

Robert Wolk, Brad Liebenberg takes GTC titles as season finale is cancelled

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Robert Wolk has taken his maiden Global Touring Cars (GTC) Championship title while Brad Liebenberg takes the GTC SupaCup title as the final round of the 2021 season, which was scheduled to be held as part of the Kyalami 9 Hour event from 2-4 December, has been cancelled.



Robert Wolk; Photo: Reynard Gelderblom

Cancellation of the seventh round

While various waves of the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in the South African motorsport calendar experiencing a host of upheavals throughout the season, GTC has been one of only a handful of categories to only have changes forced upon by one wave. This came in June and resulted in the fourth and fifth rounds being delayed by two months. Additionally, this resulted in the round at Killarney International Raceway being axed from the Extreme Festival calendar. A seventh round was subsequently slotted into the calendar at Kyalami Grand Prix Circuit with GTC being one of four local support categories for the SRO Motorsports Group's Intercontinental GT Challenge event.



Michael van Rooyen; Photo: Reynard Gelderblom

Friday, 26 November, saw the emergence of the Omicron variant of the Coronavirus and a host of travel bans imposed against South Africa, predominantly from the United Kingdom, the European Union and the Middle East. By midday, Scottish national Paul Luti, who was due to make his GTC SupaCup debut, already had to withdraw from the event. By the evening Kyalami 9 Hour and the SRO Motorsport Group released a joint statement announcing the postponement of the event until a later date which is yet to be finalised.

On Tuesday, 30 November, the GTC Management team decided to declare the championship as completed. The decision was taken following a closed stakeholder vote with practicalities relating to a delayed championship round in the early months of 2022 being the primary motivation. Various other options were also investigated before the vote.



Lee Thompson; Photo: Reynard Gelderblom

GTC Championship

Wolk (Chemical Logistics Toyota Corolla) takes his maiden GTC Championship title and a first Drivers' title for Toyota after the manufacturer had already taken the 2021 Manufacturers' title. Before this season, Wolk's previous best championship result was sixth place in 2019. Michael van Rooyen (Toyota Gazoo Racing Corolla) matches his best result by taking the runners-up spot, a feat he also achieved in 2019. Wolk took the lead on the points table in the opening round but was briefly overtaken by Van Rooyen in Round 2. Wolk retook the lead at Round 3 and gradually started increasing the gap over Van Rooyen with a host of consistent scoring finishes. Wolk finished 11 of 12 races on the podium, three of which were on the top step. Van Rooyen managed to record a win at each round while also beating Wolk in the Dunlop Pole Position and Fastest Lap statistics, but apart from his six wins, he only managed to record one further podium finish.



Brad Liebenberg; Photo: Reynard Gelderblom

Scott Temple (Chemical Logistics Toyota Corolla), Lee Thompson (Universal Healthcare Team Red Motorsport BMW 2 GTC) and Julian van der Watt (Autozone Ford Focus) finished in positions three through five with each driver having taken their maiden race victory this season. Mandla Mdakane (Toyota Gazoo Racing Corolla) completes the points table, with two podium finishes from the opening two rounds. For all four of these drivers, 2021 was their first full season in the GTC Championship.



Saood Variawa; Photo: Reynard Gelderblom

GTC SupaCup

Liebenberg (Sparco/Nathan's Motorsport) successfully defended his GTC SupaCup title to make it four national circuit racing titles for him in the last three seasons. With five victories, he held the lead throughout the season, only sharing it with runner-up Jonathan Mogotsi (Volkswagen Motorsport South Africa) briefly following the latter's maiden and only race win in Round 3. Jeffrey Kruger, the 2020 runner-up, finished in third place with two victories and after setting four new lap records in the season.

Jason Campos (Turn 1 Insurance Brokers Campos Racing) finished in fourth place, a remarkable five-place improvement on his 2020 finish while taking three race wins. Saood Variawa (SV Safaris/Varia/Mariner) completed the season as the highest-ranked rookie driver. Although he is yet to take a race win, he recorded three podium finishes. Keegan Campos (Turn 1 Insurance Brokers Campos Racing) had a superb debut in the final two rounds which saw him take a race win and two further podiums. Mikaeel Pitamber (Toys R Us/Creative Ink Media) finished in seventh place, having only competed in the first four rounds.



Andre Bezuidenhout; Photo: Reynard Gelderblom

Andre Bezuidenhout's (Motul Team Perfect Circle) eighth place also sees him finishing as the highest rank Masters (for drivers over the age of 40 years) competitor, beating Johan de Bruyn (OdorCure) by just four points. Nick Davidson (Stu Davidson & Sons) completes the top 10 with Dawie Joubert (Wild Rose Gin Rembrandt Racing) in 11th place.

Christiano Morgodo's (Morgodo Racing) solitary outing in Round 5 was enough for him to secure 12th place ahead of Rui Campos (Turn 1 Insurance Campos Racing). The latter had competed in two rounds before Keegan Campos made his debut in the same car. Samuel Hammond (Trinity Protection Services) beat the SMD Exotics pair of Manogh Maharaj and Shaun Duminy to 14th place. Round 6 debutant Danie van Niekerk (Wingfield Motors Van Niekerk Racing), Nicky Dicks (Curvent International) and Stefan Snyders (Telorex) completed the points scorers while Paul Hill (Kalex Racing) finished in 20th position with one non-scoring finish in Round 2.

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