



PORSCHE

Press Release

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Interim report 1, FIA World Endurance Championship, Round 4, Le Mans (France)

Porsche 911 RSR in the leading group after a turbulent start phase

Stuttgart. Difficult weather conditions made an impact on the early phase of the Le Mans 24-hour race. Despite this, the Porsche works team and the customer squad WeatherTech Racing have managed to settle into promising positions. The No. 79 car fielded by the American privateer team held third place over long stretches during the first four hours in the hotly contested GTE-Pro class. Due to an alternative pit stop strategy, the car fell back to fifth place just before the four-hour mark. The two ca. 515 PS Porsche 911 RSR campaigned by the factory squad are running in positions four and seven after four hours. Gianmaria Bruni in the No. 91 and Kévin Estre in the No. 92 sister car were hampered by a less than ideal tyre choice and also became caught up in incidents.

Shortly before the start of the 89th edition of the endurance classic in France, heavy rainfall caused extremely slippery conditions on the 13.626-kilometre racetrack. In the beginning, the stewards of the meeting kept the safety car out on the circuit for two extra laps. The asphalt then dried up so quickly that the rain-tyre-shod works cars came up against insufficient grip. Gianmaria Bruni was unable to avoid a slower LMP2 prototype. The side of the Italian's No. 91 car sustained minor damages. His works driver teammate Kévin Estre lost ground after a spin and lost even more time with a brief excursion into the gravel trap after switching to slicks. During a safety car phase after about three and a half hours, bad luck hit the crew of Gianmaria Bruni, Richard Lietz and Frédéric Makowiecki and they lost almost two minutes to the top.

“The first hours were extremely eventful. Both factory cars lost positions in the initial

phase due to insufficient grip and minor incidents. We've been in pursuit mode since the second hour of racing," states Alexander Stehlig, Head of Operations FIA WEC. "Luckily, during the full course yellow, the No. 92 car ended up behind the same safety car as the leading pack. So the gap is small. Our No. 91 got caught up behind the second safety car and subsequently lost contact with the leaders. We still have many hours ahead of us. The outcome is anything but a foregone conclusion. The situation remains gripping!"

At the wheel of the No. 79 entry from WeatherTech Racing, the works driver Laurens Vanthoor gave a strong performance in the early phase. Faced with changing track conditions, the Belgian systematically worked his way up the order and handed the Porsche 911 RSR off to Earl Bamber after two stints. For the next two hours, the New Zealander was only a few seconds off third place. Because of a longer pit stop, the American Cooper MacNeil is now running in fifth place. The identical vehicle fielded by the HubAuto Racing customer team currently holds eighth place. In the GTE-Am category, the No. 88 pole-setting 911 of Dempsey-Proton Racing with Porsche Young Professional Julien Andlauer at the wheel initially retained the lead. A lengthy pit stop, however, threw the vehicle back. The best-placed 911 RSR in the amateur class after four hours is Project 1's No. 56 entry in position seven.

The race on TV, via live-stream and on the Porsche Motorsport microsite

The free-TV broadcaster RTL NITRO televises the entire Le Mans event for the first time after the RTL Group secured the broadcasting rights for the FIA WEC and the 24 Hours of Le Mans. The sports channel Eurosport also reports extensively on the 89th edition of the classic. Via their paid apps, the World Endurance Championship WEC and the Le Mans organiser ACO offer a live stream and live timing.

Porsche Motorsport compiles detailed information on the Porsche 911 RSR, the team, the works drivers and the 2021 Le Mans 24-hour race on its website <https://media.porsche.com/motorsport>. This website provides the latest news and background stories, images and extensive video features for media multipliers.

Drivers' comments on the initial phase

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 RSR #92): “Unfortunately we opted for the wrong tyres at the start. That made our first stint extremely difficult. The car’s balance wasn’t great and the grip was poor. I also spun once. When the track quickly dried up, we drove an extra lap compared to our team colleagues in the sister car because we didn’t want to have both vehicles in the pits at the same time. We lost a lot of time on this additional lap because the conditions were no longer suitable for wet tyres. The car ran much better on slicks. I hope that we can fight our way back to the top during the night at the latest.”

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 911 RSR #91): “The start was totally chaotic. Several cars from the LMP2 class that started ahead of us were really slow on the wet track. In the Esses before Tertre Rouge, one of these cars suddenly appeared in front of us. I dodged to one side, Kévin veered to the other side in the sister car. We couldn’t avoid contact. Our car sustained a few damages on the side, so the balance wasn’t ideal during my stints. When we switched drivers, the team repaired the damage as quickly as they could.”

Laurens Vanthoor (Porsche 911 RSR #79): “Because the track was still very wet at the start, the race director decided to leave the safety car out on the track for two more laps. That suited us perfectly because we’d started on tyres for drying conditions. The longer the first stint lasted, the better we did. Still, I couldn’t keep up with the two Ferraris. They managed to pull away, especially on the straights. That was a big surprise.”

Julien Andlauer (Porsche 911 RSR #88): “The initial phase after the race went green was wild. I couldn’t see anything in the spray. Under these conditions, it was simply a matter of handing the car to my teammate Dominique in one piece. I managed to stay with the frontrunners and the pace was good. If we can continue like this, then a lot is possible.”

Full results and points' standings: fiawec.alkamelsystems.com

*Further information, film and photo material in the Porsche Newsroom: newsroom.porsche.com.
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