence Tomlinson), the new Ginetta took class victories in Kuwait and Dubai en-route to GTX Teams' title honours.

The Hankook 12H SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS however marks the first European outing for the new Ginetta in the 24H SERIES, entered this time by 'Team CMR.' Many will be wondering whether the reigning Middle East title holder can continue its winning streak against two of GTX's toughest competitors.

Vortex continues its program with its brand-new '2.0' sports car in Spa after a one-off run for the retiring 1.0 in Mugello (one that, sadly, got off to a troubled start with transmission issues). With three GTX pole positions already to its name and customer interest on the rise,

Vortex will be looking for a headline-grabbing result for its new and significantly improved '2.0' sooner rather than later. To win against the new Ginetta G56 Cup, which, ironically, beat Vortex to Middle East title honours, would be all the sweeter.

9und11 Racing meanwhile took GTX victory in Mugello, and will hope to do so again – decisively – in Spa. A near-certain class win looked to have slipped through the German team's fingers when coolant issues, and a late trip into the gravel, almost ground the Porsche 992.1 GT3 Cup MR to a halt. In the end, a 40-lap lead had shriveled to just four at the chequered flag, late-race drama the GTX Teams' standings leader will want to avoid in Belgium.

### Hankook 12H MUGELLO – GTX Top 2

1. 9und11 Racing (#719, Porsche 991.2 GT3 Cup MR) – 242 laps
2. Vortex V8 (#701, Vortex 1.0) – 238 laps

## Can Holmgaard Motorsport take a third class win at Spa?

**O**f the 50 teams on the provisional grid for the 2024 Hankook 12H SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS, only five competed at the first, TCE-only event in 2017. And of those five, only two have raced at every edition since then.



The first is series staple Red Camel-Jordans.nl. And the second is Holmgaard Motorsport.

Tellingly, the Danish team's record at the Hankook 12H SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS is pretty good. After top five finishes in 2017 and 2018, plus a hard-fought 6th in-class in 2019, Holmgaard finally took its first series win – and, indeed, its first series podium – at Spa in 2022, beating the impressive likes of three-time Overall TCE Teams' champion Wolf-Power Racing, eventual 2022 TCE Teams' champion BBR, and two-time Hankook 24H DUBAI TCE winner AC Motorsport to do so. A win the Danish team repeated one year later.

Admittedly, sealing the hattrick in 2024 will be difficult. The reigning TCR Teams' champion has entered just one 24H SERIES event since switching to the 992 class, and thus is still developing its program. Plus, with 20 provisional entries, '992' is the largest category in the field and, arguably, the toughest hill to climb. Taking the fight to, among many others, the likes of Red Ant Racing and HRT Performance, reigning Overall GT Teams' champion Hankook Competition, 2022 class winner Red Camel, series staples MRS GT-Racing and Bas Koeten Racing, and Porsche specialist Mühlner Motorsport will be a herculean challenge.

But, maybe – just maybe – not an impossible one...

## Buggyra vs. Lionspeed GP vs. Hofer Racing in GT4

**W**hile many will focus their attention on McLaren's Artura in GT4 (more on that in a second), the category's developing championship fight should make for equally compelling viewing at Spa-Francorchamps, given that just eight points separate the top three.

Last year's GT4 Teams' runner-up Buggyra ZM Racing bounced back from early power loss issues (caused by a faulty fuel pump) to take GT4 victory in Mugello, a championship advantage the UAE-entered, Czech-based team will look to extend at an event it won last year.

That could be far easier said than done however, as both Lionspeed GP and former GT4 Teams' champion Hofer-Racing by Bonk Motorsport – currently 2nd and 3rd respectively in the GT4 standings – will be similarly eying the top step after misfortune struck in Mugello. Before a rear axle snapped at three-quarter distance, Hofer Racing by Bonk Motorsport was on course to take its first class win with the 'G82'-

gen BMW M4 GT4 in Mugello. Lionspeed GP meanwhile, seemingly a magnet for contact in Tuscany, survived contact with THREE different GT3 teams only for the Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 CS Clubsport to later lose the GT4 lead to a punctured radiator. The consequence, admittedly, of unsighted contact with MP Racing at San Donato.

With both Lionspeed GP and Hofer Racing by Bonk keen to get their championship campaigns back on-track in Belgium (with, ideally, the win that both teams laid claim to in Mugello), the fight for GT4 Teams' honours could be the sleeper hit of the Hankook 12H SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS.

### Hankook 12H MUGELLO – GT4 Top 3

1. Buggyra ZM Racing (#416, Mercedes-AMG GT3)
2. Lionspeed GP (#424, Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 RS Clubsport)
3. Hofer Racing by Bonk Motorsport (#431, BMW M4 GT4)



## McLaren Artura GT4 to make 24H SERIES debut with returning ALFAB Racing.



This weekend, McLaren's newest racer – the Artura GT4 – is set to make its 24H SERIES debut under the ALFAB Racing banner. Officially launched at the Goodwood Festival of Speed in 2022, the Artura GT4 replaced McLaren's championship-winning 570S GT4 ahead of the 2023 season, with development focused specifically on providing the "ultimate driver engagement" for AM and PRO drivers alike.

Much like its road-going brethren, the Artura GT4 boasted the newly-developed McLaren Carbon Lightweight Architecture monocoque (MCLA) – a more rigid structure offering a wider setup window for engineers – as well as the same, all-new 3-litre twin-turbocharged V6 good for 671hp and 530lb ft (720Nm) on the road. With the hybrid side of the drivetrain ditched to meet international GT4 regulations, the Artura GT4 tipped the scales an impressive 130kg lighter than its road-going counterpart, and more than 100 kg less than the 570S it replaced.

Concerns that the V6's legs had been cut from beneath it though were quickly allayed when McLaren assured its customers the compact and considerably lighter V6 "generates more than enough output" for GT4 racing, and would even provide greater throttle response and better fuel efficiency than the 'M838'-gen V8 in the 570S GT4. Moreover, where the E-motor and lithium-ion battery had once been now lies a 110-litre fuel cell and ancillary drive systems to help keep the weight centred and low down.

Mated to the V6 is a seven-speed transmission, which replaces the eight-speed seamless shift gearbox in the road car and offers shorter ratios for snappier acceleration.

In-keeping with Woking's "everything for a reason" philosophy, the new aerodynamic package prioritized greater downforce – particularly at the front-end – over the outgoing 570S. Hence the new front splitter, dive planes and a bespoke bonnet duct. The new rear spoiler meanwhile features seven levels of adjustability "to cover a wide spectrum of circuit types."

Practicality as well as speed was also a consideration: the rear spoiler's 'G-Pylon' mounting design for example allows rear bodywork

to be removed and replaced without the need to dismantle the rear spoiler as well.

Brand-new suspension componentry helps elevate the Artura's handling over the 570S GT4, while a wider front wheel and a new limited slip diff help increase grip. The former is also said to reduce tyre degradation, while the latter helps to reduce brake pad wear, thus increasing the durability of the GT4's bespoke endurance braking system.

The revised cabin features a new Bosch DDU instrument cluster with enhanced graphics, and the steering wheel borrowed from McLaren's 720S GT3 flagship. Though McLaren hasn't specified how, ingress and egress has apparently been made easier in order to reduce time spent during driver changes. Along similar endurance racing lines, additional lighting for night racing and a heavier duty drinks system are also available.

Just over six months on from its launch, the Artura GT4 made its international competitive debut at IMSA's Pilot Challenge support race for the 2023 Daytona 24 Hours, and finished 6th overall. Three months later, an example run by multi-time Hankook 24H DUBAI class winner Optimum Motorsport took the Artura's first class win at the opening round of that year's British GT Championship.

Alongside the Artura's debut, this weekend also marks the first 24H SERIES event for ALFAB Racing, fittingly, since the Hankook 12H SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS in 2022, and only the third since the Hankook 24H DUBAI in 2018.

Sadly, while the Swedish team's 570S GT4 established itself as the GT4 frontrunner in Dubai, a potential class win was lost at half-distance to turbocharger issues. Four years later at Spa, the yellow and blue-donned McLaren, having claimed class pole position, was in the fight for GT4 honours once again, only for turbo failure to strike once again with less than three hours left to run.

Third time lucky in 2024?

# STANDINGS

## 24H SERIES

POWERED BY HANKOOK

### GT3

|   |                          |    |
|---|--------------------------|----|
| 1 | Team GP Elite (32)       | 40 |
| 2 | Herberth Motorsport (91) | 36 |
| 3 | CP Racing (85)           | 32 |

### 992-AM

|   |  |    |
|---|--|----|
| 1 | entri Porsche Ticino (912)             | 40 |
| 2 | Rimo Adero by Ebimotors (974)          | 36 |
| 3 | NKPP Racing by Bas Koeten Racing (992) | 32 |

### GT3-AM

|   |                          |    |
|---|--------------------------|----|
| 1 | Herberth Motorsport (91) | 40 |
| 2 | CP Racing (85)           | 36 |
| 3 | Poulsen Motorsport (14)  | 32 |

### GTX

|   |                     |    |
|---|---------------------|----|
| 1 | 9und11 Racing (719) | 40 |
| 2 | Vortex V8 (701)     | 36 |

### GT3-PRO/AM

|   |                           |    |
|---|---------------------------|----|
| 1 | Boem by Kessel Racing (8) | 40 |
| 2 | Juta Racing (71)          | 36 |
| 3 | E2P Racing (90)           | 32 |

### GT4

|   |                                       |    |
|---|---------------------------------------|----|
| 1 | Buggyra ZM Racing (416)               | 40 |
| 2 | Lionspeed GP (424)                    | 36 |
| 3 | Hofor Racing by Bonk Motorsport (431) | 32 |

### 992

|   |                             |    |
|---|-----------------------------|----|
| 1 | Red Ant Racing (903)        | 40 |
| 2 | Orchid Racing Team (963)    | 36 |
| 3 | Centri Porsche Ticino (912) | 32 |



Scan the QR code for the full team and driver standings

### Points structure 24H SERIES POWERED BY Hankook 2024

| Race duration       | PIC | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
|---------------------|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 12H                 |     | 40 | 36 | 32 | 28 | 24 | 20 | 18 | 16 | 14 | 12 | 10 | 8  | 6  | 4  | 2  |
| 24H halfway mark    |     | 20 | 18 | 16 | 14 | 12 | 10 | 9  | 8  | 7  | 6  | 5  | 4  | 3  | 2  | 1  |
| 24H at final result |     | 40 | 36 | 32 | 28 | 24 | 20 | 18 | 16 | 14 | 12 | 10 | 8  | 6  | 4  | 2  |