



**PORSCHE**

Press Release

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GT – Preview: World Endurance Championship WEC, Round 3, Le Mans 24 Hours/France

### **Debut for the new 911 RSR at the world's toughest automobile race**

**Stuttgart.** The 24 Hours of Le Mans is an ageless classic. At the 85th edition contested on 17/18 June, 60 cars and 180 drivers will again take up the challenge. With 18 overall and 105 class wins, Porsche is the most successful manufacturer in the history of this prestigious pursuit twice around the clock and is represented again this year by a large contingent. The Porsche GT Team fields two new 911 RSR in the famously cutthroat GTE-Pro class. This marks the debut at the world's toughest automobile race for the 510 hp race car, which was developed by Porsche Motorsport in Weissach based on the seventh generation of the iconic 911 sports car. With two 919 Hybrid contesting the LMP1 class as well as four 2015-spec 911 RSR campaigned by Porsche customer teams competing in the GTE-Am class, a total of ten Porsche race cars, 13 Porsche works drivers and one Porsche Young Professional take on the Le Mans marathon.

### **The race**

The fascination of the Le Mans 24 Hours is as unique as the challenge for drivers and teams. This is not least due to the 13.629-kilometre Circuit des 24 Heures with its combination of a permanent racetrack and normal national roads. Also setting this racetrack apart are its legendary corners like Mulsanne and Tertre Rouge as well the almost five-kilometre-long Mulsanne straight. In the list of winners, the best racing drivers in the world have been immortalized. Even Hollywood has paid tribute to the prestigious long distance race in the French province: The 1970 film *Le Mans* featuring Steve McQueen in the lead role is regarded as one of the best racing movies of all time.

**The Porsche drivers**

In the GTE-Pro class, Richard Lietz (Austria), Frédéric Makowiecki (France) and Patrick Pilet (France) share the cockpit of the new 911 RSR with the starting number 91. Their works driver colleagues, Michael Christensen (Denmark), Kévin Estre (France) and Dirk Werner (Germany) man the second Porsche 911 RSR (#92) fielded by the Porsche GT Team. In the GTE-Am class, Porsche customer teams take on the 24-hour challenge with four 911 RSR from the 2015 model year. In this class, the Porsche Young Professional Matteo Cairoli (Italy) celebrates his first ever Le Mans race. He shares driving duties in the #77 vehicle run by Dempsey Proton Racing with the two German racing drivers Christian Ried and Marvin Dienst. Porsche works driver Patrick Long (USA) tackles Le Mans for the 14th time, this time in the #93 Porsche 911 RSR campaigned by Proton Competition with Abdulaziz Turki Al Faisal (Saudi Arabia) and Mike Hedlund (USA). The drivers of Proton Competition's second 911 (#88) is the former Porsche Junior Klaus Bachler (Austria) as well as Stéphane Lemeret (Belgium) and Khaled Al Qubaisi (Abu Dhabi). In Gulf Racing's 911 RSR (#86), Ben Barker and Michael Wainwright from Great Britain join forces for the long-distance classic with Nick Foster (Australia).

**The Porsche 911 RSR**

The 911 RSR, which celebrated its race debut at the Daytona 24-hour classic in January, is a completely new development: the suspension, body structure, aerodynamic concept, engine and transmission have all been designed in Weissach from scratch. Depending on the size of the restrictor, the motor, which is now positioned in front of the rear axle, puts out around 375 kW (510 hp). Thanks to the particularly large rear diffuser combined with a top-mounted rear wing, the level of downforce and the aerodynamic efficiency were significantly improved. The 911 RSR, whose predecessor model claimed a double victory at Le Mans in 2013, tackles the second 24-hour race of its maiden season again sporting the further developed factory design with the primary colours white, red and black.

### The schedule

The race starts on Saturday, 17 June, at 15.00 hrs CEST. The free practice is held on Wednesday from 16.00 to 20.00 hrs, followed by the first qualifying session from 22.00 hrs to midnight. Qualifying 2 and 3 are contested on Thursday 19.00 to 21.00 hrs as well as 22.00 hrs to midnight respectively. The warm-up on Saturday is between 09.00 and 09.45 hrs.

### Live on TV and in the Internet

**Eurosport 1** broadcasts the entire race right through to the podium ceremony live. The free practice and the first qualifying on Wednesday, the 2nd and 3rd qualifying on Thursday as well as the warm-up on Saturday are covered live on this channel free-to-view. As part of the live broadcast, Le Mans record winner Tom Kristensen will provide a running commentary on the race as well as background reports and news from the paddock. **n-tv** broadcasts live from Le Mans at six different times: On Saturday from 14.30 to 16.00 hrs and from 19.00 to 21.00 hrs as well as Sunday from midnight to 02.00 hrs, 08.00 to 10.00 hrs, 12.00 to 13.00 hrs and from 14.00 to 14.45 hrs.

On [www.porsche.de/lemans](http://www.porsche.de/lemans) (German) or [www.porsche.com/lemans](http://www.porsche.com/lemans) (English) a 24-hour web special with live onboard camera footage from the cockpit of the factory vehicles will be shown. The website also provides information on the current race status via live ticker and live timing as well as photos and videos. The **FIA WEC App** is free in its basic version, however, for a fee, the App offers a live stream of the entire race plus live timing and interviews.

### Additional TV coverage of Le Mans

Documentaries on the preparation for the race of the year can be watched on **n-tv** (*Only Victory Counts*) and on **Sport 1** (*Road to Le Mans*): **n-tv** on Saturday, 10 June, at 11.05 hrs (with repeats on Saturday before the start of the race), **Sport 1** on Friday, 16 June, at 23.00 hrs. Highlights of the race will also be aired on Monday, 19 June, at 17.00 hrs. **RTL** broadcasts a ten-minute race roundup on 24 June before the Formula 1 qualifying of the Azerbaijan Grand Prix.

**Comments before the race**

**Dr. Frank-Steffen Walliser**, Vice President Motorsport and GT Cars: “For sports car fans around the world, Porsche and Le Mans belong together. We are the most successful manufacturer in the history of this fascinating long-distance classic, and as such we have an obligation to uphold this tradition. That’s why we’re back again this year with a large squad. We’re particularly looking forward to debuting our new 911 RSR in the strongly supported GTE-Pro class, which is once again enormously competitive. To go up against four well-known manufacturers and eleven vehicles all manned by top pilots at this toughest and most spectacular race definitely poses the greatest challenge of the season for us.”

**Marco Ujhasi**, Director GT Factory Motorsports: “Le Mans is an extraordinary race that throws very special demands at us. For this reason, preparing for the season highlight is always very intense, especially when you compete with a new car. The main thing at Le Mans is to look after each vehicle over the course of the race so that we have a healthy car to attack in the final phase and fight for victory. We hope we succeed in this.”

**Drivers 911 RSR #91**

**Richard Lietz**: “I love this race. If I weren’t able to compete here as a driver, I’d buy myself a ticket and come with my best mates to watch it from the grandstands. With its fascination and especially its rich tradition, Le Mans is on a par with classics like the Monaco Grand Prix and the Indy500.”

**Patrick Pilet**: “To win this race is one of the major goals in my career. And it’s not just because I’m French and live just 90 minutes away from the racetrack. The great atmosphere and the enthusiasm of the 250,000 spectators leaves nobody cold. With the new 911 RSR and a super team backing us, we are in the best position to be able to fight for victory.”

**Frédéric Makowiecki**: “It’s been a dream of mine to compete at Le Mans since I was a kid. Still today, this race is something very special for me. No driver can resist the fascination that grows from the pre-test to the race day. I wish nothing more than a

victory. It would be wonderful if this could happen with Porsche and the new 911 RSR.”

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

**Michael Christensen:** “Le Mans is a highlight for every race driver. When I competed here for the first time a childhood dream came true. This is my third time now and I can hardly wait until it finally starts. Porsche has celebrated many of its greatest successes at Le Mans. This is a tradition that comes with an obligation and of course that adds to the pressure. But we’re used to that.”

**Kévin Estre:** “Le Mans is the world’s most important race and I’m pleased to compete for the Porsche GT Team. We’ve worked extremely hard and we feel well prepared. As a Frenchman you’re of course standing in the spotlight, it’s like a British tennis player at Wimbledon. The expectation of the fans is high. I’ll do everything I can not to disappoint them.”

**Dirk Werner:** “It’s a great honour for me to be able to compete at the world’s greatest race; especially this year with Porsche, the company that has written history at Le Mans as the most successful manufacturer. We face huge challenges, particularly with the very demanding racetrack and the diverse conditions that you have to cope with over the course of 24 hours.”

### **Drivers for customer teams**

**Patrick Long (911 RSR #93, Proton Competition):** “This will be the 14th time I’ve raced at Le Mans so I know exactly what to expect from this unique racetrack. Nevertheless, this classic is one of the biggest challenges you can face as a racing driver. It’s the highlight of the season and it’s very important because of Porsche’s history here.”

**Matteo Cairoli (911 RSR #77, Dempsey Proton Racing):** “To be a part of the 24 Hours of Le Mans is something every driver dreams about. For me this dream will now come true. I can’t tell you how much I’m looking forward to it. With Dempsey Proton Racing we finished on the podium this season at Silverstone and Spa – so why shouldn’t we do it again at Le Mans?”

## The Sports Car World Endurance Championship WEC

Sports prototypes and GT vehicles contest the Sports Car World Endurance Championship (WEC) in four classes: LMP1 (eg. Porsche 919 Hybrid), LMP2, LMGTE-Pro (eg. 911 RSR) and LMGTE-Am (eg. 911 RSR model year 2015). They all compete together in one race but are classified separately. At Le Mans, double points are awarded in all classes towards the championship.

Please note: Photos and videos of Le Mans 24-hour race and the Sports Car World Endurance Championship WEC are available for 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. The 2017 digital Motorsport Media Guide is available on <https://presse.porsche.de/motorsport>. Porsche Communication provides an innovative service for journalists, bloggers and online multipliers under [www.newsroom.porsche.com](http://www.newsroom.porsche.com).

