



PORSCHE

Press Release

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Qualifying 1, World Endurance Championship WEC, round 2 in Le Mans/France

Porsche 911 RSR sets best time in the first qualifying session

Stuttgart. Porsche has left a strong impression after the first qualifying session on the Circuit des 24 Heures. In his very first lap, start driver Gianmaria Bruni set a phenomenal time of 3:47.504 minutes in his #91 911 RSR, a time that none of his opponents could even come close to. The Italian's 510 hp racer was setup specifically for a fast lap and benefited from the fact that the 13.626-kilometre circuit has become significantly faster compared to last year. Bruni's vehicle then suffered a puncture and was unable to continue. However, he and his teammates Richard Lietz (Austria) and Frédéric Makowiecki (France) managed to retain the top spot in the first qualifying session at the toughest long-distance race in the world.

Behind the trio, Michael Christensen (Denmark), Kévin Estre (France) and Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium) planted their #92 Porsche 911 RSR on second. The two other 911 RSR that will contest the GTE-Pro class at the 86th edition of the Le Mans 24 Hours posted the sixth and seventh quickest time.

In the GTE-Am class, three Porsche racers topped the time sheets at the first qualifying. Driving for Dempsey-Proton Racing, Porsche Young Professional Matteo Cairoli (Italy) posted the fastest lap in his 510 hp 911 RSR (#88). In the second Dempsey-Proton Racing entry, Porsche Junior Julien Andlauer (France) set the second fastest time in the #77 car, with Ben Barker (Great Britain) turning the third quickest lap in Gulf Racing's #86 vehicle.

On Thursday, two more qualifying sessions will be held on the Circuit des 24 Heures from 19:00 to 21:00 hrs and from 22:00 hrs to midnight. The race takes off on Saturday at 15.00 hrs.

Qualifying quotes

Pascal Zurlinden, Director GT Factory Motorsport: “Our clear goal was to be the fastest in qualifying. We’ve been working towards this since the test day. Gianmaria Bruni pulled out all stops and put in a perfect lap right at the start. We knew that this could only happen at the beginning of the session, because that’s when the traffic is lightest. The great result with three Porsche 911 RSR cars on the first three positions in the GTE-Am class shows us just how well our customers understand the car. If you look at the times in all classes, you’ll notice that the racetrack has become at least three seconds faster compared to last year.”

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 911 RSR #91): “My first lap was fantastic with very little traffic and so I was able to coax everything out of the car. In the second lap I took Turn 1 exactly as I had in the previous lap, however I suddenly lost the car while turning in and ended up in the gravel. When I climbed out I noticed that the front right tyre was flat. I’m very pleased with my great time.”

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 RSR #92): “The focus for us in the first qualifying was to work on our race pace. Setting second behind our sister car showed that we’re on the right path, although not everything ran perfectly. We have to keep working on the car until the race and we’ll be using Thursday’s two qualifying sessions to do this.”

Michael Christensen (Porsche 911 RSR #92): “The conditions on the track are tricky. It’s dark and cold and you have to get used to the new tyres. The car feels good, we’re just a little off the pace at the moment.”

Laurens Vanthoor (Porsche 911 RSR #92): “It was important for me to adjust the car to night-time conditions and to see how high the tyre wear is. Everything felt fine, we just have to get a bit more out of the car.”

Patrick Pilet (Porsche 911 RSR #93): “The nine-eleven felt good. We had to cope with a lot of traffic, as well. The changes we made between the free practice and qualifying worked well. But if we want to stand on pole we need to improve and this is what we’ll definitely do over the next two qualifying sessions.”

Earl Bamber (Porsche 911 RSR #93): “Our qualifying was okay. Our car was fast, but unfortunately we encountered a lot of traffic. We can do so much better if we manage to get a free run in the second and third qualifying sessions on Thursday.”

Nick Tandy (Porsche 911 RSR #93): “The car was quick, but the traffic out on the track was heavy. We collected a lot of data for various setups, which will be particularly beneficial for the race. There was just one minor incident where we had to exchange a few body parts. Otherwise everything ran smoothly.”

Timo Bernhard (Porsche 911 RSR #94): “That was an exciting first day. We learned a great deal about the car’s handling and we tweaked the setup accordingly. Now we’re on the right track. Sven put in a good lap, even though he had a bit of traffic to contend with. Still, we have work to do in terms of the race setup. We hope it stays dry for the second qualifying so that we can make progress in this regard.”

Romain Dumas (Porsche 911 RSR #94): “Everything went really well and we managed to gradually improve. Our goal was to give the drivers as many laps as possible so that we could setup and improve the car. We’re on the right track and now have to continue in the same way to qualify for top-five spot.”

Sven Müller (Porsche 911 RSR #94): “Today was my first time driving in the dark at Le Mans. It was quite a challenge but I’m pleased with my laps. Unfortunately I encountered a lot of traffic in the Porsche Curves, and that prevented me from turning an optimal lap. But we still have two qualifying sessions to improve.”

Jörg Bergmeister (Porsche 911 RSR #56): “Unfortunately I didn’t manage to get a really fast lap in. It started well, my sector times were good, but then I got held up by traffic in all three laps and that made a fast time impossible.”

Julien Andlauer (Porsche 911 RSR #77): “The first qualifying went really well and we were second fastest. We managed to tick everything off our schedule and further optimise the vehicle. The car was very fast and very consistent, which makes us all the more optimistic for the race. However, we still have two qualifying sessions ahead of us and we’ll keep pushing.”

Christina Nielsen (Porsche 911 RSR #80): “I think the first laps at night are fascinating for every driver. The temperatures drop and the tyres offer increasingly more grip. We tried the soft and extra-soft tyres, both compounds felt good. Driving in the dark on the Le Mans racetrack with a lot of traffic is very tricky. You probably only really find your rhythm when you’ve driven one or two night stints during the race.”

Matteo Cairoli (Porsche 911 RSR #88): “I’m very pleased with my lap – it was clean and free of traffic. I take my hat off to the engineers who have done a great job with setting up the Porsche. Whether accelerating, braking or taking corners, the car handles well in every situation and is easy to drive.”

Ben Barker (Porsche 911 RSR #86): “Like many other drivers, we had to battle with heavy traffic out on the track. We had to make a few changes to the car to be even faster and more competitive.”

Patrick Long (Porsche 911 RSR #99): “We didn’t attempt a fast lap because we’re working on a setup for the race. And we’ll continue to do this in the next two qualifying sessions.”

Result Qualifying 1

GTE-Pro class

1. Lietz/Bruni/Makowiecki (A/I/F), Porsche 911 RSR, 3:47.504 minutes
2. Christensen/Estre/Vanthoor (DK/F/B), Porsche 911 RSR, +1.593 seconds
3. Mücke/Pla/Johnson (D/F/USA), Ford GT, +1.677 seconds
4. Hand/Müller/Bourdais (USA/D/F), Ford GT, +2.078 seconds
5. Pier Guidi/Calado/Serra (I/GB/BR), Ferrari 488 GTE EVO, +2.350 seconds
6. Dumas/Bernhard/Müller (F/D/D), Porsche 911 RSR, +2.585 seconds
7. Pilet/Tandy/Bamber (F/GB/NZ), Porsche 911 RSR, +2.757 seconds
8. Priaux/Tincknell/Kanaan (GB/GB/BR), Ford GT, +2.925 seconds
9. Farfus/Félix da Costa/Sims (BR/P/GB), BMW M8 GTE, +3.075 seconds
10. Briscoe/Westbrook/Dixon (AUS/GB/NZ), Ford GT, +3.089 seconds

GTE-Am class

1. Al Qubaisi/Roda/Cairolì (UAE/I/I), Porsche 911 RSR, 3:50.728 minutes
2. Ried/Andlauer/Campbell (D/F/AUS), Porsche 911 RSR, +1.202 seconds
3. Wainwright/Barker/Davison (GB/GB/AUS), Porsche 911 RSR, +1.789 seconds
4. Flohr/Castellacci/Fisichella (CH/I/I), Ferrari 488 GTE, +2.028 seconds
5. Bergmeister/Lindsey/Perfetti (D/USA/N), Porsche 911 RSR, +2.257 seconds

11. Babini/Nielsen/Maris (I/DK/F), Porsche 911 RSR, +4.841 seconds

13. Long/Pappas/Pumpelly (USA/USA/USA), Porsche 911 RSR, +12.379 seconds

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