



PORSCHE

Press Release

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FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC), LMP1, Round 6, Fuji (J), Free Practice

Tricky task at Mount Fuji and encouraging lap times

Stuttgart. The Fuji Speedway in the Japanese Alps welcomed the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) in bright sunshine with temperatures of over 20 degrees Celsius. The Porsche Team had two positive free practice sessions, each 90 minutes long, in preparation for the sixth of eight World Championship rounds. The two Porsche 919 Hybrids with the driver trios of Timo Bernhard (DE)/Brendon Hartley (NZ)/Mark Webber (AU) and Romain Dumas (FR)/Neel Jani (CH)/Marc Lieb (DE) were fourth and second in the morning and first and third in the afternoon.

Intense work on the aerodynamic set-up of the Le Mans Prototypes meant more bodywork parts than usual had to be ready in the garage. Featuring a very long 1,500 metre straight, but also many tight corners, the circuit, that is only 4.549 kilometres long, places contradicting challenges regarding the car's downforce level. The team used both components with which it won on the high-speed circuit of Le Mans as well as those that were fitted to the winning car at the rather windy Nürburgring and Circuit of The Americas tracks. In the end the team tended to go for a relatively high downforce level and paid the price for this with lower top speeds on the straight. Another aspect is a change of weather conditions that is forecast: When the six-hour race is held on Sunday (start time is 11:00 hrs local time) Mount Fuji might well be covered in rain clouds.

In Japan Porsche wants to extend its lead in the manufacturers' championship and catch up to the leading Audi trio in the drivers' standings. Not an easy task: the

prototype from Ingolstadt showed a strong performance on the first day of practice.

Quotes after free practice:

Andreas Seidl, Team Principal: “We enjoyed a very productive first day with the track dry all the time. Both cars ran smoothly all day. In the morning session we did an aero comparison on car number 17, which gave us a clear result. In the second session we were focussing on tyre testing on long runs. It is remarkable that, while doing this, Brendon Hartley’s fastest lap of 1:24.460 minutes was more than two seconds faster than last year’s pole position. The weather forecast for Sunday predicts rain, which will certainly add extra excitement to the race.”

Drivers Porsche 919 Hybrid number 17

Timo Bernhard (34, Germany): “We have done lots of basic set-up work, made sure we got the hybrid settings right, and worked out which aero package would be best for this varied circuit. It didn’t take us long to decide to go for a higher downforce configuration. This certainly costs top speed, but makes the car much better to drive.”

Brendon Hartley (25, New Zealand): “It looks quite close here between us and the Audi from what I saw on the average lap times. We still have a bit of work to do for the long runs, but the single lap pace seems to be quite good. In the last sector, with its corners that come one after another, it is tricky to get by the traffic, but that is part of the game.”

Mark Webber (39, Australia): “We have had a good first day here. Fuji’s very long straight, combined with the tight corners in the last sector, obviously requires a good compromise for the aero set-up. We are still chasing the track a little bit, but gathered lots of good data and had zero problems.”

Drivers Porsche 919 Hybrid number 18

Romain Dumas (37, France): “We have been good in both sessions, but the competition is good as well. For a long time it wasn’t that close with Audi. In the

morning session we split the job between the cars to find out the best possible aero configuration. We will go for a rather high downforce level.”

Neel Jani (31, Switzerland): “I did a race stint in the second session to check how the car and the tyres perform on the long run and to get a feeling for it. When the car is understeery, the tyres are under pressure. We try to help the tyres the best way we can with the set-up. We are not completely where we want to be and will keep working on improvements.”

Marc Lieb (35, Germany): “The grip level at the front axle is relatively low here. The car was instantly good in fast corners, but the slow corners at the very end of the lap were tricky for us. We made some changes and they worked well in the afternoon. The car was less understeery, and, also with a full fuel tank, the balance improved.”

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