

Victory and the points lead for Buggyra ZM Racing after challenging 12 Hours of Spa

Aliyyah Koloc, Adam Lacko, and David Vršecky came out on top in dominant fashion in the 12 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps, winning with a three-lap margin.

TALLINN, ESTONIA, May 9, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Buggyra ZM Racing claimed its first 24H GT Series victory of the season. They are now leading the drivers' and teams' championship in the GT4 class by 12 points.

Having been denied victory in the GT4 class due to a late-race retirement in the 12 Hours of Mugello in March, the trio arrived at the iconic Belgian circuit determined to make amends. They did so in style, by taking victory in a tricky opening six-hour race on Saturday which was affected by typically unpredictable Spa weather and then repeating the feat for the second part on Sunday.

The victory moves Koloc, Lacko, and Vršecky to the top of the GT4 drivers' standings, 12 points clear of their nearest challengers ahead of the next round of the season at Monza. In the teams' standings, Buggyra ZM Racing holds the same margin over the second place at the top of the table.

"It's only the second race of the season and there is a lot of racing still to go but so far, we are feeling good," said Aliyyah Koloc post-weekend. "The weather has been so difficult, it's been



raining on and off [this weekend], so this caused a lot of issues with knowing which tyres to put on and then driving in the wet on slicks, but we managed it well."

Free Practice and Qualifying

Despite competitive times in free practice, the weekend took a turn for the worse in qualifying, which set the grid for the opening segment of the 12 Hours on Saturday. Rain had come and gone throughout the day and again played a role in the three-part qualifying. Vršický was unfortunately unable to set a lap-time, while Koloc was caught out by a torrential rain shower while on slicks, meaning the #416 Mercedes-AMG GT4 ended the session at the back of the GT4 grid having set only two times out of a possible three.

Saturday Race (Hours 1-6)

Vršický started the race and made up one place to run sixth in class around the outside of the Les Combes chicane, but he had to remain vigilant throughout the opening lap. Two cars, one at the first corner and another at the final turn, spun in front of the #416 car, while a momentary brush with the gravel trap on the exit of Stavelot also threw up a challenge.

Nothing, however, could have presented more of a challenge than the changing Spa weather, which caught out Vršický as the rain began to hit the track. The experienced team leader brilliantly held onto the car as it aquaplaned at Eau Rouge, and managed to get the car off the wet grass in order to continue, before the race was neutralised with a Code 60 period.



Once the race resumed and the field settled into a rhythm, strategy and tactics dictated the remainder of the race, with the #416 coming out on top.

“The weather conditions were really tricky today, it was raining a lot and then it stopped, so it was a lot of strategy with the tyres and a lot of teams were going onto wets earlier and a lot sooner, and some stayed on slicks,” said Aliyyah.

“Adam and David drove really well; I drove the last stint, so I waited all day, so it was really nerve racking to wait almost five hours to get in the car. The strategy in these long races is really important, especially in these weather conditions because there were a lot of Code 60s, so refuelling was always full. It was all about surviving these conditions and not getting a track limits’ penalty which three cars in front of us did. So, we stayed safe today and we got the first position.”

Sunday Race (Hours 7-12)

After a promising start to the 12 Hours, consistency was the key to Sunday’s race and that is exactly what the trio managed to achieve to secure victory. Thanks to their halfway stage win, the #416 started from pole position for the second segment and maintained the advantage during the opening hour.

The predicted rain for Sunday thankfully failed to appear, making strategy far less of a headache than it had been the day before. Nevertheless, several Code 60 periods affected the race, most notably during Lacko’s time in the car where no fewer than three occurred in one stint.

Such was the pace of the trio in the Mercedes, that when Lacko brought the car home at the end of the 12 Hours, the #416 took victory by three laps from the second placed competitors.

“I’m happy we got the win. The strategy and being safe of track limits was the key [to victory], because there were a lot of penalties, so we had to be safe to stay on track. We learned that hard lesson in qualifying, so we were extra careful in the race,” said Aliyyah.

The next stop on the 24H GT Series calendar for Koloc, Lacko, Vršecky and the rest of the Buggyra ZM Racing team is the iconic Monza circuit in Italy, taking place on the weekend of 10-11 June. But before that, Aliyyah will start her South African rally raid campaign in a T1 with the Sugarbelt 400 on 12-13 May.

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