

2 Seas set for Gulf 12 Hours title-defence

Bahraini-British motorsport team headlines 15-car grid with two GT3 cars in the fray in gruelling 2022 endurance race taking place this weekend in Abu Dhabi

● **HH Shaikh Isa bin Abdulla Al Khalifa to reunite with Croatian Martin Kodric and Briton Ben Barnicoat to compete in Pro class**

● **All-British trio of Casper Stevenson, Morgan Tillbrook and Ian Loggie to contest Am class**

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Bahraini-British racing team 2 Seas Motorsport are set to headline a highly competitive 15-car grid in the Gulf 12 Hours this weekend at Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi.

2 Seas are the defending



Flashback: From left, HH Shaikh Isa bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, Ben Barnicoat and Martin Kodric following their race win in Bahrain last year

champions of the event, which was held last year in Bahrain. This time they have returned with another two GT3 cars entered.

Team co-owner His Highness

Shaikh Isa bin Abdulla Al Khalifa will feature in one of the crews. He is reuniting with Croatian Martin Kodric and Briton Ben Barnicoat, with whom he won the 2021 race. They will once

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HH SHAIKH ISA BIN ABDULLA AL KHALIFA

again compete in the Pro class.

The second car will see an all-British trio of Casper Stevenson, Morgan Tillbrook and Ian Loggie, who are contesting the Am class.

HH Shaikh Isa commented: “The 2021 Gulf 12 Hours was

a hugely proud moment for me personally, both as a driver and a team owner, winning on home soil in Bahrain.

“I am extremely pleased that we can return to defend the title, with the added challenge of being back at Yas Marina, and I am really looking forward to being back racing with Ben and Martin.

“Hopefully we can keep the momentum going into the new season and start the year on another strong footing.

“It is also great to be challenging for the Am honours, and the line-up is a fantastic mix of youth and experience with Casper, Morgan and Ian.

“I am feeling confident that we have a real chance of a strong result, and they will certainly be a force to be reckoned with.”

Race organisers announced yesterday the full 15-car grid, which will have 12 GT3 contend-

ers and three GT4 cars.

Set to battle 2 Seas amongst the GT3 challengers are a pair of AF Corse Ferraris, two Kessel Racing Ferraris, an Akka ASP Mercedes, an Attempto Racing Audi, a Baron Motorsport Ferrari, an SPS Automotive Mercedes, a Sun Energy 1 by SPS Automotive Performance Mercedes and a Monster VR46 Kessel Racing Ferrari, who boast legendary Italian motorcycle racer Valentino Rossi in their driver line-up.

The three GT4 cars include a Century Motorsport Aston Martin, a Century Motorsport BMW and a Greystone GT McLaren.

Action is scheduled to get underway on Friday with three sessions of Qualifying. The first part of the race will then flag off at 8.35am, Bahrain time, on Saturday and continue until 2.35pm, followed by the second part from 4.30pm to 10.30pm, Bahrain time.

Loeb boosts Dakar bid with historic stage victory for BRX

● **Team's maiden stage win on world's toughest rally is first-ever by a car using sustainable fuel**

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Sebastien Loeb underlined his challenge for a first Dakar Rally triumph yesterday as he delivered an historic stage victory for the Bahrain Raid Xtreme (BRX) in Saudi Arabia.

The nine-time World Rally Champion, partnered by Fabian Lurquin in one of the three BRX Prodrive Hunters, was fastest on the 338-km stage from Hail to Al Artawiya by three mins 28 seconds from overnight leader Nasser Al Attiyah.

The result saw Loeb cut Al Attiyah's advantage alongside Matthieu Baumel in a Toyota Hilux to nine minutes 16 seconds ahead of today's 255-km special from Al Artawiya to Al Qaysumah.

The first stage win for the BRX Prodrive Hunter in the Dakar came after three hours 25 minutes of hard driving through the northern part of Saudi Arabia.

It is also the very first Dakar stage victory by a car using sustainable fuel, as the Hunter runs on Prodrive EcoPower made from agricultural waste that reduces CO2 emissions by 80 per cent.



BRX's Orlando Terranova drives his Hunter car during yesterday's stage

Loeb's BRX teammates Nani Roma and Alex Haro further confirmed the pace of the Hunter with a fifth place on the stage for the all-Spanish crew as competitors tackled the first big dunes of the 44th Dakar.

Orlando Terranova with Dani Oliveras in the third BRX car came home in 13th position to maintain their overall top 10 place in the world's largest and most demanding motorsport event, which covers 8,375 km over two weeks.

Loeb completed the stage and said: “It was a real battle as Nasser was pushing very hard over the sand as he was opening the stage and really fast. We pushed hard like we were on a WRC rally for 340km, so it was exciting and really tough, but we have a fantastic result at the end.

“Towards the end of the stage, Nasser and I were driving together through the dunes, but then there were a lot of stones. I tried to lead so I could pick the line and try to avoid a puncture so we could finish the stage well, as yesterday I had two flats.

“It was not such a big question of navigation today as the line was really clear to see for Fabian. It's a fantastic result for BRX and proof of the benefits of sustainable fuel for such long distance events. After an enormous

amount of work by so many people over so many months, we are proud to take this first stage with for the team.”

BRX team principal Gus Beteli said: “A great day with the first stage win for BRX thanks to Seb and Fabian having such great pace all the way through the difficult 338 kms

“It's quite a big task to beat Nasser in these types of dunes. We're very happy to have had

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SEBASTIEN LOEB

no major problems, which is the main thing, but we're well aware we still have 11 days to go.”

BRX saves tonnes of CO2 emissions

BRX is the first top Dakar team to run on next generation advanced sustainable fuel.

BRX is the first top Dakar team to run on next generation advanced sustainable fuel. On yesterday's 333-km stage, the team's three Prodrive Hunter cars saved over two tonnes of CO2 emissions by running the Prodrive EcoPower sustainable fuel that is created from agricultural waste material.

It reduces carbon emissions by 80% compared to petrol.

By using the fuel on the world's most demanding motor race, BRX aims to demonstrate that such fuels can be used as an alternative to petrol and diesel in road transport, and immediately make a con-



tribution to fighting climate change.

New Dakar regulations will ensure both cars and the event become carbon neutral.

BRX is leading the way with its sustainable fuel initiative, with plans to develop hybrid technologies and fuels using carbon capture, as well as hydrogen fuel cells

Noltsis wins Arcapita Stableford golf event



Winner Sara Noltsis, centre, receives her prize from Susan Scott in the presence of tournament director Rashed Al Qutami

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Sara Noltsis won the Arcapita Stableford competition at Awali Golf Club (AGC) held over the weekend.

A total of 89 players took to AGC's browns to compete in the event, and Noltsis clinched first place with a score of 44 points. En route to her victory, she had a gross of 98, breaking the 100-barrier.

Finishing as the runner-up with 43 points was Chaitanya Kodange, while in third on 41 points was Charles Dela Cruz.

There were 10 prizes in all to

be played for.

Finishing fourth with 40 points following a steady round of pars and bogeys was Farooq Ahmed, while in fifth came Dong Jin Jeong on 30 points. Also on 39 points were Lynn St Lawrence in sixth and Husain Ahmed Salem in seventh.

Rashed Al Qutami came eighth on 38 points, Sarah Hobday ninth on 37 points and 10th was Ishbel Dunn, also on 37 points.

Following play, the winners were presented their prizes in an awarding ceremony by AGC captain Susan Scott.

Spurs hit by fresh Covid outbreak ahead of League Cup semis

AFP | London

Tottenham have been hit by fresh coronavirus concerns ahead of their League Cup semi-final first leg at Chelsea on Wednesday.

Spurs already had an outbreak that affected nine first-team players in December and saw three games called off, but manager Antonio Conte said on Monday there are now an-

other couple of potential cases in the camp.

The club are waiting for results of PCR tests, while Conte is also hoping there are no further new positive tests on Tuesday ahead of their trip to the European champions.

“We are checking a couple of situations about Covid,” said Conte at his pre-match press conference.



Sebastien Loeb trimmed Qatari Nasser Al Attiyah's overall lead to just over nine minutes