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919 Hybrid in the heat of the night

With its two Le Mans prototypes, Porsche has enjoyed a smooth first day of the sixth round of the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) on the Circuit of The Americas, Texas.



The two Porsche 919 Hybrid defied the Texan heat in Austin. With ambient temperatures of up to 35 degree Celsius, the two Le Mans prototypes covered 158 laps in total of the 5.513 kilometre long Circuit of The Americas (COTA).

In the first of two 90-minute free practice sessions the championship leaders Romain Dumas (FR), Neel Jani (CH) and Marc Lieb (DE) were second (1:48.500 minutes). The reigning world champions, Timo Bernhard (DE), Brendon Hartley (NZ) and Mark Webber (AU), finished fourth (1:49.248 minutes). The second practice session was held after dark. Bernhard/Hartley/Webber were third fastest (1:47.959 minutes), while the sister car of Dumas/Jani/Lieb came fourth (1:48.130 minutes).

Porsche leads the manufacturers' world championship

The demanding track is known as the favourite of the modern Formula One circuits. High ambient temperatures can be expected and the timing for the race provides an extra challenge: The six-hour race will start at 17:00 hours with sunset being at 19:32 hours.

Porsche leads the manufacturers' world championship after having won four races in 2016 – Silverstone, Le Mans, the Nürburgring and Mexico City. It is the third sea-son for the innovative Porsche 919 Hybrid. During this year's five championship rounds Porsche has scored 201 points, Audi is second (158) and Toyota follows in third position (112). In the drivers' world championship, this year's Le Mans winning trio of Romain Dumas (FR), Neel Jani (CH) and Marc Lieb (DE) has extended its lead to 41 points ahead of the best placed Toyota drivers. The first Audi drivers fol-low in P3 with 74.5 points. The second Porsche works drivers crew of Timo Bern-hard (DE), Brendon Hartley (NZ) and Mark Webber (AU) recently achieved two con-secutive race wins and improved to fifth in the standings. The reigning World Champions have scored 53.5 points.

In 2015 Jani/Lieb took pole position with an average lap time of 1:46.211 minutes. The overall fastest lap was done by Jani in 1:46.018 minutes. Hartley/Webber were second on the grid with a qualifying time of 1:46.375 minutes. (In the WEC the average of the respective best laps of two drivers counts for the grid position.)

Bernhard/Hartley/Webber won last year's race. After leading for a long time, Dumas/Jani/Lieb finished fifth in the LMP1 class. A lap on the Formula One circuit in Austin, that was opened in 2012, is 5.513 kilometres and has 20 corners. The circuit goes anti clockwise.

At normal race speed (no safety car) the Porsche 919 Hybrid is due for refuelling after every 31 laps at the latest. Refuelling and changing tyres may only be done sequentially, not at the same time. Only four mechanics may work simultaneously when changing tyres and may use only one wheel gun. That takes a lot longer than in Formula One, for example. The drivers are normally only changed when new tyres are needed.

A set of Michelin slick tyres should ideally last two fuel tank fills.

The WEC efficiency regulations limit the amount of energy that can be used per lap. In Austin the Porsche 919 Hybrid can use 5.01 megajoule of electrical power from energy recovery systems and 1.411 kilograms or 1.930 litres of petrol.

These different types of tyres can be used: three different compounds of slick tyres for dry conditions, a hybrid tyre (no profile either but softer cover) for mixed conditions and wet weather tyres. 6.5 sets of dry weather tyres are available per car for qualifying and the race.

Quotes after Free Practice

Team Principal Andreas Seidl: "This was a healthy first day for us. Despite the hot conditions, both 919s were running smoothly, so we were able to complete our programme as planned. Alongside various cooling options, the focus was on tyre testing. All drivers have done their mandatory five night laps. The competition looks very strong here. We will now carefully analyse our data to do the next step tomorrow."

Drivers Porsche 919 Hybrid number 1

Timo Bernhard (35, Germany): "Especially in the first session, it was really hot out there and this will be about the same for the start of the race at 5pm on Saturday. It's a balancing act to get the car's setup right for the race, because the longest part takes place after sunset in cooler conditions."

Brendon Hartley (26, New Zealand): "It is great to be back at COTA and in the City of Austin. Our car performed very well straight away, and we used the day to run through a long list of test items."

Mark Webber (40, Australia): "It is nice to feel the car in a normal situation again with a lot more grip after the high altitude experience in Mexico. Driving anticlockwise is actually something that requires a little bit of familiarisation, because we sit on the left hand side of the 919 Hybrid and this makes it hard to see the apexes of turns 11 and 15, but I was tuned in quickly."

Drivers Porsche 919 Hybrid number 2

Romain Dumas (38, France): "COTA is a nice and interesting track with a lot of grip. You have everything here – fast corners, slow corners, with camber and without camber. I think the 919 performs best in the fast corners between turns two and nine."

Neel Jani (32, Switzerland): "We definitely have a good baseline with our car, now it is all about developing the details in the best possible way. If it stays as hot as it was today, the race is going to be a battle for men and machines."

Marc Lieb (36, Ludwigsburg): "On the first day of practice, of course, the car is not a hundred per cent perfectly tuned for the track, but this isn't an issue, as we'll get that done. I really do enjoy fast corners like those in sector one. They are flowing in sixth gear at generally over 200 km/h – I could do with more of such sections."

Porsche 919 Hybrid

The Weissach developed Porsche 919 Hybrid competes in the highest category of the 31 car field, which is the class one Le Mans prototypes (LMP1). The two-time Le Mans winning car produces a system power of over 900 HP (662 kW). Its combustion engine is a ground breaking downsizing motor: the very compact two-litre V4 turbocharged petrol engine drives the rear axle with almost 500 PS (368 kW). Two different energy recovery systems – brake energy from the front and exhaust energy – feed a lithium ion battery that, on command, passes on the energy to an E machine to power the front axle with an extra boost of over 400 PS (294 kW).

The six-hour race on the Circuit of The Americas (COTA) is the sixth out of nine rounds of the 2016 WEC and starts on September 17 at 17:00 hrs local time (midnight in Central Europe).

Europort offers a free of charge Livestream of the six-hour race in Mexico City on his [website](#).

The official WEC App can be downloaded free of charge in its basic version and can be extended (not free of charge) by a live stream. Several live features, such as on-board cameras, timing and GPS tracking, are implemented in the Porsche Motorsport App (free of charge) and at porsche.com/fiawec.

All points' standings: <http://www.fiawec.com/courses/classification.html>

All results: <http://fiawec.alkamelsystems.com>

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Downloads

Porsche 919 Hybrids defy the Texan heat, Press release, 09/16/2016, Porsche AG

Next stop Texas – the Porsche 919 Hybrid in the heat of the night, Press release, 09/12/2016, Porsche AG

Videos

<https://player.vimeo.com/video/160098933>

External Links

<http://www.porsche.com/usa/eventsandracing/motorsport/>

http://www.eurosport.de/wec/die-wec-rennen-live-bei-eurosport_sto5706038/story.shtml