



Car Collection Motorsport takes second Hankook 6H ABU DHABI win; GT4 victory decided on the very last corner of the race

- Car Collection Motorsport becomes first team to win the Hankook 6H ABU DHABI more than once.
- Baron Motorsport's hopes of victory stymied by late-race fuel stop.
- Red Camel-Jordans strengthens 992 championship lead; QMMF by HRT and RABDAN by FULGENZI go down to the wire for 2nd in-class.
- Vortex 2.0 takes maiden GTX win by less than half a second.
- Century Motorsport seals GT4 victory over AGMC Racing by Simpson Motorsport at the final corner.

ABU DHABI (21 January, 2024) – Car Collection Motorsport came out on top of a race-long fight with Baron Motorsport to take its second win at the Hankook 6H ABU DHABI, and inadvertently played a role in the event's GT4 class victory being decided at the final corner.

The largest Hankook 6H ABU DHABI to-date (43 cars) was already gearing up to become one of the most dramatic, as Baron Motorsport Ferrari 488 GT3 (#86, Ernst Kirchmayr / Axcil Jefferies / Philipp Baron) and the Car Collection Motorsport Porsche 992 GT3 R (#96, Dustin Blattner / Loek Hartog / Dennis Marschall), the only two overall event winners in the field, took the fight for 2024 victory down to the wire.

Despite a spin earlier in the day, Baron Motorsport looked to have the race in-hand after a scintillating run by Axcil Jefferies (the two-time Hankook 24H DUBAI race winner set the event's fastest lap – a 1m 53.598s – during his one and only stint) pulled the Austrian team almost a lap clear. Having pushed its pit strategy to the max though, the fuel-starved Baron Motorsport was forced to make a final splash and dash heading into the final 20 minutes, a stop that would eroded most of the Ferrari's lead.

A technical issue with the fuel pumps however, during which race control neutralized the event, made a pit stop before the closing 20 minutes impossible, and it was pure bad luck that the Ferrari hit the refueling area just as the race went green once again. Car Collection Motorsport thus moved into the overall lead, and while Baron Motorsport managed to remerge within striking distance of the Porsche, the gap was too great for Jefferies to close over the final 20 minutes.

Dennis Marschall drove the #96 Porsche across the line to secure victory, the German team completing 140 laps of the 5.281 km Yas Marina Circuit in the process. Car Collection Motorsport thus becomes the first team to win the Hankook 6H ABU DHABI more than once.

“I’m feeling great,” Marschall explained to radiolemans.com’s Joe Bradley. “What a nice debut: my first time in the 24H SERIES, and the first time in the Porsche this weekend. I think we had a really strong race and strategy, so a big thank you to Car Collection Motorsport, and I think we played this one really well. And obviously thank you to my teammates. I’m really happy!”

One of nine overall leaders at the 2024 Hankook 6H ABU DHABI, Manamauri Energy by Ebimotors (#955, Fabrizio Broggi / Sergiu Nicolae / Sabino de Castro / Cosimo Papi) took its first event podium in 3rd with its Porsche 992 GT3 R. In a nod to how competitive the race had been, the Romanian-Italian team, after six uninterrupted hours of racing, finished just a few seconds clear of the Attempto Racing Audi R8 LMS GT3 EVO II (#99, Jef Machiels / Alex Arkin Aka / Florian Scholze).

The result that moves the Romanian-Italian team eight points clear of CP Racing in the GT3 Teams’ standings heading into the 24H SERIES Middle East Trophy season finale next weekend in Dubai.

The CP Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3 EVO (#85, Charles Putman / Charles Espenlaub / Joe Foster / Shane Lewis) meanwhile finished two places further back in 6th and secured the final spot on the GT3-Am class podium behind the Herberth Motorsport Porsche 992 GT3 R (#91, Ralf Bohn / Alfred Renauer / Antares Au).

Having scrapped for the lead in the opening phase of the race with Baron Motorsport, the pole sitting HAAS RT Audi R8 LMS GT3 EVO II (#21, Stanislav Minsky / Thomas Kiefer / Torsten Kratz / Mathieu Detry) lost time during the event’s myriad Code 60s, and ultimately finished 7th ahead of Car Collection Motorsport’s second entry: the Goroyan RT by Car Collection Motorsport Audi R8 LMS GT3 EVO II (#80, Artur Goroyan / Roman

Mavlanov / Markus Winkelhock) had worked its way up from 12th on the grid to 3rd across the first 30 minutes, only to be delayed by a slow puncture that forced an early pit stop.

Sadly, Haas RT's second entry – a Mercedes-AMG GT3 EVO (#92, Masoud Jaberian / Edoardo Bacci / Alessandro Tonoli) – managed just 21 laps before retiring with engine issues.

A bold pit strategy meant Huber Motorsport Porsche 992 GT3 R (#50, Finn Gehrsitz / Marc Bartels / Tim Zimmermann), at one stage looked on course for an overall podium finish, but the German team nevertheless completed a quiet run to finish 9th overall.

A high-profile retirement, Century Motorsport (#22, Carl Cavers / Lewis Plato / Jack Barlow) led more laps than any other team bar the top two, but a spike in water temperature, and a clutch release bearing failure, meant the BMW M4 GT3 was eventually retired after stalling in the refueling area and, shortly afterwards, grinding to a halt at turn four.

The Grove Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo (#10, Stephen Grove / Brenton Grove / Jordan Love), another podium contender, also hit problems. The Australian team, supported by New Zealand's Earl Bamber Motorsport in Abu Dhabi, initially slipped from 5th on the grid to 15th in the opening laps, but was the last GT3 team to make its first stop for fuel, and even led outright. The team soon recovered into the overall top six only to before suffer issues with its right rear wheel mount at half-distance. The Mercedes would eventually lose its right rear wheel at turn nine and stop on-track, a delay that dropped the team back to 34th at the flag.

Despite the disappointment, Grove Racing was awarded radiolemans.com's 'Spirit of the Race' award for its persistence on debut at the Yas Marina Circuit.

992 and GTX

Despite a precautionary engine change overnight, Red Camel-Jordans.nl (#909, Ivo Breukers / Luc Breukers / Fabian Danz) came out on top of an incredibly tight fight for 992 honours, which saw five different cars hold the class lead across the six hours. Its second win in succession strengthens the Dutch team's lead in the 992 Teams' 24H SERIES Middle East Trophy standings.

Behind the Dutch team, a sensational battle for the final podium spots was decided with less than four minutes left on the clock, as QMMF by HRT (#931, Abdulla Ali Al Khelaif /

Ghanim Al Ali / Ibrahim Al Abdulghani / Julian Hanses overtook the RABDAN by FULGENZI Porsche 992 GT3 Cup (#971, Saif Alameri / Christopher Zöchling / Salem Alketbi) for 2nd place. This marks the Qatar Motor and Motorcycle Federation's best result to-date in the 24H SERIES' 992 class, while Abu Dhabi's Rabdan Motorsport, having also led the class comfortably early on, celebrated being back on the podium at its home event.

Series newcomer KKrämer Racing (#936, Michele Di Martino / 'Selv' / Fidel Leib / Alexej Veremenko) kept itself in 992 Teams' 24H SERIES Middle East Trophy title contention with quiet run to 4th in-class and the final rostrum spot in 992-Am.

Vortex V8 (#701, Lionel Amrouche / Philippe Bonnel / Olivier Gomez / Arnaud Gomez) secured a maiden win for its new 2.0 sports car after a decisive run in Abu Dhabi, one spin under the W hotel aside. In a remarkable performance on its 24H SERIES debut, Britain's Scott Sport (#750, Keith Frieser / Mikkel Mac) finished just half a second behind the Vortex with its Lamborghini Huracán Super Trofeo.

The ratoon-more than racing KTM X-BOW GTX (#714, Artur Chwist / Daniel Drexel / Denis Liebl) looked on course to replicate its GTX class win from last year only to lose its right rear wheel at turn 10 shortly after half-distance (that Grove Racing also lost its right rear wheel at turn nine was an odd coincidence).

GTX podium contender Leipert Motorsport (#710, Gregg Gorski / Gerhard Watzinger / Brendon Leitch) and P21 Motorsport (#721, Kika Queiroz / Alexandre Fonseca / Rúben Costa / José Monroy) were sadly eliminated from contention by a heavy coming together during the third hour, amazingly, while the leading Century Motorsport BMW was lapping them both! Attempting to share the same stretch of asphalt, Leipert Motorsport and P21 Motorsport tangled at turn nine, significantly damaging the Lamborghini Huracán Super Trofeo's right front corner and sending the Porsche 991-I Cup heavily into the barriers.

Incredibly, the Porsche recovered to the pitlane under its own steam, but was later retired after the damage proved too extensive to repair. P21 Motorsport was deemed at fault for the incident, and was handed a 30-second time penalty.

Ironically, the incident helped the sister P21 Motorsport Porsche 991-II Cup (#715, José Monroy / BigGeorge Figueiredo / Rui Miritta / Rúben Costa) secure its second consecutive Hankook 6H ABU DHABI class podium in 3rd.

Hankook 12H KUWAIT class winner Toro Verde (#795, Lawrence Tomlinson / Freddie Tomlinson / Michael Simpson) also retired early in Abu Dhabi. The developmental Ginetta

G56 Cup suffered a bird strike during Qualifying, which, unbeknownst to the team, broke an air filter that ultimately led to V8 engine failure.

GT4 and TCX

In a stunning grandstand finish, and after a race-long duel between the two, Century Motorsport (#429, Charlie Robertson / Ravi Ramyeed) secured GT4 victory in Abu Dhabi over AGMC Racing team by Simpson Motorsport (#438, Fabian Duffieux / Timothy Docker / Ivan Krapivtsev) on the very last corner of the race.

Century Motorsport, which, like Simpson, was running a G82-generation BMW M4 GT4 in Abu Dhabi, was on course to take the win as the race entered its closing stages, but was caught short when a technical issue forced the refueling area to be momentarily closed. Required to pit to complete a driver change (or risk earning a penalty for exceeding Ravi Ramyeed's stint time), Century Motorsport then had to pit again the following lap for fuel and to serve a penalty, turning a near-one-minute lead into a 30-second deficit. The charging Charlie Robertson would eventually hunt down and overtake the Simpson Motorsport BMW at the final corner.

"I thought we were in the straight and narrow, but then I heard we had a 20-second penalty, which we served during our last pit stop," Charlie Robertson explained to radiogram.com's Joe Bradley. "So we probably lost around 45, 50 seconds to the car behind. I came out 23 seconds back with 10, 12 minutes to go, and just got my head down and tried my hardest. I could see the [Simpson] BMW getting closer and closer every lap, but I didn't know if I would get it."

Robertson's charge was inadvertently made more difficult by the Car Collection Motorsport Porsche, which, unaware of the duel, put both GT4 BMWs a further lap down on the final tour.

"I just saw some GT3 traffic on the last lap," Robertson continues, "let the Porsche through in a good place, and I thought he might just compromise the Simpson car. And he did! And I just managed to nick the win in the final corner! It was really good. I pushed everything out there!"

On its 24H SERIES debut, the Toyota Gazoo Racing UK works entry (#423, Michael O'Brien / Benjamin Tusting / Samuel Harrison / Kavi Jundu), operated by Speedworks Motorsport, secured the first series podium for the new Toyota GR Supra GT4 Evo in 3rd.

Fittingly, the UAE's Continental Racing (#496, Vasily Vladykin / Andrey Solukovtsev / Ahmed Al Khaja), also running a GR Supra GT4 Evo this weekend, rounded out a good weekend for Toyota with 4th in-class.

GPM by Dragon Racing (#408, Keith Gatehouse / Ramez Azzam / Denis Bulatov), which had been battling for the lead, retired during the second hour when the Mercedes-AMG GT4 suffered a suspected wheel bearing failure. This would be the first of a flurry of Code 60s during the second half of the event, with the purple flags coming out nine times.

AC Motorsport (#188, Ivars Vallers / James Kaye) took both the overall TCE win and its second TCR class win at the Hankook 6H ABU DHABI after a race-long duel with CWS Engineering (#277, Owen Hizzey / Dale Albutt / Colin White): able to extend its fuel stints further than the Ginetta G55, the Audi RS3 LMS TCR was able to leapfrog CWS in the pits heading into the final hour.

The second CWS Engineering Ginetta G55 (#278, Colin White / Mark Griffin) had started from pole position and held that advantage over the opening stages, but was soon on pitroad with gear selector issues. This was later traced to water in the compressor, which continually jammed the gearbox and eventually had to be changed altogether.

The #278 Ginetta eventually finished 4th overall in TCE behind the Simpson Motorsport Audi RS3 LMS DSG (#138, Andrei Muraveika / Jason Garrett / Ivan Stanchin / Ricky Coomber), the British team retained its TCR Teams' lead in the 24H SERIES Middle East Trophy despite losing time to a suspected broken toe link on the rear right corner.

Race Track Competition (#223, Tommy Rollinger / Gilles Bruckner / Daniel Lamouli) ended its Hankook 6H ABU DHABI weekend in dramatic fashion when the Lamera Cup disintegrated after hitting the barriers at turn four. Daniel Lamouli fortunately walked away from the incident under his own steam, and was checked out at Yas Marina Circuit's on-site medical facility.

The incident was deemed to have been caused by a collision with the MDM Ireckonu Porsche 992 GT3 Cup (#965, Jan Jaap van Roon / Tom Coronel), which was later handed a 120-second penalty for avoidable contact with the Lamera. Despite also replacing its brakes during the six-hour event, the MDM Porsche still managed to finish 5th in 992. Particularly impressive, as reigning TCR Europe Touring Car Series champion Tom Coronel completed the formidable Dakar Rally mere days before his arrival in Abu Dhabi.

Endurance fans won't have to wait long for more 24H SERIES racing action, as CREVENTIC will host the 19th annual Hankook 24H DUBAI at the Dubai Autodrome in

just one week's time on 26-27-28 January. CREVENTIC's biggest event of the year also brings the curtain down on the 24H SERIES Middle East Trophy in 2023/2024. Further information can be found at www.24hseries.com.

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