



PORSCHE

Press Release

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24 Hours of Le Mans and WEC, LMP1:

Porsche 919 Hybrids take P1, P2 and P3 in first Qualifying

Stuttgart. With a strong performance the three Porsche 919 Hybrids finished first, second and third in the first of three qualifying sessions for the Le Mans 24 Hours. The best overall lap time for the field of 56 cars was achieved by Neel Jani on Wednesday night, who lapped the 13.629 kilometre long circuit in 3:16.887 minutes. The Swiss has established a new qualifying record for the current track length by beating Peugeot's pole position time from 2008 (3:18.513 min). Jani shares car number 18 with Romain Dumas (FR) and Marc Lieb (GER). Timo Bernhard (GER) achieved the second fastest time today, which was also good enough to beat the old record. Just like Jani, he was in the car as soon as qualifying began before his teammates Brendon Hartley (NZ) and Mark Webber (AUS) took over the number 17 prototype later in the session. For the third trio, with the Le Mans rookies Earl Bamber (NZ) and Nico Hülkenberg (GER) sharing car number 19 with Nick Tandy (GB), it was the Britain who did their fastest lap with the around 1,000 HP hybrid race car in 3:19.297 minutes to come third.

In Le Mans three qualifying sessions are held with each of them lasting for two hours. The best lap time achieved in these six hours is the one that decides each car's grid position. Because the weather conditions are currently tending to be changeable, it is not clear what Wednesday's time sheets from the dry session may be worth in terms of grid positions. However, despite a long interruption because of a red flag, all nine Porsche LMP1 works drivers managed to get their five mandatory night laps completed.

The second qualifying session for the 24 Hours of Le Mans will take place on Thursday from 19:00-21:00 hrs, with the third and final qualifying following in the dark from 22:00-24:00 hrs. On Friday the Porsche press conference is scheduled from 13.00-14.00 hrs, before the drivers go to the traditional parade in the Le Mans city centre. On Saturday at 15:00 hrs the 83rd staging of the world's toughest endurance race will get underway.

The one and only free practice session of the event was held in the late afternoon finishing at 20:00 hrs, and saw Porsche in positions one, three and four. The fastest overall lap during the four-hour session was achieved by Webber with car number 17 in 3:21.362 minutes. The number 18 sister car (Jani, 3:22.059 min) came third, followed by car number 19 (Tandy, 3:22.819 min). Despite changing conditions with some rain showers and a long red flag interruption, the team managed to get most of its work done in terms of aerodynamic settings, tyre evaluation and car balance.

Quotes after first qualifying:

Fritz Enzinger, Vice President LMP1: "You've got to have a great deal of respect for the drivers if you look at these lap times. Today was a great team effort and a nice first step into Le Mans 2015, but it isn't anything more than this yet. The entire team has to cope with huge expectations and managed that. I especially want to thank them for that. Tomorrow we will see how the track conditions develop."

Alexander Hitzinger, Technical Director LMP1: "Today I'm just very happy and pleased with the new qualifying record the Porsche 919 Hybrid has achieved. It absolutely proves that we have developed a fast car. Tomorrow will tell how much the competition can improve – weather permitting. And then, I'm sure, we are going to face a tough race."

Andreas Seidl, Team Principal: "Conditions were not easy today. But, despite some showers in free practice, we have managed to get through our programme."

Today the focus was on race preparation. The cars ran trouble-free and the team did a great job. Especially with cars 17 and 18, the interaction between drivers and engineers worked out very nicely in positioning the cars in a good gap in the traffic. I'm also extremely pleased with the performance of our new drivers – they have been on a par with our more experienced drivers under all circumstances.”

Drivers Porsche 919 Hybrid number 17

Timo Bernhard (34, Germany):

(8 races: overall victory 2010, class victory GT 2002, 2nd place GTE class 2013, 2nd place GT2 2005)

“I did a real qualifying lap right when the session started and it was good fun. At the entrance of the Porsche Curves I came across a LMP2 car, but everywhere else it was clear. A lap in three minutes 17 is really fast in Le Mans, and the time sheets look great for us. However, we don't want to lose focus and must keep preparing for race day, which is when it counts.”

Brendon Hartley (25, New Zealand):

(3 races since 2012)

“One-two-three is just fantastic for us today. We have had some good runs in daylight and at night and, most importantly, we know now we are quick and can keep focussing on race preparation.“

Mark Webber (38, Australia):

(participated 1998 and 1999 but not in the race, 1 race in 2014)

“Qualifying was the first time that we had run properly in the night with dry conditions, so all the drivers were able to get a feeling for the track and the car. We didn't push too much for qualifying, because here in Le Mans it is not so important to start from pole position. We focused on the race, because that's what matters.“

Drivers Porsche 919 Hybrid number 18

Romain Dumas (37, France):

(14 races: overall victory 2010, 3rd place overall 2007, class victory GTE 2013, 2nd place GT class 2001 and 2002, 3rd place GT class 2004)

“For sure we are competitive. The car is fast and good fun to drive. At night it is always tricky with the slower cars on the track, and you have to get used to it again. Now we have to keep working.”

Neel Jani (31, Switzerland):

(6 races since 2009)

“I was the first one in our car in qualifying. Of course, we had to tick off the list the five mandatory night laps. My initial lap was good, but not perfect because it wasn't entirely clear. That it was still the fastest lap of the day and a qualifying record is very pleasing. But I know this wasn't the maximum, and we have to wait to see what happens in the other qualifying sessions.”

Marc Lieb (34, Germany):

(9 races: class victories GTE 2013, GT2 2010, GT 2005, 2nd place GT class 2003)

“When I saw the lap times that we set in the beginning of the session, I was quite sure that we had good chances to set the best time. I thought nobody is going to reach our times. All in all, the car felt very good. Only the balance is not yet how we want it to be, but I am sure we will get that sorted before the race.”

Drivers Porsche 919 Hybrid number 19

Earl Bamber (24, New Zealand):

(Rookie)

“This is a very good result for today and for Porsche. My first night laps have been a special experience for me. I didn't really have a clear lap, but the car is absolutely great to drive.”

Nico Hülkenberg (27, Germany):

(Rookie)

“When testing I enjoyed night driving a lot, but here in Le Mans this is even more special. This atmosphere here gives you goose bumps. Facing the traffic I know well that experience means a lot here to find the last tenths. But I'm quite happy and my enjoyable anticipation for the race is increasing.”

Nick Tandy (30, Great Britain):

(2 races with Porsche in GTE-Pro)

“Between free practice and qualifying we made a huge step forward, but we have not made use of our full potential yet. We set our fastest lap time in the third lap of the stint when the tyres were not working perfectly anymore. Unfortunately I was stuck in traffic in the two laps before that. Therefore, we should be able to improve on our time if it doesn’t rain tomorrow.”

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