



IMSA Performance takes rain-affected pole for 2023 Hankook 24H BARCELONA

- *IMSA LS GROUP PERFORMANCE becomes CREVENTIC's seventh different GT polesitter of 2023.*
- *992 Teams' standings leader Red Ant Racing starts on the front row!*
- *Razoon KTM on GTX pole; Mercedes' new GT2 2nd in-class with Spain's NM Racing Team.*
- *Buggyra ZM Racing out-qualifies GT4 title rival Atlas BX Motorsport.*
- *Holmgaard Motorsport on TCR pole for CUPRA's final 24H SERIES start.*

BARCELONA (15 September, 2023) – IMSA LS GROUP PERFORMANCE has taken pole position for the 2023 Hankook 24H BARCELONA after heavy rain caused qualifying to be ended early at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya.

Heavy rain and intermittent thunder and lightning threatened this morning's Free Practice session, and adversely affected earlier qualifying sessions for the GT4 and TCE entrants. Ironically, conditions seemed to be improving as the first of three, 15-minute sessions for the GT division got underway. Heavy rain, limited visibility and almost no grip on-track however meant race control had no choice but to end Q1 early, and cancel Q2 and Q3 altogether.

Consequently, the GT grid for the 24th Hankook 24H BARCELONA, this year's 24H SERIES powered by Hankook European season finale, will be based solely on laptimes completed during the truncated Q1.

The returning IMSA LS GROUP PERFORMANCE (#76, Julien Andlauer / Grégory Guilvert / Simon Tirman / Laurent Hurgon), winner of the 24H DUBAI back in 2010, thus becomes CREVENTIC's seventh different outright polesitter of 2023, the Porsche 992

GT3 R having lapped the sodden Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya in 2m 03.875s, just over two-tenths quicker than the rest of the field.

992 Teams' standings leader Red Ant Racing (#903, Ayrton Redant / Yannick Redant / Kobe de Breucker / Huub van Eijndhoven) collected 992-class pole position, and, in a surprise weather-affected turn, the Porsche 911 GT3 Cup will also start tomorrow's race from the overall front row. So treacherous were the conditions, the Belgian team at one stage even found itself on outright provisional pole.

WTM by Rinaldi Racing (#22, Georg Weiss / Leonard Weiss / Jochen Krumbach / Torsten Kratz / Isaac Tutumlu Lopez) was the second quickest of the GT3 frontrunners, and will line up 3rd overall ahead of the returning Car Collection Motorsport (#23, Hash Patel / Ivan Jacoma / Alex Fontana / Yannick Mettler), the latter of which makes its first 24H SERIES start with its new Porsche 992 GT3 R. Fittingly, WTM Racing, which took victory last time out in Estoril with its brand-new Ferrari 296 GT3, secured its first win in the 24H SERIES at last year's Hankook 24H BARCELONA.

992 Teams' title contender Willi Motorsport by Ebimotors (#955, Sergiu Nicolae / Sabino de Castro / Papi Cosimo) was the second quickest of the Porsche 911 GT3 Cup runners and will line up 5th overall after setting its fastest lap early in the session. The Romanian-Italian team will be joined by the Porsche 991.2 GT3 R of three-time Hankook 24H BARCELONA winner Herberth Motorsport (#91, Ralf Bohn / Daniel Allemann / Robert Renauer / Alfred Renauer / Patrick Kolb) on the third row.

Hankook 12H MUGELLO winner HAAS RT (#21, Miika Panu / Mathieu Detry / Max Hofer / Gavin Pickering / Kris Cools), which goes into CREVENTIC's European season finale at the top of the GT3 Teams' standings, secured 7th on the grid. The Audi R8 LMS GT3 EVO II will line up alongside 992-AM polesitter Richardson Racing (#906, David Waddington / James Littlejohn / Ali Al-khalifa / Charles Hollings) – the third fastest of the 992 runners – and line-up with the Mercedes-AMG GT3 of 2013 Hankook 24H BARCELONA winner, Hofer-Racing (#11, Michael Kroll / Chantal Prinz / Alexander Prinz / Carsten Tilke / Manuel Rubow).

Unsurprisingly, several GT3 outfits were caught out by the heavy rain and will start further down the grid. An unsighted collision between Red Ant Racing (#903) and GT3-AM standings leader CP Racing (#85, Charles Putman / Charles Espenlaub / Joe Foster / Shane Lewis / Philip Quaife) at turn one left the Mercedes-AMG GT3 with left front-end damage and no time to improve upon its 14th place on the grid. Reigning GT European Trophy winner Scherer Sport PHX (#1, Michael Doppelmayr / Pierre Kaffer / Elia Erhart / Christer Jöns / Swen Herberger) could only manage 13th on the grid with its Audi R8 LMS

GT3 EVO II, just behind the Porsche 991.2 GT3 R of Spanish fan favourite E2P Racing (#90, Javier Morcillo / Pablo Burguera / Antonio Sainero), while the Land Motorsport Audi R8 LMS GT3 EVO II (#34, Dr. Johannes Kirchhoff / Ingo Vogler / Tim Vogler / Max Edelhoff / Wiggo Dalmo) will start 22nd!

JUTA Racing's Audi R8 LMS GT3 EVO II meanwhile (#71, Jonas Gelžinis / Jonas Karklys / Arunas Geciauskas / Yevgen Sokolovskiy / Bas Schouten) was one of several cars that ended its qualifying session abruptly in the turn five gravel trap. The others, interestingly, were two of HRT Performance's three Porsche 991 GT3 Cups entered for this weekend: the #928 NKPP by HRT Performance entry (Gijs Bessem / Harry Hilders / Bob Herber / Mark van der Aa) and the German team's standalone #929 Porsche 911 GT3 Cup (Anthony Leighs / Mikael Pitamber / Harley Haughton / Julian Hanses).

JUTA Racing's early 'flying' lap was enough to bank 11th on the overall grid, while the HRT Porsches will line up 23rd and 29th – 8th and 12th in the '992' class – respectively.

Newly-crowned 992-AM Teams' champion RPM Racing (#907, Tracy Krohn / Niclas Jönsson / Philip Hamprecht / Patrick Huisman) was the only GT team not to set a laptime during qualifying, a collision during Free Practice having caused significant front end damage. The German team is confident though that the #907 Porsche 992 GT3 Cup will be repaired in time for tomorrow's race start.

GTX polesitter Razoon - More Than Racing (#714, Daniel Drexel / Christian Loimayr / Artur Chwist / Dominik Olbert) rounds out the overall top 10 on the grid with its KTM X-BOW GTX on its first European start of the season with CREVENTIC. Despite the heavy rain, 2nd in-class was decided by just six-tenths of a second in NM Racing Team's favour (#715, Jörg Viebahn / Stéphane Perrin / Manel Lao Cornago / Viacheslav Gutak / Lluç Ibáñez). The Spanish team has entered Mercedes-AMG's brand-new GT2 for its 24H SERIES debut.

The Lamborghini Huracán Super Trofeo of GTX Teams' standings leader RD Signs - Siauliai racing team (#720, Audrius Butkevicius / Nicola Michelin / Paulius Paskevicius / Jocius Deividas) lines up 3rd in-class. In contrast, qualifying proved disastrous for the Lithuanian team's nearest title rival Vortex V8, which could only bank 30th (#701, Lionel Amrouche / Philippe Bonnel / Miguel Moiola / Lucas Sugliano) and 31st (#702, Solenn Amrouche / Julien Boillot / Stéphane Cottrell / Philippe Gruau) on the grid after an incredibly cautious session for both Vortex 1.0 sports cars.

Unlike their GT counterparts, this weekend's GT4 and TCE entrants were able to complete their earlier qualifying sessions.

GT4 title contender Buggyra ZM Racing (#416, Aliyyah Koloc / David Vršecký / Adam Lacko / Jaroslav Janis / Jaromir Jirik) fought back across a sodden qualifying session to claim its third category pole position of the season. Having taken a conservative approach with the fourth fastest lap in Q1, Jaroslav Janis then posted a time more than two seconds quicker than any other entrant in Q2, teammate David Vršecký improving this time yet further in Q3 to secure the Czech-based, Emirati-team pole position with a 2m 14.087s average laptime, more than three seconds clear.

GT4 Teams' standings leader Atlas BX Motorsports (#403, Steven Cho / Roelof Bruins / Jongkyum Kim / Taekeun Yang / Donggi Noh) similarly bounced back from a saturated Q1 to set the second fastest average laptime of the GT4 runners, just ahead of the GSR Motorsport Ginetta G56 GT4 (#405, Ernesta Globytė / Rokas Kvedaras / Rolandas Salys / Mindaugas Liatukas / Aras Kvedaras). After posting just one banker lap, the South Korean team found itself last of the TCE/GT4 runners after Q1, but in the drier Q3 was just one of three teams to set a time below 2m 12s.

Hofor Racing by Bonk Motorsport (#431, Martin Kroll / Maximilian Partl / Michael Mayer / Michael Bonk / Felix Partl), the Overall TCE Teams' champion of 2018 and the 24H SERIES' GT4 Teams' champion of 2019, made a scintillating start to the session with the fastest lap of Q1, but cautious runs for the BMW M4 GT4 in Q2 and Q3 meant the German team ended up the fourth fastest of the GT4 runners at Barcelona.

TCR Teams' champion-elect Holmgaard Motorsport (#102, Magnus Holmgaard / Jonas Holmgaard / Roy Edland / Tom Cloet / Michael Sallenbach) dutifully held on to provisional pole position across all three sessions, in, what will effectively be, the Danish team's final 24H SERIES event with its CUPRA Leon Competición TCR

"We're very happy to get pole this weekend because it's the last race for us in the CUPRA," Magnus Holmgaard explained to *radiolemans.com*'s Diana Binks. "Next year, we will have a new car, so yeah, definitely happy to be P1 for the last time!"

"I think it's going to be a good race. We have some new drivers [*Belgium's Tom Cloet and Canada's Michel Sallenbach*] so I'm excited to see how they'll do during the night."

Three-time Overall TCE Teams' champion Wolf-Power Racing (#121, Jasmin Preisig / Ivars Vallers / Roberto Ferri / Miklas Born) lines up 2nd in TCR. In the drying Q3, the returning Miklas Born posted a sensational 2m 09.183s on his penultimate run, a full 1.2 seconds quicker than any other runner managed across any of the three sessions.

The returning Bas Koeten Racing (#125, Bert Mets / Bob Stevens / Jos Stevens / Christiaan Frankenhout) completes the TCR line-up at Barcelona, and will start 3rd after an explorative run in qualifying with its CUPRA TCR DSG.

Following official Night Practice this evening, the green flag for the 24th Hankook 24H BARCELONA itself will fly at 12.00 hrs local time on Saturday 16 September. Racing will run uninterrupted throughout the night, with the chequered flag set to fly at 12.00 hrs local time on Sunday 17 September. 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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