



PORSCHE

Press Release

December 14, 2019

Race GTE, FIA World Endurance Championship WEC, round 4 Sakhir/Bahrain

### **Porsche customer team Project 1 celebrates first win of the season**

**Stuttgart.** Porsche has concluded the 2019 year with another victory in the FIA World Endurance Championship. At the eight-hour race in Sakhir (Bahrain), the American Ben Keating and his two Dutchmen teammates Larry ten Voorde and Jeroen Bleekemolen won the GTE-Am class in their No. 57 Porsche 911 RSR. After claiming pole position, the Project 1 team has moved to the top of the overall classification thanks to their maiden victory. The Porsche GT Team (GTE-Pro) has enjoyed an outstandingly successful 2019 season, however the squad was struck by misfortune at the eight-hour race.

The new Porsche 911 RSR had at times held the lead, only to have technical problems relegate both works-run vehicles far down the field. A shock absorber broke on the No. 92 car driven by the world champions Kévin Estre (France) and Michael Christensen (Denmark), while a wheel nut on the sister car manned by Gianmaria Bruni (Italy) and Richard Lietz (Austria) came loose and caused tyre damage. The repairs resulted in both ca. 515-hp cars losing about two laps to the frontrunners. Despite perfect teamwork and a strong performance from the drivers, the gap could not be closed. Porsche heads into the second half of the season ranking second in the manufacturers' classification.

In the GTE-Am class, the three customer teams gave an impressive performances with their ca. 510-hp Porsche 911 RSR in the 2017-spec. In addition to the race winners Keating, Bleekemolen and ten Voorde, the No. 86 car fielded by Gulf Racing also took

the lead at times. The all-British driver crew, Michael Wainwright, Ben Barker and Andrew Watson, concluded the final race of the year on position three after receiving a drive-through penalty. The No. 77 Porsche 911 RSR, shared by the works driver Matt Campbell (Australia), Dempsey-Proton Racing team owner Christian Ried (Germany) and the Italian Riccardo Pera, finished on sixth place. The No. 88 sister car retired after an accident. Project 1's number 56 vehicle took the flag in ninth place after a lengthy pit stop for repairs.

The 2019/2020 FIA WEC season will resume on 22 February 2020 in Austin (USA).

### Comments on the race

**Pascal Zurlinden (Director Factory Motorsport):** "I'm delighted for our Project 1 customer squad, who claimed their first win of the season and took over the championship lead. For Ben, Jeroen and Larry – our new Porsche family members in the WEC – this is a well-deserved and tremendous success. In the GTE-Pro class, our works teams were plagued by a lot of bad luck. Finishing fifth and sixth still puts us in a good position in the championship. We'll strike back next year at the Austin round."

**Alexander Stehlig (Head of Operations FIA WEC):** "What a huge disappointment. We only achieved fifth and sixth at the longest and most important race of the first half of the season. The fact that a lot of points were awarded at this round makes it even worse. We had minor defects on both cars, which we'll now take a good look at. We didn't think the last outing of the year would turn out like this."

**Richard Lietz (Porsche 911 RSR #91):** "We simply have to accept this result. We all did our best, but sometimes we even stood in our own way. We'll learn from this and will return stronger. The important thing is that we reached the finish line with our cars and at least earned some points."

**Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 911 RSR #91):** "This is not exactly the nicest present just before Christmas. Our car was fast and consistent as always, but this time we were

unlucky on the technical side. We'll examine the causes in more detail during the test on Sunday. I think it is terrific how our team never gave up and kept pushing despite the setbacks. We would have deserved more, but sometimes that's how it goes in motor racing. Setbacks are just part of it."

**Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 RSR #92):** "Initially the race went well for us. With this track layout, it was hard to find an opportunity to overtake. But at some point it worked and I was in the lead. As a result, I was able to build a decent lead, but then bad luck struck. The left rear shock broke. We lost a lot of time in the pits and couldn't catch up. We've lost a lot of ground in the drivers' standings."

**Michael Christensen (Porsche 911 RSR #92):** "Our car was strong, the team worked perfectly and we drivers did our job. A top result would have been possible at Bahrain. Unfortunately this time technology threw a spanner in the works. Things like this can happen, although of course it painful for us, particularly at this race where so many points were up for grabs."

**Ben Keating (Porsche 911 RSR #57):** "What a fantastic race! When you start from pole, everything is much easier. I was able to immediately build a gap at the front after the start. I was in high form. So good, in fact, that my team left me in the car for three straight stints. This had the advantage that we could save a driver change at the end. My teammates put in extremely strong drives, the team did a perfect job. This is my first win in the WEC, and it's now time to celebrate!"

## Race result

### GTE-Pro class

1. Thiim/Sörensen (DK/DK), Aston Martin Vantage, 235 laps
2. Molina/Rigon (E/I), Ferrari 488 GTE, 235 laps
3. Martin/Lynn (B/GB), Aston Martin Vantage, 235 laps
5. Lietz/Bruni (A/I), Porsche 911 RSR, 233 laps
6. Christensen/Estre (DK/F), Porsche 911 RSR, 233 laps

**GTE-Am class**

1. Keating/ten Voorde/Bleekemolen (USA/NL/NL), Porsche 911 RSR, 233 laps
2. Turner/Dalla Lana/Gunn (GB/CDN/GB), Aston Martin Vantage, 233 laps
3. Wainwright/Barker/Watson (GB/GB/GB), Porsche 911 RSR, 233 laps
6. Campbell/Ried/Pera (AUS/D/I), Porsche 911 RSR, 231 laps
9. Perfetti/Heinemeier Hansson/Cairolì (N/DK/I), Porsche 911 RSR, 214 laps
11. Preining/Al Qubaisi/de Leener (A/UAE/B), Porsche 911 RSR, 109 laps

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

*Further information, film and photo material in the Porsche Newsroom: [newsroom.porsche.com](http://newsroom.porsche.com). The Twitter channel @PorscheRaces provides live updates from Porsche Motorsport with the latest information and photos from racetracks around the world.*

