

Robert de Haan dominates in Bahrain as Janne Stiak claims title

14/04/2025 The Porsche Carrera Cup Middle East once again served as a major support series to the Formula One Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix, marking the 20th anniversary of Porsche racing in the Middle East with Lechner Racing. Notably, eighteen year old German driver Janne Stiak secured the Championship title with three races remaining in the season.

Round 5 of the 2024/25 Porsche Carrera Cup Middle East Championship at the Bahrain International Circuit was a watershed moment for Porsche racing in the Middle East. It not only served as the major support category for the Formula One Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix, but it also marked 20 years of Porsche racing in the Middle East.

In what was then Porsche Supercup in 2005, Lechner Racing's founder Walter Lechner fielded a grid of cars as the support category to the Grand Prix that was won by Richard Westbook. Two decades later, it continues to flourish as part of the most successful one-make racing series in the world.

Proving yet again its role of creating stars of the future, 18-year old Stiak wrapped up the title for the

one-make Porsche 911 GT3 Cup (type 992) in his Team DHL car despite stiff competition from Dutch driver Robert de Haan, who dominated the weekend.

“Big congratulations for Janne to win the Championship with three races to go and who has not been feeling well this weekend but he drove amazingly well and is a worthy Champion,” said Robert Lechner, series head and promoter.

“Also I’d like to say thank you to Sheikh Salman Bin Isa Al Khalifa, the CEO of the Bahrain International Circuit who showed enormous faith in Lechner Racing exactly 20 years ago at this event by allowing us to introduce Porsche Racing to the Middle East and show the world how good Middle East racing can be. Here’s to 20 more wonderful years with Porsche Middle East racing in the region,” said Lechner.

BWT Junior Racing's Robert de Haan made his intentions clear in Friday practice by clocking the fastest time in both sessions and following up with pole position for Race One with a time of 2:03.990.

His second-best lap of 2:04.106 was good enough to claim pole for Race Two, while championship leader Stiak lined up alongside him in Race One with a best time of 2:04.364. Saudi Racing's Khaled Alahmadi was third quickest overall and took Pole for both the ProAm and GCC classes while Japan's Bankcy topped the time sheets for the Masters category.

Stiak knew he had to race with a cool head as he was on target to wrap up the title this weekend and again qualified second for Race Two behind pole man de Haan with Britain's Angus Whiteside third for Proton Huber Competition and Alahmadi starting from fourth.

Under the floodlights of the Bahrain International Circuit, Dutch driver de Haan took the Race One win by 11.5 seconds from Stiak who did enough to secure the championship with his second place while Australian Caleb Sumich rounded out the podium in third.

“I’m very happy to win the title in the first race. To be a Porsche Cup champion is very special and this has been the perfect preparation for our summer in Europe. After winning the title in Race One, my focus for Sunday was to just chill a bit because I’ve not been feeling well and just focus on doing the best I can,” said Stiak.

Saudi Racing’s Khaled Alahmadi wins the ProAM and GCC Classes

Saudi Arabia’s Khaled Alahmadi won both the ProAm and the GCC classes while Bulgarian driver Alexandra Vateva, the only female driver in the series, fought hard to claim another ProAM podium finish with second in class for AV Racing ahead of a fine drive from the UAE’s Rabdan Motorsport’s Saif Al Ameri in third.

The Masters category win went to the consistent Seven X Seven car of Japan’s Bankcy with Mark J. Thomas in the M3L Team car second from MVII Racing’s Mike Mim in third

BWT's de Haan backed up his race-winning form from the previous night with another near-perfect drive under the Bahraini sun and in stifling conditions compared to the cooler temps of Race One's night race to make it two wins from two starts.

"Today's second race was a lot tougher than racing under lights last night. Compared to when I raced here last year, because we're a month later, it's a lot hotter and when I got out of the car I could really feel the heat but a huge thanks to the BWT Junior team for a fantastic weekend," said de Haan.

"Next weekend I'll be racing in Imola, so this weekend has been great preparation for the endurance fitness from the heat in the Middle East that I will need next weekend in Italy and I'd like to thank Lechner Racing for inviting me and giving me the opportunity. I can't wait to come back to the Middle East."

Stiak followed de Haan home again for second place five seconds behind the winner with Whiteside climbing on to the podium with a superb third place.

Saudi Racing dominates Pro-Am and GCC classes

Saudi Racing made it a one-two win in the ProAm and GCC classes with Alahmadi clean-sweeping the weekend with another class win this time from his team mate Saud Al Saud in second with Alexandra Vateva getting her second podium in as many days.

Bankcy also celebrated a double class win by taking the Masters Class from Mim and Thomas in third, boosting his championship position.

Stiak now holds an unassailable lead in the Championship with 235 points from Whiteside who has moved into second place with 155 points from James Wallis on 148. Saudi Arabia's Khaled Alahmadi leads the ProAM category 103 points from team mate Saud Al Saud on 92 and Vateva close behind on 74. Bankcy continued his climb and is now tied for the lead in the Masters class with Mike Mim on 64 from Petr Brekr in third on 48.

The Porsche Carrera Cup Middle East wraps up the 2024/25 season next weekend around the streets of the Jeddah Corniche as the support class to the Formula One STC Saudi Arabian Grand Prix on April 19 and 20.

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