



PORSCHE

Press Release

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World Endurance Championship WEC, round 3, 24 Hours of Le Mans – Interim report GT

Rollercoaster first third of the race for the Porsche 911 RSR

Stuttgart. It was an interesting start to this year's Le Mans 24-hour race: Due to heavy rain, the long distance classic in France started behind the safety car for the first time in its 84-year history. The race finally went green after 52 minutes and seven laps on the 13.629-kilometre Circuit des 24 Heures. Hollywood star Brad Pitt, as the official starter, sent the record field of 60 cars on its way.

In the initial phase of the world's toughest automobile race, the Porsche 911 RSR performed brilliantly. In the #92 Porsche 911 RSR campaigned by the Porsche Motorsport works team Frédéric Makowiecki snatched the lead of the GTE-Pro class on the drying track. At times, his compatriot Patrick Pilet in the #91 vehicle also held the top spot in the strongly-represented category with 14 vehicles from five different automobile manufacturers. In the GTE-Am class, Wolf Henzler (Germany) led the field in the opening phase with the 911 RSR of the KCMG customer team. During the first race hours he swapped the lead position with his factory driver colleague Patrick Long (USA) driving for Abu Dhabi Proton Racing.

While the customer-run 911 RSR entries were still performing strongly around midnight, various problems plagued the Porsche Motorsport nine-elevens. The number 91 vehicle lost time when the cooler was punctured by stone and had to be changed. The sister car lost several positions due to a sheered-off drive peg, which required a new wheel hub, as well as a faulty power steering.

Comments after the first third of the race

Dr. Frank-Steffen Walliser, Head of Porsche Motorsport: “Under difficult conditions we were able to gain ground immediately after the start. The drivers put in a strong performance. After the track dried it was clear that we’d fall back. Our number 91 car had bad luck when a stone flew up and put a small hole in the cooler. But we repaired it and the chase continued. With our #92 we had a problem with the steering support and for safety reasons we had to call the car into the pits. In the GTE-Am class an extremely thrilling three-way battle is going on between the number 88 of our customer team Abu Dhabi Proton Racing with Aston Martin and Ferrari. It’s looking good for us.”

Driver 911 RSR #91

Patrick Pilet: “The 911 RSR is running fantastically. You could see that it’s in a class of its own in the rain thanks to its great traction. As expected, when the track dried the situation changed significantly. But the race is long, you must never give up. My last stint was good. I had no problems. Our 911 RSR was very fast. On the straight, however, it’s difficult to overtake other cars.”

Nick Tandy: “During my second stint I suddenly had a hole in the radiator. That’s a real shame, because we were doing so well.”

Kévin Estre: “Since changing the cooler, which threw us back, the car is running beautifully. Our pace is good. Unfortunately I was hampered by an LMP2 prototype and that cost me a lot of time. Now we just have to pull out all stops to work our way up the field again.”

Drivers 911 RSR #92

Frédéric Makowiecki: “As expected, we were very fast in the rain. But once the track was dry it became somewhat harder for us. We had several problems with our tyres cooling down a lot due to the slow zones. But all in all I’m feeling good about my stint.”

Earl Bamber: “The car ran without any problems during my stint. We had a good race strategy and we implemented it perfectly. We were able to go all out right from

the start and we'll continue to fight despite the setbacks."

Jörg Bergmeister: "During my stint the left rear wheel peg sheered off and I had to pit for repairs. To keep up with our opponents we have to drive over the kerbs much harder and more often. Everything was running pretty well up until then."

Customer team drivers

Michael Christensen (911 RSR #77, Dempsey Proton Racing): "I'm happy. It was tough getting the tyres up to temperature, but the performance of our 911 RSR in the wet was fantastic. We can't expect to be the fastest on the track. Our goal is to turn consistent lap times and not make any mistakes."

Richard Lietz (911 RSR #77, Dempsey Proton Racing): "The car is running well, although the balance wasn't perfect. We can't quite match the pace. The challenge now is to get through without problems. We're hoping for a little race luck."

Philipp Eng (911 RSR #77, Dempsey Proton Racing): "That was really cool. I'll never forget my first double stint at Le Mans. It was extremely exciting and great fun. After a couple of laps I got totally into the rhythm and I negotiated the traffic well. The car's good, no problems."

Patrick Long (911 RSR #88, Abu Dhabi Racing): "I had a great and fair fight with Wolf, with were both at the limit. I'm very happy so far."

David Heinemeier Hansson (911 RSR #88, Abu Dhabi Racing): "I'm very pleased. Today was the best experience I've ever had in Le Mans. The pace of our 911 RSR was excellent. I hope it can continue like this to the finish."

Khaled Al Qubaisi (911 RSR #88, Abu Dhabi Racing): "My stint was tough right from the start. I tried to drive consistently and faultlessly so that I could hand the 911 RSR off to Patrick in the lead."

Wolf Henzler (911 RSR #78, KCMG): "That was a long stint for me. I was in the car for well over three hours. The safety car stayed out for ages, but in fact it would have been possible to start the race quite a few laps earlier. The track dried up quickly. The tyres held up well and the car ran without any problems. The balance is better than in qualifying. Driving in Le Mans is simply great."

Joel Camathias (911 RSR #78, KCMG): "I'm happy with the car, it's easier to drive

than in qualifying. At the moment it's too early for us to make any sort of prognoses.”

Marc Miller (911 RSR #89, Proton Competition): “To retire so early is simply disappointing. We took on the challenge of staying in contention with two drivers after Cooper’s retirement, and everything was looking great. It was fantastic that Leh was leading. The handling of the 911 RSR was outstanding and we were consistently fast. Then a car in front of me began to lose cooling fluid, in the very quick Turn 1 of all places – I approached in fifth gear and had no chance to catch my car. I’m so sorry for the team. We had really big plans.”

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Please note: Photo and video material from the Le Mans 24 Hours and the Sports Car World Endurance Championship WEC is available for accredited journalists from the Porsche Press Database on <https://presse.porsche.de>. The Twitter channel **@PorscheRaces** provides live updates with the latest information and photos from race tracks around the world. Journalists also have access to the digital Porsche Motorsport Media Guide on <https://presse.porsche.de/motorsport>. Porsche Communication provides a new service for journalists, bloggers and online multipliers under www.newsroom.porsche.com. Up-to-date video news can be downloaded from www.vimeo.com/porschenewsroom.

Model range 911 (Type 991 II): Fuel consumption combined 9.3 – 7.4 l/100 km; CO₂ emissions 216 - 169 g/km; efficiency class (Germany): F – D

