



PORSCHE

Press Release

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LMP1 race FIA World Endurance Championship, round 1 in Silverstone (GB)

Stronger than expected: Porsche 919 Hybrids second and third in Silverstone

Stuttgart. Despite a well calculated but significant aerodynamic disadvantage, Porsche fought for the victory with the 919 Hybrid on Sunday in Silverstone. After six hours of racing in the FIA World Endurance Championship season-opener on the challenging British Grand Prix circuit, the trio of Earl Bamber (NZ)/Timo Bernhard (DE)/Brendon Hartley (NZ) crossed the finish line just 6.173 seconds behind the winning Toyota of Sébastien Buemi (CH)/Anthony Davidson (GB)/Kazuki Nakajima (JP). Buemi had clawed in Hartley in a breath taking final stint with only seven laps to go. The second Porsche 919 Hybrid of reigning world champion Neel Jani (CH), André Lotterer (DE) and Nick Tandy (GB) finished third.

The first race of the 2017 WEC was accompanied by typical cool and changeable British weather with rather low ambient and track temperatures of around 11 degrees Celsius and occasional light rain. However, this did not hamper the atmosphere with 50,200 fans attending over the weekend.

The Porsche LMP Team – Le Mans winner and world champion in 2015 as well as in 2016 – leads the manufacturers' classification after the first of nine championship rounds on 33 points with Toyota second (26.5). In the drivers' standings, the Porsche crews are currently second and third.

How the race went for car number 1:

Jani starts three on the 27-car grid but slips behind the sister car in the first part of the opening lap. He pits after 28 laps for fuel only and continues in P4. At the second regular pit stop (fuel and tyres) after 57 laps, Tandy takes over and resumes in P4. He is up to third on lap 64 ahead of Toyota #7 which appears to have an issue. After 86 laps, Tandy comes in for fuel only and afterwards attacks the #8 Toyota. When rain sets in, Tandy stops again only three laps later (after 89 laps) and takes intermediate tyres. Having completed 98 laps, Tandy hands over to Lotterer who continues on slicks in P3 behind the leading #8 Toyota and the #2 sister Porsche. On lap 117, the #7 Toyota crashes causing a safety car period that Lotterer uses for refuelling. With 141 race laps completed, the tyre performance has dropped significantly and the team decide to stop early and let Tandy take over again. At his final stop for fuel after 171 laps, the Brit only changes the two left hand tyres – used ones from qualifying and comes home third.

How the race went for car number 2:

Hartley moves up from his fourth place start to third in the opening corners on the first lap. At the end of lap 29 he refuels and resumes in P3, consistently matching the Toyota lap times. After 59 laps, Hartley hands over to Bernhard, the German rejoining second and now ahead of Toyota #7. After 87 laps, Bernhard initially comes in for fuel only but on short notice, has intermediate tyres fitted. He rejoins the race in P2. Bamber jumps into the car 99 laps into the race, the car now on slicks again and continues in P2. During the safety car period triggered by the #7 Toyota crash, Bamber comes in for refuelling after 117 laps. On 149 laps, Hartley takes over again to chase the leading Toyota. When Hartley pits for his final refuelling after 178 laps, he leads the race by almost one minute. This and a perfect service from the pit crew enables the Kiwi to rejoin with a lead of eight seconds. It is still half an hour before the chequered flag and the Toyota not only benefits from better aerodynamics due to the high downforce configuration but also is on fresher tyres. On lap 190 of 197, and in light drizzle, Buemi squeezes himself through on the inside of Hartley's car to take the race win.

The Porsche LMP Team after the race

Fritz Enzinger, Vice President LMP1: “This was a thriller for us as well as for the spectators. Due to our consequent decision for the low-downforce aero package, as expected we couldn’t be a threat in qualifying. Therefore, we are even happier about today’s second and third place with such a marginal gap to the winners. Our low downforce aerodynamic package now has its most difficult race behind it. We can very much look forward to the next race at Spa-Francorchamps. The fans there can expect to see even more from us. Thanks a lot to the entire team.”

Andreas Seidl, Team Principal: “Today’s second and third place feels like a race win. I am very proud of every single team member in Weissach and here on site – it is amazing what this team achieved today. Despite the decision to come here with little aerodynamic downforce, both our cars were 100% reliable and very competitive. Additionally, our six drivers have again underlined what a high and balanced level they operate on. Congratulations to Toyota for a well deserved race win.”

Drivers Porsche 919 Hybrid car number 1:

Neel Jani (33, Switzerland): “I was first in our car and at the start I struggled with some oversteer. I had two very big moments on lap one because the rear tyres were not warm enough. Then, as expected, we were slower than the Toyotas but not by too much. It was all about managing the traffic on track and I had two situations that cost me a lot of time. On the second stint, when the tyres were pretty used, it wasn’t easy to handle the front axle but still it was better than expected.”

André Lotterer (35, Germany): “It was good to have my first race with the team. I had no major issues but I’m still obviously in a learning process. The car requires a completely different driving style. Overall it was a positive race and better than expected as we thought we would be a lot weaker against the Toyotas.”

Nick Tandy (32, Great Britain): “I felt comfortable with the car and all went well in my opening stint. It rained just after we had stopped for fuel. We had to do an extra stop for tyres which was a shame and that dropped us down. The car was working well in the dry as well as in the damp. Before I came in to change from slicks to inters, the track conditions were really tough. It was just a matter of trying not to crash. We rolled the dice on strategy with our car in my final stint by taking tyres and although the pace was good, I couldn't pull back the time. That said, I'm really optimistic for the future after such a good run with both cars in this set-up.”

Drivers Porsche 919 Hybrid car number 2

Earl Bamber (26, New Zealand): “I had a good stint and the car was handling well. We had mixed and difficult conditions out there but we survived and managed to keep hanging on to the Toyotas and fight. We were actually competitive on a low downforce kit in Silverstone and this was excellent.”

Timo Bernhard (36, Germany): “On my stint towards mid-race, it wasn't really easy to find a good rhythm. I managed to follow the leading Toyota and the timing to change from slicks to inters was right, but it was pretty slippery out there. The necessary change back to slicks shortened the second half of my scheduled double stint from 29 to twelve laps.”

Brendon Hartley (27, New Zealand): “It was an action-packed first lap, getting the jump on Neel around the outside of Turn 3. He gave me room, which was good. I did my best to hang on to the Toyotas while at the same time trying to save a little fuel which would open up our strategy. I was back in the car for the finish and it was very close, closer I think than many thought it would be but I was always optimistic. We took a gamble at the end by not taking tyres to retain track position. Buemi was a little forceful although he'd have got through sooner or later but we can all be happy with second place.”

All scores: <http://www.fiawec.com/courses/classification.html>

All results: <http://fiawec.alkamelsystems.com>

Note: At <https://presse.porsche.de> text, image and video material on the LMP1 programme is freely accessible. The link <https://presskit.porsche.de/motorsport/en/mediaguide/index.html> takes you straight to the Porsche Motorsport Media Guide. The LMP1 twitter feed @Porsche_Team broadcasts information, photos and video material live from the race track. Further live features from the races are available at www.porsche.com/fiawec. For further press content, please visit the Newsroom at www.newsroom.porsche.com. Video news is available at www.vimeo.com/porschenewsroom.