

Successful season opener in Silverstone

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12/04/2015 The 919 hybrid finished second in the opening round of the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC). The 911 RSR also clinched second in the GTE-Pro class.

The driver trio of Romain Dumas (France), Neel Jani (Switzerland) and Marc Lieb (Germany) secured the first trophy for the new Porsche 919 Hybrid at the six-hours of Silverstone (GB). Sharing the number 18 prototype, they covered 201 laps and finished second in what was a thrilling and totally dry race.

During the first one-and-a-half hours of the opening round of the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) the two Porsche 919 Hybrids were even boasting a one-two. Mark Webber (Australia) started from pole position and had opened up a good lead when a gearbox problem forced him to retire the number 17 sister car. Dumas/Jani/Lieb took over the lead from their team mates, but later in the race had to concede the win to Audi by 4.6 seconds after a breath-taking battle.

“A great promotion for endurance racing and for the WEC.”

How the race went for car number 17:
Mark Webber started from pole and increased his lead to more than seven seconds during the first 23 laps. At the end of lap 24 he made his first pit stop and changed the tyres during a full course yellow. He continued with a strong lead until after almost one and a half hours into the race he was called into the pits because of a gearbox problem. He retired after 44 laps.

How the race went for car number 18:
Romain Dumas started second on the grid and managed to defend his position until his first stop after 24 laps during a full course yellow. Marc Lieb took over and stayed in second place on fresh tyres until he moved into the lead when the sister car retired. After 53 laps it was the next stop for fuel, tyres and a driver change and Neel Jani got behind the wheel. From lap 58 onwards he was in a battle that was well worth watching with his fellow countryman Marcel Fässler in the Audi. They swapped the lead on numerous occasions before the Audi pitted at the end of lap 80. Jani stopped two laps later and handed the car over to Dumas, who continued in P3. After 112 laps Lieb got behind the wheel again and at the end of lap 142 Jani was back in the car. In the final stages of the race he was again chasing Fässler, but could not catch him in the end.

Fritz Enzinger, Vice President LMP1: “Second place is a great result for the season’s opening race after we managed to put both cars on the front row yesterday. For the crowd it is fantastic when the first three cars finish less than 15 seconds apart after six hours of racing. We have seen the most exciting battles today with a very special Swiss input. This opening round was a great promotion for endurance racing and for the WEC.”

GTE-Pro class: Second place for Porsche 911 RSR

A successful start to the season for the Porsche Manthey team in the Sports Car World Endurance Championship WEC: At the six-hour race on the Silverstone Circuit, Porsche works drivers Michael Christensen (Denmark) and Richard Lietz (Austria) clinched second in the GTE-Pro class in front of over 45,000 spectators.

The 470 hp winning racer from Weissach – which is based on the seventh generation of the iconic 911 sports car and has been modified in several areas for this season – was just ten seconds shy of the leader after 172 laps. In the sister 911 RSR, their French works driver colleagues Frédéric Makowiecki and Patrick Pilet had been running in the lead at the halfway mark, but ultimately saw the flag in seventh.

Early in the race on the storied British race track on which Porsche last year scored a double class victory, the #92 Porsche 911 RSR powered by the legendary flat-six engine in the rear swept into the lead. After all the teams had completed their first pit stop, starting driver Patrick Pilet moved to the

front of the strong GT Field for the first time.

Frédéric Makowiecki defended the top position and handed the 911 RSR after his stint to his teammate. While still running in first, Patrick Pilet was forced into the pits halfway through the race with a defective shock absorber. Repairs put them more than one lap down and cost them their chance of victory.

“All in all, it was a positive start to the season for us.”

At that point, all hopes for the Porsche Manthey team rested on Michael Christensen and Richard Lietz in the #91 contender. The pair honed in on their rivals in front, and put them under increasing pressure in the last two hours. First, Richard Lietz slipped into third place, with Michael Christensen snatching second in the final phase before going in pursuit of the leader. Putting in a faultless drive and consistently fast lap times, he finally brought home second place for the Porsche Manthey squad.

In the GTE-Am class, the former Porsche junior Klaus Bachler (Austria), Christian Ried (Germany) and Khaled Al Qubaisi (Abu Dhabi) scored fifth in the 911 RSR fielded by Porsche's customer team Abu Dhabi Proton Racing. In the nine-eleven campaigned by Dempsey Proton Racing, the American race driver and actor Patrick Dempsey, Porsche works driver Patrick Long (USA) and Marco Seefried (Germany) secured sixth place.

Dr Frank-Steffen Walliser, Head of Porsche Motorsport: “That was a perfect race for our number 91 car. The drivers, pit crew and engineers did a superb job. We're very pleased with second place. And with the number 92 Porsche, we can't fault the drivers' performance, the strategy or the pit stops. We'll now analyse the shock absorber problem and make sure it doesn't happen again. All in all, it was a positive start to the season for us.”

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