



PORSCHE

Press Release

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Race report, Total 24 Hours of Spa, Spa-Francorchamps/Belgium

Porsche celebrates one-two victory at endurance classic in Belgium

Stuttgart. With a strong effort from its teams, Porsche won the 24 Hours of Spa. The GPX Racing Porsche 911 GT3 R crewed by the current FIA WEC Sportscar World Champions Kévin Estre (France), Michael Christensen (Denmark), and Austria's Richard Lietz finished first at the Belgian long distance classic after 363 laps, securing Porsche the seventh overall success from the world's most important GT3 event. The 500+hp Porsche 911 GT3 R fielded by Rowe Racing (#998) rounded off the one-two victory of the Porsche teams at the marathon in the Ardennes. Five of the six Pro-cars from Porsche finished the 71st running of the 24 Hours of Spa in the top ten.

Right from the start, the rain played the leading role at the 24-hour classic in Belgium. In the early hours of Sunday morning, the race had to be stopped for almost six hours due to heavy downpours. But even this interruption couldn't end the victorious drive of the number 20 Porsche 911 GT3 R. The crew with Estre, Christensen, and Lietz, which had been relegated down the field by a drive-through penalty in the evening, put in an impressive charge through the field. When the race was halted, the driver trio had made it back to eighth place with a series of flawless and constantly fast stints and made up more positions after the race was restarted. With two hours to go, the GT3 R driven by Kévin Estre took the lead, which the Frenchman held driving the slick-shod car on a damp track surface. After nine years, it was time to celebrate again for Porsche at the prestigious endurance classic in the Ardennes.

The Rowe Racing number 998 Porsche 911 GT3 R also had a race of mixed fortunes on the 7.004 kilometre storied circuit. Patrick Pilet (France), Frédéric Makowiecki (France) und Nick Tandy (Great Britain) also lost many places due to a drive-through penalty and caught up to the frontrunners in the night with a strong performance in the rain. During the closing stages of the race, rain specialist Tandy conquered second place with several skilful overtaking manoeuvres to secure the one-two win for Porsche.

Scoring three more top ten placings, the Porsche customer teams crowned their strong and unified showing at the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps. The Porsche 911 GT3 R fielded by Rowe Racing with the starting numbers 98 and 99 finished fifth and seventh. KÜS Team75 Bernhard brought its identical number 117 nine-eleven home in ninth place.

Comments on the race

Fritz Enzinger, Vice President Porsche Motorsport: “Congratulations to our customer teams at Spa. The effort of the engineers, strategists, the pit crews, and the drivers impressed me deeply. They all co-operated with our support crew from Weissach in the best possible way. We’ve scored this victory together. And the Porsche 911 again proved to be the car to beat at sportscar races.”

Sebastian Golz, Project Manager Porsche 911 GT3 R: “I’m speechless. For 24 hours one challenge came after the other at Spa. We put in a strong performance under all conditions – from the qualifying to the last race lap. Our teams worked perfectly together over the entire weekend. This makes this one-two victory a common success for all. The start was great, afterwards the best running cars were unfortunately thrown back by penalties but charged back to the front in the night. The drivers and teams didn’t make any more mistakes, dictated the pace and pushed right through to the end. The 911 GT3 R put in a strong performance at Spa. Our rear engined car displayed fantastic traction, and all drivers praised the driveability of the

new GT3 R. Under all track conditions the nine-eleven was the best car. Moreover, our vehicles didn't have the slightest technical problems."

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 GT3 R #20): "This was another typically crazy race at Spa. We had to master various weather conditions and aquaplaning. With tough wheel-to-wheel racing we conquered one position after the other, we were on slicks in the rain and on wets on the drying track. During the last 30 minutes of the race there were yellow and safety car phases – the way to our victory was truly a tough piece of work. But after the race was halted in the morning we were confident to have the right strategy to make it to the top. I am proud of our team that only started the co-operation with Porsche this year. And I am proud to be a member of this squad."

Michael Christensen (Porsche 911 GT3 R #20): "An unbelievable race. Tackling Spa is always something special with the unpredictable weather. And the fights on track are extremely tough from start to finish. As a team we have mastered all those feats well and did a great job right to the end."

Richard Lietz (Porsche 911 GT3 R #20): "This marks a special victory because our team ran a Pro car for the first time. We were welcomed well and now we are the happy ones who won. Everything was prepared immaculately, and the team have surely deserved this win."

Nick Tandy (Porsche 911 GT3 R #998): "What a fantastic result for Porsche! The outcome of consistently hard work from each of our team members every day. I am truly happy. We gave it all and had a good tactic. In the end we only narrowly missed out on the win."

Mathieu Jaminet (Porsche 911 GT3 R #98): "I am proud of our team effort. A one-two win plus three GT3 R in the top five is simply great. Unfortunately we made a strategic error in the opening phase of the race which cost us time. Then our charge went well, we made it to fifth place, but we could even have finished better."

Matt Campbell (Porsche 911 GT3 R #99): “This was a crazy and a very tough race under constantly changing weather conditions. Unfortunately there were several cautions towards the end and we were not able to catch up more. All Porsche teams co-operated well at Spa, and it was incredible fun to drive here for Porsche.”

Laurens Vanthoor (Porsche 911 GT3 R #117): “I am not content. The car was good and we had the pace. But unfortunately some mistakes threw us back. That’s a bit disappointing, but we’ll be back next year to give it another go.”

Klaus Bachler (Porsche 911 GT3 R #54): “This was an interesting race for our team. We had to adapt the strategy again and again because of the changing weather, and we succeeded. With only ten minutes to go I suffered a flat tyre in an accident. For us this was the end of the race.”

Result

1. Estre/Christensen/Lietz (F/DK/A), Porsche 911 GT3 R, 363 laps
2. Pilet/Makowiecki/Tandy (F/F/GB), Porsche 911 GT3 R, 363 laps
3. Engel/Buurman/Stolz (D/NL/D), Mercedes-AMG GT3, 363 laps
5. Müller/Dumas/Jaminet (D/F/F), Porsche 911 GT3 R, 362 laps
7. Olsen/Campbell/Werner (N/AUS/D), Porsche 911 GT3 R, 362 laps
9. Bernhard/Vanthoor/Bamber (D/B/NZ), Porsche 911 GT3 R, 362 laps

248 drivers took up the 24 hour classic at Spa-Francorchamps in 72 cars. Eleven marques were represented at the 71st running of the Ardennes marathon which is regarded the world’s most important GT3 event.

Further information, film and photo material in the Porsche Newsroom: newsroom.porsche.de. The Twitter channel [@PorscheRaces](https://twitter.com/PorscheRaces) provides live updates from Porsche Motorsport with the latest information and photos from racetracks around the world.

