



24HR DUBAI 2016 – RACE REPORT

January 2016

The Dubai 24 hour race is globally known as the season opener for the endurance calendar and 2016 marked the Zest Racecar Engineering squads' first entry. With an experienced line-up of successful single make championship drivers the expectations were set high.

Wednesday afternoon saw the quartet get their first run in the ZRE SEAT Leon Cup Racer. Unfortunately and almost bizarrely, rain showers curtailed running at the Dubai Autodrome which hampered the much needed seat time for all four drivers. Come Thursday's free practice, times began to tumble and the very successful Mini regulars - Kane Astin, Dan Wheeler and Andy Hack – started to feel more comfortable in the heavier and more powerful front wheel drive touring car. ZRE were to top the timing screens in the TCR class in both free practice sessions.



Opting to save tyres and wear on the car, Lucas Orrock stepped in to qualify the car with just one run. Sent out in the middle of the session when most were pitting for new tyres and/or driver change, Lucas made the most of the clean air and put in a fantastic time of 2:13.9 to clinch provisional pole by 3 tenths of a second. Unfortunately, with 5 minutes left and track temperature rapidly dropping, others were able to improve and pipped Lucas to pole.

Immediately after qualifying, focus switched straight to race pace with night practice looming. Managing to get into a good rhythm amongst the 100 car field proved difficult but ZRE again topped the timing screens, all four drivers proving they very much had the pace to be up front.

Lucas started the race and by lap 3 had passed 6 cars whilst on his way to taking the TCR class lead and began to stretch his legs out front - however on just lap 6, bad luck struck as the right rear bearing strangely collapsed which sent the car to the garage for repairs. In just under 19 minutes the right rear corner was rebuilt and after a strategy call to change drivers Andy was out and up to speed. 11 laps were lost to class leaders, almost putting us out of the race for the win before it had begun. Race pace was outstanding from all four drivers and an incredibly





consistent set of stints through the night put us back into contention, clawing back up the order to P42 overall and P2 in class with the lead down to just 7 laps at times. However, just as all seemed set for a smooth run in to the chequered flag, a suspension failure 35 minutes from the end saw all hands on deck for a quick fix. An ingenious solution saw the car able to limp round and take the flag, salvaging P53 overall and most importantly P2 and a podium position for the first ever TCR endurance race.

Congratulations to Memac Ogilvy Duel Racing who had a faultless run and took home the class win. We are extremely proud to be part of an incredibly close and fairly fought TCR class and we look forward to what the rest of the 2016 season has to offer.

Next up is the Mugello 12hr where we hope to be one step higher on the podium but until then it's back to our winter preparations.

