



Round two of the Porsche Carrera Cup Middle East was the perfect warm up to the F1 Qatar GP

02/12/2024 Qatar | Round two of the Porsche Carrera Cup Middle East provided the main drawcard to the penultimate round of the Formula One World Championship, the Qatar Grand Prix and despite red flags and safety cars, it again proved a happy hunting ground for 17-year old Janne Stiak.

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For a series which is only in its second year as an official part of the international Porsche Carrera Cup calendar, the opportunity to be the main support event to the Qatar Formula 1 Grand Prix confirms its standing as the premier one-make Championship of motor racing across the Middle East.

“Debuting as a support event at the Formula 1 Qatar Airways Qatar Grand Prix 2024 was a new

milestone for us and I'd like to think that we put on a good show which was in keeping with the best Carrera Cup racing around the world," said Robert Lechner.

For German-born DHL Team driver Stiak, it was an opportunity to show his talent in front of F1 team bosses as he was the only driver to break under the two minute barrier in free practice and followed it up with pole position for both races by nearly half a second from Englishman James Wallis.

Qatari driver Abdulla Al Khelaifi qualified third outright which was also pole position for both the Pro-AM and GCC categories while Japan's Banky took pole in the masters class.

As racing got under way, Porsche Junior driver Wallis capitalised on a great start to take the lead from Stiak, while Qatar's Al Khelaifi dropped back to fifth before the red flag came out after Sweden's Krister Andero crashed out of the masters class.

When the race re-started, Stiak made a brave move on lap 2 to regain the lead from Wallis while Al Khelaifi dropped back through the field. Proton Huber's Angus Whiteside passed Wallis for P2 and began to chase down Stiak but the German was settled and took the chequered flag nearly four seconds ahead of Whiteside with Wallis, who had led momentarily before the red flag, rounding out the podium in third.

Saudi Racing's Saud Al Saud dived with Al Khelaifi for GCC honours and finished fourth overall but won the regional class as well as claimed first in the Pro-AM category. Bulgaria's Mike Mim took the masters class for MVII Racing with masters pole sitter Banky back in third behind Petr Brecka.

Sunday's curtain raiser to the Formula 1 Grand Prix was equally exciting but also proved the talent of Stiak who wrapped up a solid weekend with another win despite the safety car being called at the end of Lap 1.

Separate incidents involving Brecka and Germany's Soren Spreng driving for team GP elite, forced the race to be suspended with a full course yellow flag behind the safety car to allow marshals to clear the debris before it resumed four laps later with Stiak in the lead from 18-year old Wallis and Al Saud.

This time Stiak remained focused and kept his lead which he held to the finish line for his second win of the weekend, four seconds clear of Wallis while Al Saud dropped back and spun out of contention on Lap 6. This allowed local driver Al Khelaifi to take the final podium position with third overall and importantly, first place in the GCC and Pro-AM categories much to the delight of the partisan Qatari crowd.

Porsche Carrera Cup Middle East's only female driver, AV Racing's Alexandra Vateva made it two podiums from two Rounds following her impressive third place debut in Bahrain by going one better to take second place in Pro-AM while Seven X Seven's Banky found his form from earlier in the weekend to win the masters class from Bulgaria's Mike Mim and the recovering Proton Huber car of Andero.

"Thank you very much to everyone involved in the preparations at Lusail International Circuit and to the Qatar Motor & Motorcycle Federation (QMMF) as well as the Swiss sports marketing experts from Glenvale Sports for all their support," said Lechner.

Stiak extended his championship lead to 95 points from Wallis on 71 with Whiteside third on 62. Saudi Arabia's Saud Al Saud leads his countryman Khaled Alahmadi from Vateva in the Pro-AM category with 85 to 74 and 58 points respectively while Mim is pulling away from GT Sports Technology's Brecka at the top of the Masters Class with a 25 point buffer on 90 points and Canadian M3L Team driver Mark J. Thomas is chasing down second, just three points behind Brecka on 62 points.

The Porsche Carrera Cup Middle East now takes a short holiday before resuming on January 18 and 19 for Round Three at the Dubai Autodrome.

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