

Aliyyah Koloc overcomes adversity to win the Mugello 12 Hours

Dubai-born teenager Aliyyah Koloc has won her class at the tightly-fought Mugello 12 Hours race in Italy: the first round of the decade-old 24H Series.

MUGELLO, ITALY, March 25, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Mugello 12 Hours is slightly different from other endurance races, as it's effectively split into two six-hour races, with the first part starting on Saturday, and the second part on Sunday.

Driving together with experienced team mates Adam Lacko and David Vršecký, Aliyyah won the GT4 class for Buggyra ZM Racing, at the wheel of the team's Mercedes AMG-GT4. The field included some of the world's top drivers – such as nine-time World Rally Champion Sebastien Loeb and two-time Le Mans winner Romain Dumas – with the number 416 Buggyra car recording 22nd place overall, one lap ahead of the second-placed car in GT4.



Not only that but Aliyyah also set the fastest lap in the GT4 category on lap 38 at an average speed of 158.60 kph, underlining her mastery of the category last weekend.

The Mugello circuit in Tuscany is fast and varied, having formed part of the 24H Series since 2014, and it's described as almost like a mini-Nürburgring Nordschleife by some drivers. There's plenty of elevation with a quite narrow racing line and some bumps, giving the layout an old-school feel: no big surprise as the circuit was inaugurated in its current form back in 1974, but

with its roots going all the way back to a 1914 road course.

The 15 corners are mainly medium to high speed, with no really tight chicanes or big braking zones throughout the 5.2-kilometer lap, making it a real challenge for every driver. And Aliyyah loved all 12 hours of it, despite variable and tricky conditions that included periods of heavy rain – which the teenager excelled in, despite her relative lack of wet-weather experience on only her second visit to Mugello.

The weekend started off with plenty of drama, after a testing crash before practice on Wednesday damaged the car sufficiently that the spare chassis needed to be brought over from the team's base in the Czech Republic and built up overnight by the team's mechanics. Their efforts were rewarded when the newly rebuilt car went quickest in practice and then took pole in qualifying. So as well as the trio of talented drivers, the entire Buggyra ZM squad did not miss a beat throughout the Italian weekend, recording what was arguably its best-ever team performance over the course of the four days.

It wasn't an entirely straightforward race weekend, with the team having to deal with a brake problem while Adam was driving, as well as heavy tyre wear as they pushed hard to get the result they deserved. With David at the wheel, the team also had to carry out a fuel pump change on Saturday.

"I really love Italy and the Mugello track – it's nice to be in the greenery and not in the sand!" said a delighted Aliyyah at the finish. "The race was fantastic although it didn't get off to an easy start for me on Saturday: the car wouldn't get off the line and then two drivers spun in front of me: everything was happening! The main thing is that over the course of the race I was consistent and fast. I'm happy and I actually surprised myself. Even in the wet I had fun, so it was a great team effort and I'm really proud of the whole team after our early setback on Wednesday: we definitely have the best mechanics, so big congratulations to them!"



There is only a short break for Aliyyah before she is back at the wheel from April 2 to 7 for the Ultimate Rally Raid in Portugal and Spain, focussing on her second series she is competing in this year, the FIA World Rally Raid Championship.

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