



**PORSCHE**

Press Release

May 31, 2015

No. M 67/15

Sports Car World Endurance Championship WEC, race 3, Le Mans 24 Hours/France – Preview GT

## **Porsche Manthey squad campaigns two 911 RSR at the Le Mans classic**

**Stuttgart.** The Le Mans countdown has begun for the Porsche Manthey team. Sunday's official pre-test marked the start of the critical phase in the lead up to the 83<sup>rd</sup> edition of the world's toughest 24-hour race, contested on 13/14 June on the Circuit des 24 Heures. This race is also the highlight of this year's Sports Car World Endurance Championship WEC. After clinching a double victory in 2013, the Porsche Manthey outfit fields two 911 RSR in the GTE-Pro class. Furthermore, Porsche customer teams are back to fight for victory in the GTE-AM class. Porsche is the most successful manufacturer in the history of this long distance classic.

### **The race**

The world's most famous endurance race was contested for the first time in 1923. Each year it attracts the best sports car pilots from around the globe and more than 250,000 spectators. Hollywood also set a cinematic monument with the classic: The 1970 film "Le Mans" featuring Steve McQueen in the lead role is one of the best racing movies of all time. Just as legendary as the race is the 13.629-kilometre Circuit des 24 Heures. With corners like Mulsanne and Tertre Rouge as well as the legendary five-kilometre long Mulsanne straight, the track, much of which runs over national roads, represents one of the greatest challenges motorsport has to offer.

### **The Porsche drivers**

Six Porsche works drivers tackle the GTE-Pro class at Le Mans for the Porsche Manthey team. At this race, double championship points are awarded in all classes. Sharing driving duties in the number 91 Porsche 911 RSR are Michael Christensen

(Denmark), Richard Lietz (Austria) and Jörg Bergmeister (Germany). Richard Lietz won Le Mans in 2013, and with 13 starts under his belt Jörg Bergmeister is the Porsche GT pilot with the most Le Mans experience. The cockpit of the number 92 Porsche 911 RSR is occupied by Frenchmen Patrick Pilet and Frédéric Makowiecki with Wolf Henzler (Germany). Two customer teams contest the GTE-Am class with the Porsche 911 RSR: Taking up the race for Dempsey Proton Racing is Hollywood star Patrick Dempsey (USA), as well as Porsche works driver Patrick Long (USA) and Marco Seefried (Austria). Competing for Abu Dhabi Proton Racing are Christian Ried (Germany), the former Porsche Junior Klaus Bachler (Austria) and Khaled Al Qubaisi (Abu Dhabi). Last year the trio claimed second place. The team AAI Motorsports campaigns both a 911 RSR and a 911 GT3 RSR. With the three 919 Hybrids contesting the LMP1 class, a total of nine Porsche race cars tackle Le Mans.

### **The Porsche 911 RSR**

The Porsche 911 RSR is based on the seventh generation of the iconic 911 sports car and in its maiden 2013 season it clinched a double GTE-Pro class victory at the Le Mans 24 Hours. The winning racer from Weissach, mounted with a 3,996 cc flat-six engine in the rear and producing 345 kW (470 hp), is characterised by a consequent lightweight design and sophisticated aerodynamics. The insights gained during the vehicle's development and at race outings are directly incorporated into the design of future 911 generations. Last year the 911 RSR won three of America's most prestigious long distance classics, the Daytona 24 Hours, the 12 Hours of Sebring and Petit Le Mans, as well as the WEC races in Silverstone and Shanghai.

### **The schedule**

Free practice for the 24-hour classic is held on Wednesday, 10 June, from 16.00 to 20.00 hrs, followed by the first qualifying session from 22.00 hrs to midnight. Two more qualifying sessions follow on Thursday, 11 June, from 19.00 to 21.00 hrs and from 22.00 hrs to midnight. The flag drops for the 56-strong field on Saturday, 13 June, at 15.00 hours.

**TV tips**

Eurosport broadcasts almost the entire race live. The live transmission is only interrupted by two reports for the “24 Minutes of Le Mans” magazine with the latest news and interviews from the track on Saturday evening and Sunday morning. The three qualifying sessions on Wednesday and Thursday will also be televised live. Eurosport 2 airs the free practice live on Wednesday. Eurosport’s detailed TV schedule during the Le Mans week is available on [www.eurosport.com](http://www.eurosport.com).

**Quotes leading up to the race**

**Dr Frank-Steffen Walliser**, Head of Porsche Motorsport: “We experienced a very productive day of testing. The different weather conditions that we had today could also occur during the race, so that suited our preparations very well. We have trialled various tyre combinations from standard slicks to wet tyres. We were able to find a setup for the 911 RSR for all conditions and the drivers are now prepared as well. Our cars run like clockwork and the drivers have become well-attuned to each other. We’re heading into the race week full of confidence.”

**Marco Ujhasi**, Overall Project Leader GT Works Motorsport: “We’re heading to Le Mans better prepared than ever before. We used the test day to perfect the 911 RSR for the most important race of the year. The key to success at Le Mans is relatively simple: You have to perform at your highest level for as long as possible and make sure that your car is in top condition for the final sprint so that you can really attack. If we manage this and we get through the night intact, we should have a chance at fighting for victory.”

**Drivers 911 RSR #91**

**Michael Christensen**: “I came to Le Mans as a fan in 1999 and 2000 and I was completely bowled over even then. To now race there myself is a dream come true. I’m looking forward to the 20,000 Danish fans expected there again this year. It’s hugely motivating. Le Mans is a race that every driver wants to win. This increases the pressure but it adds to the attraction. There is no greater challenge in our sport.”

**Richard Lietz:** “It’s wonderful to come home again. We all feel really great at Le Mans, not least because Porsche has celebrated its greatest successes at this race. A victory at Le Mans eclipses everything else. It’s the most important race of the year. I love it. If I couldn’t be here as a competitor I would buy an entrance ticket and watch the action from the grandstand as a spectator.”

**Jörg Bergmeister:** “I’ve won Le Mans once, but that was eleven years ago. It’s high time for another victory. Le Mans is the absolute highlight of the year and it’s particularly important for Porsche, of course, because of the history. We finished in second two years ago, so it’d be great if we could climb to the very top of the podium this time.”

### **Drivers 911 RSR #92**

**Patrick Pilet:** “Le Mans is unique. It’s a race we can’t wait to contest every year and every one of us is determined to win. Winning Le Mans makes your season an instant success – regardless of what comes afterwards. So we’ve prepared ourselves accordingly. The pre-test under difficult weather conditions was a good conclusion to our preparations. We’re fit for Le Mans.”

**Frédéric Makowiecki:** “Le Mans is something very special. It’s almost like the whole season in one race. When you win at Le Mans you’ve achieved the ultimate goal. Its appeal and tradition puts it on a par with classics like the Indy500 and the Monaco Grand Prix. I came to Le Mans often as a child and I always dreamed of being able to eventually race here myself one day. This fascination has grown stronger from year to year.”

**Wolf Henzler:** “It’s great to be back at Le Mans after a year’s break. The atmosphere is unique. No other race has such charisma. It’s a very special challenge for me to support my teammates Patrick and Fred at this critical race. I won Le Mans in 2010 with Richard Lietz and Marc Lieb. That was an unforgettable experience.”

### **Customer team drivers**

**Patrick Dempsey (911 RSR #77):** “There’s something magical about coming to Le Mans. It’s incredibly special to contest this classic with Porsche, the most successful

brand in the history of the race. Porsche's great Le Mans victories were part of my childhood and youth. As a team, we've made great progress this season and we're at a good level. Testing in the rain was a valuable experience for me. I felt good and safe in the 911 RSR. Now I'm looking forward to the race."

**Patrick Long (911 RSR #77):** "This is my twelfth time here at Le Mans. Of course I try to share as much of my experience as possible with my teammates. But once the race starts, they all know what they have to do for us to fight for victory."

**Klaus Bachler (911 RSR #88):** "The day of testing was not easy because of the rain, but we learned a lot. I'm so excited to race here. Le Mans is the highlight of my year. Second place last year was one of the greatest achievements of my career. In my entire life I'll never forget that day."

## GO

Please note: Photo and video material of the Le Mans 24-hour race and the Sports Car World Endurance Championship WEC are available for accredited journalists from the Porsche Press Database under the internet address <https://presse.porsche.de>. On this website you can also activate the **Porsche Motorsport SMS Info Service** to receive the latest news and information. The Twitter channel @PorscheRaces provides live updates with the latest information, photos and videos from race tracks around the world. Journalists also have access to the 2015 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](http://www.newsroom.porsche.com).