



## RACE REPORT ROUNDS FIVE & SIX — SNETTERTON —

Oman Air Motorbase's first victory of the season propels Ahmad Al Harthy and Michael Caine's title defence

Written by **Paul Lawrence** Photography by **Oman Air Motorbase**

**T**he fifth round of the Avon Tyres British GT Championship at Snetterton was a pivotal race for the Motorbase Performance team when its Porsche 911 GT3R was raced to victory by Ahmad Al Harthy and Michael Caine.

The team's first victory this season came after a mighty team effort and a slice of good fortune. Despite qualifying down in eighth place, the drivers battled hard through the opening hour-long race to fight up to second at the flag. However, Al Harthy and Caine were later elevated into first place when the rival Trackspeed Porsche of Jon Minshaw and

Phil Keen, which finished first on the road, was handed a 30-second time penalty for overtaking under yellow flags.

Still carrying a massive 75kg penalty due to the driver grading system, the Oman Air backed car added an eighth place finish in the second of the weekend's hour-long races. With the success in East Anglia, Al Harthy and Caine have jumped into the top four in the championship within seven points of the series leaders with four rounds left to run. From a feeling that the title contest was out of reach, the team are suddenly firmly in contention to retain their famous 2012 title.

Team boss David Bartrum was delighted with the result: "It was a very good weekend for us and the drivers did a brilliant job," said Bartrum. "The car never missed a beat, and in race two it survived two big hits from other cars. I'm over the moon with the result, as it has put us right up into contention in the points. We're the only team to have scored points in every round, and that says a lot about the reliability and consistency of the whole team."

Al Harthy started the first race in eighth place, and was immediately on the attack, climbing into fifth place on the opening lap. On lap seven he sliced past Steve Tandy's BMW Z4 at the hairpin



Perhaps the new Total 911 decals on the GT3R proved a lucky charm?



Caine and Al Harthy celebrate their first win of the 2013 British GT season

2013 British GT Championship Calendar

Event	Circuit	Start date	End date	Round
1	Oulton Park	01/04/2013	01/04/2013	Race 1, Race 2
2	Rockingham	05/05/2013	06/05/2013	Race 1
3	Silverstone	25/05/2013	26/05/2013	Race 1
4	Snetterton	15/06/2013	16/06/2013	Race 1, Race 2
5	Brands Hatch	10/08/2013	11/08/2013	Race 1
6	Zandvoort	06/09/2013	08/09/2013	Race 1, Race 2
7	Donington Park	05/10/2013	06/10/2013	Race 1

Round 5 Results – Snetterton

Pos	Car	Class	Drivers	Car	Time	Laps	Gap	Avg speed
1	1	BGT	Oman Air Motorbase	Porsche 997 GT3 R	1:00:17.853	31		94.96
2	10	BGT	M-Sport Racing	Audi R8 LMS Ultra	1:00:18.140	31	0.287	95.03
3	9	BGT	VonRyan Racing	McLaren MP412C	1:00:38.569	31	20.716	93.86
4	7	BGT	Beechdean AMR	Aston Martin Vantage GT3	1:00:39.427	31	21.574	94.49
5	25	BGT	United Autosports	Audi R8 LMS Ultra	1:00:41.893	31	24.04	94.72
6	14	BGT	Fortec Motorsports	Mercedes AMG SLS GT3	1:00:42.120	31	24.267	94.41
7	33	BGT	Trackspeed	Porsche 997 GT3 R	1:00:42.424	31	24.571	95.41
8	24	BGT	United Autosports	McLaren MP412C	1:00:42.851	31	24.998	93.85
9	18	BGT	FF Corse	Ferrari 458 Italia GT3	1:00:47.088	31	29.235	94.01
10	23	BGT	United Autosports	McLaren MP412C	1:00:55.265	31	35.436	94.56
11	40	BGT	CWS 4 x 4 Spares	G55 Ginetta GT3	1:01:04.329	31	37.412	94.42
12	6	BGT	PGF - Kinfaun AMR	Aston Martin Vantage GT3	1:01:04.329	31	46.476	93.94
13	22	BGT	Preci-Spark	McLaren MP412C	1:01:08.173	31	50.32	93.43
14	888	BGT	888 Optimum Racing	BMW Z4 GT3	1:01:12.093	31	54.24	94.82
15	13	BGT	AF Corse	Ferrari 458 Italia GT3	1:01:14.825	31	56.972	94.58
16	8	BGT	888 Optimum Racing	BMW Z4 GT3	1:01:31.065	31	01:13.2	95.43
17	78	BGT	Barwell Motorsport	BMW Z4 GT3	1:01:59.460	31	01:46.6	92.83
18	44	BGT	Optimum Motorsport	Ginetta G50	1:01:01.966	29	2 lap	87.38
19	53	BGT	Complete Racing / Steven Chaplin	Aston Martin GT4	1:01:44.073	29	2 laps	86.58
20	43	BGT	Century Motorsport	Ginetta G50	1:02:00.362	29	2 laps	86.7
21	50	BGT	Redgate Lifetime Racing	Ginetta G50	1:02:13.936	29	2 laps	87.25
22	69	BGT	APO Sport / Alex Osborne	Ginetta G50	1:00:20.820	28	3 laps	86.24
23	31	BGT	Trackspeed	Porsche 997 GT3 R	0:51:07.401	26	5 laps	95.01
24	41	BGT	Mtech	Ferrari 458 Italia GT3	0:42:05.066	21	10 laps	93.42
<b>Not Classified</b>								
--	79	BGT	Ecurie Ecosse	BMW Z4 GT3	0:02:04.391	1	30 laps	85.92
--	80	BGT	Barwell Motorsport	Aston Martin Vantage GT3				
--	32	BGT	Trackspeed	Porsche 997 GT3 R				
--	16	BGT	Team LNT	G55 Ginetta GT3				

to take fourth, and then started to put pressure on Minshaw's similar Trackspeed-entered Porsche.

The Omani racer made his pit stop from fourth place at the end of lap 14 to hand the car to Caine. The team did a perfect job with the pit stop to send the Newmarket driver back into the lead ahead of the Minshaw car, which now had Keen at the wheel.

Despite Caine's legendary speed at his home track, the added 75kg was enough of a penalty to allow Keen to retake the lead, but Caine managed to see off the challenge of the M-Sport Racing Audi to cross the line second. That later became overall victory, the first such result for Al Harthy.

In round six, Caine took the opening stint from seventh place, but dropped a couple of places and handed the car over to Al Harthy in tenth when they made their pit stop on lap 14. Al Harthy rejoined the race in 17th, and worked his way through to eighth place at the finish to cap the team's best weekend of the season to date. Despite being hit twice by other cars during the race, once from behind and once in the side, the Motorbase Porsche ran like clockwork throughout the weekend.

"It's great for everyone at Oman Air Motorbase to have won for the first time in British GT", said an elated Al Harthy. "It was a great race for us: we

qualified well, and to come through from eighth on the grid to second place was fantastic. To then take the win was the icing on the cake.

"Everyone back home in Oman, all my sponsors and supporters, they are the ones who deserve this win. The first few laps were very tough, I just had to stay out of trouble and keep pushing. The team did an amazing job in the pit stop, and Michael then did an incredible job in his stint as usual. It's great for everyone who has supported this programme."

There is now a summer break in the British GT schedule before round seven at the team's home track of Brands Hatch on 10/11 August. **911**