

Buggyra ZM Racing passes the tough test of its first 24-hour race

The team successfully completes their first 24-hour race at Barcelona finishing third in the GT4 class despite some major setbacks.

BARCELONA, SPAIN, September 18, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- • The usual driver line-up of Adam Lacko, David Vršecký, and Aliyyah Koloc was joined last weekend by experienced racers Jaroslav Janiš and Jaromír Jiřík

- Buggyra ZM Racing finishes runner-up in the GT4 championship and sixth overall against much more powerful machinery and experienced drivers

In the world of racing, there is no bigger test than a round-the-clock endurance classic – and Buggyra ZM Racing rose to the occasion at the 24 Hours of Barcelona last weekend, part of the 24H Series.

At the wheel of the Buggyra ZM Racing Mercedes AMG-GT4 were as usual Adam Lacko, David Vršecký, and Aliyyah Koloc; joined last weekend by experienced racers Jaroslav Janiš and Jaromír Jiřík to complete the line-up.

After a day and a night of racing at the Circuit de Catalunya, which is also the home of the Spanish Grand Prix, the squad finished 29th overall and third in class in their first 24-hour race, despite some major setbacks along the way.

The 24 Hours of Barcelona also crowned the 24H Series champions, with Buggyra ZM Racing



eventually finishing runner-up in the GT4 championship along with a fine sixth in the overall standings – against much more powerful machinery and experienced drivers.

The team's 19-year-old star Aliyyah Koloc also claimed second in the GT Junior class and first in the Ladies Cup, rounding off a successful weekend for the team. Although Aliyyah took part in the Dakar Rally for the first time this year, Barcelona was the longest circuit race so far in her young career, as she continues her intense learning programme all over the world.

Free Practice and Qualifying

The rate of improvement was rapid: on its 24-hour debut, the team posted the second-fastest time in official free practice on Friday, then started from pole position as a result of combined qualifying: a remarkable four seconds faster than its nearest rival on aggregate. With the 4.657-kilometer

Barcelona circuit providing a good all-round test of the capabilities of any car and driver – one of the reasons why it is regularly used as a Formula 1 testing venue – the 24-hour race itself was set to provide the biggest challenge for the Buggyra ZM Racing team and its drivers yet.

Race

The drama started before the lights went to green, as the car failed to start the opening lap and had to be pushed back to the pitlane, with David Vršecký at the wheel. But even a restart from pit lane failed, prompting a frantic search for the problem. Deposits in the control fuel turned out to have clogged the filter, which subsequently damaged the fuel pump. Eventually the fuel tank itself had to be dismantled, taking about an hour to fix before the crew finally got underway, from last place. This was the start of a strong fightback: by the halfway point, the team was already up to third in class, albeit a number of laps behind. From there, it was a question of trying to maintain the same progress to the finish and narrow the gap to the leaders – having fought hard for second place in the closing stages. The only other major issue came with Jaromír Jiřík at the wheel, when the rear suspension broke after the straight. Luckily, the



Czech driver managed to nurse the car back to the pits and the team could continue.

By the time the #416 car crossed the finish line at midday on Sunday with Jaroslav Janiš, the team recorded a well-deserved class podium after a gruelling but extremely educational 24 hours, only a minute and half off second place. As well as learning about endurance and race craft, the squad successfully overcame all the hurdles that it was faced with; benefitting from the shared human adventure of non-stop racing against the clock.

Quotes

Aliyyah Koloc, driver:

"I think it was the first time for most of us, so it was a very new experience, and a very tough race as well. But we made it to the finish and we got a podium finish too, so I'm very happy despite the issues we had. Honestly, I did a lot of driving during those 24 hours, including a long endurance stint at night so it was very interesting to experience driving in different conditions. I also drove a bit when the sun was rising, so that was very cool. The team did a great job, along with all the drivers and mechanics, so I think we can be happy. I was just trying to be consistent and not have any issues, but unfortunately, I had a small contact that wasn't my fault: no big damage, so we just pitted to change the wheel. That was a good wake-up call, but we managed to continue and made it to the finish!"

David Vršecký, driver:

"After qualifying, we knew we had the speed. That's why we were expecting a slightly different start to the race. I felt a bit desperate: everybody was running away at the start, while I was just restarting systems and trying to find a way to get the car moving. But the team did an amazing job; when they found the problem, they were able to solve it and we drove the rest of the race without any problems."

Martin Koloc, Team Principal:

"It has been an extremely long and demanding season for us. In between GT racing we have been doing offroad rallies, so to summarize the endurance season, we have done really well for the first time. We have been leading throughout the year; we lost a few races, mainly because of bad luck and we didn't really make any big mistakes. We finished second in the championship; Aliyyah finished a close second in the GT Junior class which is incredible, racing with so many strong guys in this championship. We will all work hard to get better next year. I am very proud of this team, they have been working so hard, they never stop, trying to battle the odds, never giving up. Each individual member of the team should get a medal because they have been really good."

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