

Porsche wins the GT class at the 24 Hours of Le Mans

13/06/2022 Porsche has won the GTE-Pro class at the 24 Hours of Le Mans. Works driver Gianmaria Bruni from Italy, Richard Lietz from Austria and Frédéric Makowiecki from France crossed the finish line in first place after an intensive and gripping race over 350 laps.

Race

At the wheel of the No. 91 Porsche 911 RSR, the trio set a new distance record for GTE vehicles: 4,769 kilometres. The sister car driven by Kévin Estre (France), Michael Christensen (Denmark) and Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium) wrapped up the 90th edition of the long-distance classic in fourth place. In the GTE-Am category, the Porsche customer team WeatherTech Racing from finished the race on the podium.

“The Porsche GT Team has upheld our great tradition at the 24 Hours of Le Mans today. This success makes me very proud,” says Michael Steiner, Member of the Board for Research and Development at

Porsche AG. “A big thank you to the team, the drivers and everyone else who contributed their expertise and passion to make this 109th class victory possible for Porsche.”

“Victory at the final outing of the 911 RSR at Le Mans: that’s an indescribable feeling,” said a delighted Thomas Laudenbach, Vice President Porsche Motorsport. “When our No. 92 got a puncture while running in the lead, I thought it might all be over. But our Corvette rivals also experienced bad luck. At the exact moment, we were where we needed to be with our No. 91 car – because no one gave up: neither the team nor the drivers. We’ve been rewarded for the hard and systematic work that was also done behind the scenes. It simply feels great!”

Watched by large crowds, the 24 Hours of Le Mans took off on Saturday in sunshine and summer temperatures. With a track temperature of up to 40 degrees Celsius, the two Porsche 911 RSR initially moved into positions three and four and remained within striking distance of the leader. The critical hours began as the sun dipped below the horizon. In cooler temperatures, the two racers managed to make the best use of the tyres over large stretches to progress through the field. In the evening, the successful crew sharing the No. 91 car experienced a setback: Makowiecki was handed a drive-through penalty for exceeding the track limit. The winning car then covered the distance without further incident and benefited from their competitors’ bad luck, among other things, on the way to class victory. At its final factory mission at Le Mans, the 911 RSR took the flag with a lead of 42.684 seconds.

Meanwhile, the No. 92 car was plagued by misfortune. Kévin Estre, Michael Christensen and Laurens Vanthoor put in a strong drive through the night to take the lead. By sunrise, the trio from France, Denmark and Belgium – who were also the 2018 Le Mans class winners – had eked out a lead of more than two minutes. Then came the blow: Shortly before 8 am on Sunday, the front right tyre of the 911 RSR blew out and damaged a large section of the front. Due to the slow drive back to the pits and the subsequent 10-minute repairs, the team lost three laps. The No. 92 car ultimately crossed the finish line in fourth place.

“What we witnessed was a classic long-distance race. Those who experience the least number of incidents end up on top of the podium – today, that was our No. 91 car,” concluded Alexander Stehlig, Director Factory Motorsport FIA WEC. “I’m delighted for the victorious crew, who have often not had luck on their side in the past. The No. 92 crew had bad luck with a puncture, but they never gave up. Fourth place earns us many important points in the championship. I’m also thrilled that we finally won at Le Mans with the latest version of our car, the RSR-19.”

In the GTE-Am class, five Porsche 911 RSR were candidates for victory. Ultimately, however, only one team managed to survive the gruelling 24-hour race without major setbacks. The No. 79 entry from WeatherTech Racing driven by Julien Andlauer from France and the two Americans Cooper MacNeil and Thomas Merrill, turned 343 almost flawless laps to claim second place. GR Racing’s No. 86 car achieved fourth place. With 75 minutes left on the clock, all hopes of a podium finish were dashed for the Hardpoint crew. Andrew Haryanto from Indonesia slid into the gravel trap and lost four laps. The No. 99 vehicle ultimately finished eleventh.

Fortune was also not with Dempsey-Proton Racing with the American actor and team co-owner Patrick Dempsey. The No. 88 entry took the flag in fifth place, with the No. 77 sister car dropping out of the top five about two hours before the end of the race due to a broken wishbone and ultimately finishing the race in 14th place. The No. 93 car, in which Hollywood star Michael Fassbender celebrated his Le Mans debut, reached the flag in 16th place. The Project 1 squad from Germany's Lower Saxony experienced the worst luck: The cars fielded by the experienced customer team had to retire early.

Double points were awarded at the 24 Hours of Le Mans – round three of the FIA World Endurance Championship. Thanks to its success in France, Porsche has extended its lead in the manufacturer's standings. The new Le Mans class winners Bruni and Lietz have moved into the lead of the driver's standings. Round four of the season will be contested on 10 July at the Italian Formula 1 circuit in Monza.

Drivers' comments after the race

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "A dream has come true for me today. I've won Le Mans three times with Ferrari. After my move to Porsche, winning was at the top of my list. I've been incredibly close twice with second place – today was finally my day. The era of the GTE-Pro class comes to an end with a victory for Porsche at Le Mans. It doesn't get better than that."

Richard Lietz (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "Le Mans has chosen its winners – and this time it was our turn. We were where we needed to be when others ran into problems. I think we made the least mistakes over the 24 hours and therefore deserved to win. I was part of the crew at the first victory for a factory-RSR in 2013 and also for the final outing of the GTE-Pro class at Le Mans today. That's a wonderful story."

Frédéric Makowiecki (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "Finally! I've been trying for nine years and now I'm at the top of the podium! I finished second several times and was often the fastest car, but it never quite worked out. Today was different. We weren't perhaps the ones to shine with top lap times, but we made it over the distance with the fewest mistakes. This win feels so good."

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "We were among the frontrunners for a long time but then we had to pit to change the brakes. That threw us back a bit. Afterwards, we pushed and our pace was good – but this time it simply wasn't meant to be, because a minor puncture had major consequences. The repairs took so long that it threw us out of contention for victory. Still, it's a great day for Porsche. Congratulations to our teammates in the No. 91 car: They did a great job. And it's terrific that the Porsche 911 RSR was able to win the last race in the GTE-Pro class at Le Mans."

Michael Christensen (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "That was definitely not the race I'd hoped for. It wasn't my day. I made a couple of mistakes which had a major impact. When you lock up the wheel and get a flat spot, it doesn't normally lead to the tyre blowing out. But unfortunately, that happened today. The

team had to do some extensive work, which was unfortunate. We were doing so well in the race and the 911 RSR was running beautifully. Afterwards, the car handled really well but unfortunately, the repairs simply cost us too much time."

Laurens Vanthoor (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "We were super fast with our No. 92, at times we even dominated. Unfortunately, the puncture shattered all our dreams. We finished fourth in the end. That yields some decent points for Porsche and my colleagues who are contesting the whole FIA WEC season. Congratulations to the No. 91 crew: they deserved to win the class."

Cooper MacNeil (Porsche 911 RSR #79): "The race was eventful, exhausting and anything but easy. We couldn't do more than second place against such tough competition. Our 911 RSR ran like clockwork and our WeatherTech Racing team did a great job. Thanks for the incredible support, particularly to Porsche. If you finish second, your eyes are always on the top step of the podium. Still, I'm satisfied with my third podium finish at Le Mans."

Race results

GTE-Pro class
1. Bruni/Lietz/Makowiecki (I/A/F), Porsche 911 RSR #91, 350 laps
2. Calado/Pier Guidi/Serra (GB/I/BR), Ferrari 488 GTE #51, 350 laps
3. Fuoco/Molina/Rigon (I/E/I), Ferrari 488 GTE #52, 349 laps
4. Christensen/Estre/Vanthoor (DK/F/B), Porsche 911 RSR #92, 348 laps
5. Fraga/Bird/Van Gisbergen (BR/GB/NZ), Ferrari 488 GTE #74, 347 laps

GTE-Am class
1. Keating/Chaves/Sörensen (USA/P/DK), Aston Martin #33, 343 laps
2. MacNeil/Andlauer/Merrill (USA/F/USA), Porsche 911 RSR #79, 343 laps
3. Dalla Lana/Pittard/Thiim (CDN/GB/DK), Aston Martin #98, 342 laps
4. Wainwright/Barker/Pera (GB/GB/I), Porsche 911 RSR #86, 340 laps
5. Poordad/Heylen/Root (USA/B/USA), Porsche 911 RSR #88, 340 laps
11. Haryanto/Picariello/Rump (RI/B/EST), Porsche 911 RSR #99, 338 laps
14. Ried/Priaulx/Tincknell (D/GB/GB), Porsche 911 RSR #77, 336 laps
16. Campbell/Fassbender/Robichon (AUS/IRL/CDN), Porsche 911 RSR #93, 329 laps
DNF. Iribe/Barnicoat/Millroy (USA/GB/GB), Porsche 911 RSR #56, 241 laps
DNF. Leutwiler/Cairoli/Pedersen (CH/I/DK), Porsche 911 RSR #46, 77 laps

Newsflash

Porsche has further expanded its overall record at the 24 Hours of Le Mans with a triumph in the GTE Pro category. At the 90th edition of the long-distance classic in France, Gianmaria Bruni (Italy), Richard Lietz (Austria) and Frenchman Frédéric Makowiecki were victorious at the wheel of the No. 91 Porsche

911 RSR. The identical sister car with the starting number 92 crossed the finish line in position four.

As a Le Mans record winner, Porsche built upon its track record on the tradition-steeped 13.626-kilometre circuit. With 19 overall victories and a total of 109 class wins, the Stuttgart sports car manufacturer is the undisputed leader in the almost 100-year history of the world's most famous long-distance race. More information, quotes from drivers and management as well as photos and videos will be available shortly.

Interim report 2

The No. 92 Porsche 911 RSR from the Porsche GT Team leads the GTE-Pro class after the first 16 hours. Customer teams WeatherTech Racing and Hardpoint are in a good position in the 90th edition of the 24 Hours of Le Mans. The Porsche GT Team is leading the GTE-Pro class at the 24 Hours of Le Mans. After putting in strong drives through the night in their No. 92 Porsche 911 RSR, Kévin Estre, Michael Christensen and Laurens Vanthoor have built a gap at the front of more than a minute with eight hours of racing to go. In 2018, this trio from France, Denmark and Belgium achieved a class win here at the world's greatest endurance race. The No. 91 sister car is currently running fourth after almost 16 hours of racing. In the GTE-Am class, the customer teams WeatherTech Racing and Hardpoint still have realistic chances of winning.

“Our goal was to get through the night safely and we did this very well,” outlines Alexander Stehlig, Director Factory Motorsport FIA WEC. “The race pace is blistering and the competition is extremely close. What's unusual is that, in the first 16 hours of racing, the safety car hasn't been deployed once and there hasn't been a single full course yellow. This means that everyone has driven at the limit for a very long time. That's tough – not only for the drivers but for the material as well. For this reason, we had to change the brakes on the No. 92 car relatively early. But that's behind us. Now it's about the next eight hours at full tilt. It'll be a sprint to the flag.”

Interim report 1

The Porsche GT Team and the customer squads put in a good show in the early hours of the 24 Hours of Le Mans. Both 911 RSR from the factory team running in the Top 3. In GTE-Am class, two cars from WeatherTech Racing and Dempsey-Proton Racing in P1 and P2. The Porsche GT Team and the customer squads have put in strong drives in the opening phase of the 24 Hours of Le Mans. At the four-hour mark, the two Porsche 911 RSR fielded by the works team are currently running in second and third in the fiercely contested GTE-Pro class. In the GTE-Am category, the 911 entries from WeatherTech Racing and Dempsey-Proton Racing lead the 23-strong field after a thrilling early phase in France.

“It's an extremely close race at the top,” says Alexander Stehlig, Director Factory Motorsport FIA WEC. “Our cars are matching the pace of the two Corvettes. The leading car got an advantage when a slow

zone was activated so the gap increased significantly. Overall, everything is going well on our side. Only the No. 91 car had some vibrations coming from the tyres during the first stint, so we changed the wheels of the car earlier than on the sister car. For this reason, our two 911 RSR are implementing different strategies. Now we're focusing on getting through the night safely and then let's see what's possible for us tomorrow."

Makowiecki and Estre start the 24-hour-race

In sunny conditions and temperatures of around 26-degrees Celsius, Frédéric Makowiecki (#91) and Kévin Estre (#92) took the wheel of the two factory vehicles at the start of the 90th running of the long-distance classic. Right from the outset, the two Frenchmen put in a strong pace and were able to remain within striking distance of the leading pack at all times. Their teammates Richard Lietz (Austria) and Michael Christensen (Denmark) worked their way up the order during their first stints to rank second and third. The two cars still hold these positions after four hours.

The Le Mans night passed without any major incidents for almost all competitors tackling the 90th edition of the 24 Hours of Le Mans. Estre, Christensen and Vanthoor maintained a steady pace and at times even managed to eke out a healthy advantage of over two minutes at the front. In the sister car, their colleagues Gianmaria Bruni (Italy), Frédéric Makowiecki (France) and Richard Lietz (Austria) drove a similarly strong pace, only to have a drive-through penalty, among other things, hamper the team's charge. The No. 91 car, however, is running in the lead lap and still has decent chances of a podium finish.

In the GTE-Am category, the WeatherTech Racing and Hardpoint customer teams seamlessly continued their impressive performance into the night. Over long stretches, the two Porsche 911 RSR with the starting numbers 79 and 99 swapped places in the lead. At the 16-hour mark, the two cars occupied positions two and three and were within striking distance of the race leader. The racing 911 fielded by Proton Competition, in which Hollywood star Michael Fassbender celebrates his Le Mans debut, is already eleven laps down. Project 1's No. 46 entry retired after several incidents.

Drivers' comments after 16 hours of racing

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "It's a tough race where we have to fight incredibly hard at all times. We initially lost some ground because our competitors' cars performed better in the sunshine and high track temperatures. In the cooler night temperatures, we turned the tables and established a strong lead. At around six in the morning, we changed the brakes and this cost us about a minute. But the others will surely have to pit again, too, and that'll definitely balance things out."

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "I drove a difficult double stint in the early morning hours. There was a slow zone almost the entire time. I was barely able to keep the tyres warm during that period. As a result, the car had constant understeer. We certainly lost some time, but I couldn't do a

thing about it. Now the sun is back. That should help us in terms of tyre use."

Alessio Picariello (Porsche 911 RSR #99): "So far, everything is going according to plan for us. Our tyres are holding up well. We always have plenty of grip in the first stint, but we can still set a good pace at the end of a double stint. Unfortunately, we had some bad luck with a slow zone. We came into the pits when the track was still clear, whereas the competition pitted when everyone had to slow down. We lost about a minute in the process. Now we're putting pedal to the metal to catch up. Our car is running beautifully."

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In the GTE-Am class, the eight Porsche 911 RSR put on an impressive show in the first two hours of racing. At times, the customer teams' cars locked out the first six places as well as positions eight and nine. However, the 911 racers from Weissach were separated due to driver and tyre changes during the second round of pit stops. Julien Andlauer showed particularly impressive form in the action-packed

race on the 13.626-kilometre circuit. At the wheel of WeatherTech Racing's No. 79 car, the Frenchman held the lead and gradually built an advantage of over 40 seconds. In the starting phase, Andlauer spent 2:45 hours at the wheel of the car.

While the No. 77 vehicle campaigned by Dempsey-Proton Racing currently ranks second in its class, the sister car with Hollywood star Michael Fassbender is already two laps down. After a strong first hour of racing, the No. 46 car from Project 1 has also lost touch with the leading pack. After ploughing through a deep gravel bed at the Indianapolis corner, the car spent around 13 minutes in the pits for repairs and lost four laps as a result.

Drivers' comments on the starting phase

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "It went pretty well for me. Our No. 91 car had good balance during my double stint after the start. I have the impression that the Corvettes are really strong today, but that can change of course when the sun goes down and temperatures drop. We'll have to wait and see how the competition plays out over the coming hours."

Michael Christensen (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "The car's running very well and the tyres offered a lot of grip during my double stint. I kept experiencing slight understeer but we can cope with that. Unfortunately, our timing was unlucky in a slow zone and the leading Corvette gained over a minute at the front. I expect that something like this will balance itself out over the course of the 24 hours."

Julien Andlauer (Porsche 911 RSR #79): "Compared to the competition, we deliberately opted for a different strategy. I spent almost three hours at the wheel in the opening phase. Our car was really strong early on in the race. It was hotter than we've ever experienced it here during our preparations. That was actually a journey into the unknown but it quickly put us up the front. Now I'll catch my breath a bit and hope that my teammates have as much fun as I had in our car."

Hyperpole

The Hyperpole session for this year's 24 Hours of Le Mans concluded with the Porsche works team setting the third and fourth fastest times in the GTE-Pro category. The two 911 RSR fielded by the Porsche GT Team will take up this year's 24 Hours of Le Mans from the second grid row. In the Hyperpole session, the two works drivers Frédéric Makowiecki from France and Laurens Vanthoor from Belgium planted the two ca. 378 kW (515 PS) 911 racers on positions three and four. In the GTE-Am class, Britain's Harry Tincknell secured the third grid spot at the wheel of the No. 77 car campaigned by the customer team Dempsey-Proton Racing.

"It's a pity of course that our impressive series of pole positions should end at Le Mans of all places," declares Alexander Stehlig, Director Factory Motorsport FIA WEC. Previously, the Porsche 911 RSR had scored the best grid position at ten consecutive races of the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC.

"Last year we were on pole but we didn't win the race. So let's make a virtue of necessity and turn this game around. The chequered flag will drop at 4 pm on Sunday. That's the moment of truth. We want to secure the class win at Le Mans."

In sunny conditions on the 13.626-kilometre Circuit des 24 Heures, the Porsche GT Team waited at the beginning of the 30-minute session. To avoid possible traffic with a 23-strong field all hunting top times, the two Porsche 911 RSR only left the pits after around ten minutes. Makowiecki then put in two flying laps with Vanthoor making three attempts to set the best time in the GTE-Pro class. In the end, both nine-elevens were only about half a second off pole position.

In the GTE-Am class, the Dempsey-Proton Racing team allowed even more time before attempting its qualifying laps. Half way through the session, and under the watchful eye of team co-owner Patrick Dempsey, Harry Ticknell was still sitting calmly on a toolbox, only to launch his attack in the very last minutes. In 3:53.006 minutes, the Briton missed the front row by just three-tenths of a second.

On Friday, no laps will be driven on the 13.626-kilometre Circuit des 24 Heures, instead, competitors will be the focus of the traditional drivers' parade in downtown Le Mans. The 90th running of the 24-hour classic starts on Saturday at 4 pm (CEST).

Drivers' impressions of the Hyperpole

Frédéric Makowiecki (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "Everything went normally. Third place at the Le Mans 24 Hours is not a bad starting position. I tried everything, but on the last lap, the tyre pressure increased a bit too much. So I was no longer able to get the maximum performance out of the tyres. The race is long. A well-balanced car counts more than the starting position – and that's exactly what we have."

Laurens Vanthoor (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "My fastest lap was good, very clean. I don't think we could've achieved more than fourth place in this session. The Corvette was slightly better on a single hot lap. The race will be a whole different story. We hope that the power balance will then turn in our favour and that we gain the upper hand."

Harry Tincknell (Porsche 911 RSR #77): "Third place is a great result for us. We were fifth in qualifying the day prior and we've now moved up two positions. The Porsche 911 RSR handles excellently in all conceivable conditions. I'm convinced that we'll have a perfectly prepared car for the long race on Saturday and Sunday."

Hyperpole results

GTE-Pro class
1. Tandy/Milner/Sims (GB/USA/GB), Corvette C8.R #64, 3:49.985 minutes
2. Garcia/Taylor/Catsburg (E/USA/NL), Corvette C8.R #63, 3:50.177 minutes

3. Bruni/Lietz/Makowiecki (I/A/F), Porsche 911 RSR #91, 3:50.377 minutes
4. Christensen/Estre/Vanthoor (DK/F/B), Porsche 911 RSR #92, 3:50.522 minutes
5. Fuoco/Molina/Rigon (I/E/I), Ferrari 488 GTE #52, 3:51.779 minutes
6. Calado/Pier Guidi/Serra (GB/I/BR), Ferrari 488 GTE #51, 3:51.816 minutes

GTE-Am class
1. Prette/Grunewald/Abril (I/USA/F), Ferrari 488 GTE #61, 3:52.594 minutes
2. Kimura/Schandorff/Jensen (J/DK/DK), Ferrari 488 GTE #57, 3:52.751 minutes
3. Ried/Priaulx/Tincknell (D/GB/GB), Porsche 911 RSR #77, 3:53.006 minutes
4. Dalla Lana/Pittard/Thiim (CDN/GB/DK), Aston Martin #98, 3:53.578 minutes
5. Cassidy/Flohr/Castellacci (NZ/CH/I), Ferrari 488 GTE #54, 3:53.757 minutes
6. Frey/Gatting/Bovy (CH/DK/B),Ferrari 488 GTE #85, 3:53.869 minutes

Qualifying

The two 911 RSR fielded by the Porsche GT Team have qualified for the Hyperpole at the 24 Hours of Le Mans. Works driver Laurens Vanthoor from Belgium and Frédéric Makowiecki from France concluded the qualifying session on the 13.626-kilometre racetrack in positions one and three in the GTE-Pro class. In the GTE-Am category, the No. 77 car of Dempsey-Proton Racing made it into the top six. Only the six fastest vehicles from each of the two GTE classes are eligible to compete for the best grid positions this Thursday from 8 pm (CEST). The 911 RSR in which Michael Fassbender celebrates his Le Mans debut has not qualified for the shootout. Fassbender had an accident during the qualifying but was uninjured.

At the beginning of the qualifying session, Makowiecki in the No. 91 car and his brand colleague Vanthoor in the No. 92 sister car initially waited in the pits for a few minutes. The pit crew then sent the two vehicles out on the track at the most opportune time so that both drivers encountered as little traffic as possible and could get the most out of their ca. 378 kW (515 PS) 911. Setting a time of 3:50.999 minutes, Vanthoor was just 0.383 seconds faster than Makowiecki. Due to the wet track in the second half of the 60-minute session, it was impossible to improve the times.

In the GTE-Am class, Britain's Harry Tincknell planted the No. 77 fielded by Dempsey-Proton Racing on P5 with a time of 3:54.224 minutes – and thus made it into the Hyperpole. The grid positions for all other Porsche 911 RSR in the amateur category have already been determined. GR Racing's 911 takes up the race from position seven, with the two Project 1 cars right behind. The 911 entries campaigned by WeatherTech Racing and Hardpoint achieved positions eleven and twelve, with the two Proton cars on the 18th and 21st grid spots.

This Thursday, two free practice sessions are on the programme plus the Hyperpole, in which the battle for the best grid positions is decided in all four classes. On Friday, there will be no further races on the 13.626-kilometre Circuit des 24 Heures, instead, the drivers will take centre stage at the traditional drivers' parade in downtown Le Mans. The 90th edition of the 24-hour classic starts on Saturday at 4

pm (CEST).

Drivers' impressions after the qualifying

Laurens Vanthoor (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "It was a really good lap, and I hit it lucky. Right before turning onto the long straights, a couple of LMP2 cars overtook me, which gave me a nice slipstream. That certainly helped in achieving a decent top speed. Overall, it was a clean drive, so we deserve to be on the provisional pole position."

Frédéric Makowiecki (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "I was able to set a pretty good lap time, which was enough to get into the Hyperpole. At the same time, we gained further insight into how to optimise our car for the long 24-hour race. Our engineers have great ideas and are doing a fantastic job."

Harry Tincknell (Porsche 911 RSR #77): "For us, it was all about getting into the Hyperpole – and we did it. Our Porsche 911 RSR felt better than ever in qualifying. The team has moved in the right direction on tweaking the setup. Because the pace is so high on this track, the little things make a big difference. If the shock absorbers are altered even slightly, or the rear wing is adjusted by one degree, it's immediately noticeable. We're well-positioned. I think we'll be able to put in a strong lap in the Hyperpole. However, it's much more important to finish the race well."

Qualifying results

GTE-Pro class
1. Christensen/Estre/Vanthoor (DK/F/B), Porsche 911 RSR #92, 3:50.999 minutes
2. Garcia/Taylor/Catsburg (E/USA/NL), Corvette C8.R #63, 3:51.132 minutes
3. Bruni/Lietz/Makowiecki (I/A/F), Porsche 911 RSR #91, 3:51.382 minutes
4. Tandy/Milner/Sims (GB/USA/GB), Corvette C8.R #64, 3:51.491 minutes
5. Calado/Pier Guidi/Serra (GB/I/BR), Ferrari 488 GTE #51, 3:51.502 minutes
6. Fuoco/Molina/Rigon (I/E/I), Ferrari 488 GTE #52, 3:51.614 minutes
7. Fraga/Bird/Van Gisbergen (BR/GB/NZ), Ferrari 488 GTE #74, 3:54.116 minutes

GTE-Am class
1. Dalla Lana/Pittard/Thiim (CDN/GB/DK), Aston Martin #98, 3:52.559 minutes
2. Kimura/Schandorff/Jensen (J/DK/DK), Ferrari 488 GTE #57, 3:53.489 minutes
3. Cassidy/Flohr/Castellacci (NZ/CH/I), Ferrari 488 GTE #54, 3:53.690 minutes
5. Ried/Priaulx/Tincknell (D/GB/GB), Porsche 911 RSR #77, 3:54.224 minutes
7. Wainwright/Barker/Pera (GB/GB/I), Porsche 911 RSR #86, 3:54.323 minutes
8. Iribe/Barnicoat/Millroy (USA/GB/GB), Porsche 911 RSR #56, 3:54.510 minutes
9. Leutwiler/Cairoli/Pedersen (CH/I/DK), Porsche 911 RSR #46, 3:54.533 minutes
11. MacNeil/Andlauer/Merrill (USA/F/USA), Porsche 911 RSR #79, 3:54.912 minutes
12. Haryanto/Picariello/Rump (RI/B/EST), Porsche 911 RSR #99, 3:55.076 minutes

18. Poordad/Heylen/Root (USA/B/USA), Porsche 911 RSR #88, 3:56.516 minutes
21. Campbell/Fassbender/Robichon (AUS/IRL/CDN), Porsche 911 RSR #93, 4:07.907 minutes

Test Day

At the official pre-test, the Porsche GT Team has continued its preparations for the 90th running of the 24 Hours of Le Mans (11/12 June). In the two four-hour sessions on the 13.626-kilometre Circuit des 24 Heures, both Porsche 911 RSR run by the works team turned a total of 143 laps (1,949 kilometres). On the timesheets, the No. 91 and 92 cars occupied positions three and six in the notoriously competitive GTE-Pro class. Eight other ca. 378 kW (515 PS) racers from Weissach will tackle the GTE-Am category. The fastest Porsche in that class was the No. 93 entry from Proton Competition with Hollywood star Michael Fassbender as one of the driver crew.

“In the morning, damage to the No. 92 car and an accident involving the sister car cost us a lot of time but things ran more smoothly after that,” stated Alexander Stehlig, Director Factory Motorsport FIA WEC. “We turned a lot of laps in the afternoon and gained important data and insights into the tyres and the setup. Our engineers will now take a close look and, with the crew, make further improvements to our two Porsche 911 RSR for the first practice sessions and the qualifying next Wednesday.”

The four-hour test in the morning did not go to plan for the Porsche GT Team. After four laps on the 13.626-kilometre Circuit des 24 Heures, Michael Christensen had to park the No. 92 car in the Tertre Rouge corner. The team found damage to the driveshaft. After about an hour spent on repairs, the vehicle was able to rejoin the action. At that point, the No. 91 sister car came into the pits. After Gianmaria Bruni had slid into the tyre wall at the Mulsanne corner, several components on the front of the car had to be replaced. During the first session, the two 911 RSR only managed to turn a total of 41 laps.

In the afternoon, the works team completed an extensive programme in slightly overcast conditions and temperatures around 20 degrees Celsius to prepare for the final Le Mans outing in the GTE-Pro class. In the second session, Bruni and his teammates Richard Lietz from Austria and Frédéric Makowiecki from France lapped the legendary circuit 52 times. Christensen, Kévin Estre (France) and Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium) turned 50 laps in the No. 92 car. The main focus for the Porsche GT Team was to optimise the setup and test the tyres.

On the only day for testing before the start of the race weekend at the Sarthe, the actor and film producer Michael Fassbender ramped up preparations for his first attempt at the 24 Hours of Le Mans. The Irish-German and his teammates Matt Campbell (Australia) and Zacharie Robichon (Canada) concluded the test drive at the wheel of Proton Competition's Porsche 911 RSR seventh in the GTE-Am category. This made the No. 93 entry with its eye-catching green paintwork the fastest 911 in the amateur class. The identical cars fielded by Hardpoint (#99) and Dempsey-Proton Racing (#77) concluded the test as the second and third-best Porsche in positions ten and eleven.

The Porsche GT Team and the customer squads now have two days to prepare the 911 RSR for the first official sessions of the 2022 Le Mans 24 Hours. The first free practice will be held this coming Wednesday from 2 pm to 5 pm. The 90th edition of the endurance classic takes off on Saturday 11 June at 4 pm (CEST).

Drivers' comments after the pre-test

Richard Lietz (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "All in all, it was a good day, although we made a couple of mistakes. Hopefully that's now sorted for the race week. We've found the setup for our Porsche 911 RSR and the vehicle balance is okay. The car is as good as it was in the past two years. Whether it'll be enough to win the class this time remains to be seen. That's not only up to us."

Laurens Vanthoor (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "We had a minor technical defect early in the morning. The team worked quickly to get the car back on the track. In the afternoon we ticked off many items on our test programme without any problems. Still, it's not yet possible to gauge where we stand compared to our rivals. That will become clear over the course of the race week. I anticipate that the grip conditions on the track will change significantly in the coming days."

Michael Fassbender (Porsche 911 RSR #93): "It took me a while to get up to speed today. At first, I was overwhelmed by the sheer history of this legendary track. My second stint went a bit better but I slowed again when we changed the setup. So it was a bit of a rollercoaster. I certainly need to pick up the pace a bit, but for now, I got the car through the test day in one piece. I'll definitely improve once I get a better feel for the quirks of the circuit."

Harry Tincknell (Porsche 911 RSR #77): "We divided the test work in our team among the five cars. Each crew had different tasks. We finished in the top 10 in both sessions with our number 77 car. This is because we're full of confidence after our recent class win in Belgium and also because we all have a lot more experience in the Porsche 911 RSR on this special Le Mans circuit. I think we're heading into the most important race week of the year well prepared."

Pre-test results

GTE-Pro class
1. Tandy/Milner/Sims (GB/USA/GB), Corvette C8.R #64, 3:54.001 minutes
2. Fuoco/Molina/Rigon (I/E/I), Ferrari 488 GTE #52, 3:54.037 minutes
3. Bruni/Lietz/Makowiecki (I/A/F), Porsche 911 RSR #91, 3:54.263 minutes
4. Calado/Pier Guidi/Serra (GB/I/BR), Ferrari 488 GTE #51, 3:54.395 minutes
5. Fraga/Bird/Van Gisbergen (BR/GB/NZ), Ferrari 488 GTE #74, 3:54.437 minutes
6. Christensen/Estre/Vanthoor (DK/F/B), Porsche 911 RSR #92, 3:54.444 minutes
7. Garcia/Taylor/Catsburg (E/USA/NL), Corvette C8.R #63, 3:54.504 minutes

GTE-Am class
1. Kimura/Schandorff/Jensen (J/DK/DK), Ferrari 488 GTE #57, 3:54.827 minutes
2. V. d. Zande/Kvamme/Hart (NL/USA/USA), Ferrari 488 GTE #66, 3:55.241 minutes
3. Dezoteux/Ragues/Aubry (F/F/F), Ferrari 488 GTE #71, 3:55.349 minutes
6. Campbell/Fassbender/Robichon (AUS/IRL/CDN), Porsche 911 RSR #93, 3:55.747 minutes
10. Haryanto/Picariello/Rump (RI/B/EST), Porsche 911 RSR #99, 3:55.780 minutes
11. Ried/Priaulx/Tincknell (D/GB/GB), Porsche 911 RSR #77, 3:55.850 minutes
17. Wainwright/Barker/Pera (GB/GB/I), Porsche 911 RSR #86, 3:56.376 minutes
18. MacNeil/Andlauer/Merrill (USA/F/USA), Porsche 911 RSR #79, 3:56.489 minutes
20. Iribe/Barnicoat/Millroy (USA/GB/GB), Porsche 911 RSR #56, 3:56.670 minutes
21. Leutwiler/Cairoli/Pedersen (CH/I/DK), Porsche 911 RSR #46, 3:57.049 minutes
22. Poordad/Heylen/Root (USA/B/USA), Porsche 911 RSR #88, 3:58.353 minutes

The preview

Porsche has set itself a big goal for the final GTE-Pro-class race at Le Mans for the 911 RSR: The works team is determined to secure a class win at the 24 Hours of Le Mans on 11/12 June. The endurance classic on the 13.626-kilometre Circuit des 24 Heures in the west of France will be contested for the 90th time and represents round three of the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC. The Porsche GT Team will field two ca. 378 kW (515 PS) 911s. In the GTE-Am class, five customer squads campaign a total of eight 911 RSR. After careful preparation as part of the Porsche Racing Experience and two years in the European Le Mans Series (ELMS), Hollywood star Michael Fassbender celebrates his Le Mans debut in the No. 93 entry. He has documented his personal “Road to Le Mans” journey in his own YouTube series: www.porsche.com/RoadToLeMans. With 19 outright victories and 108 class wins, Porsche is by far the most successful manufacturer in the world's most important sports car race.

“We're tackling the 24 Hours of Le Mans well prepared, with huge determination and as the leaders of the WEC rankings,” says Thomas Laudenbach, Vice President Porsche Motorsport. “This is the last time the works team will contest the tradition-steeped classic with the two 911 RSR. We still have a score to settle there: Since the debut in 2019, our cars have won on almost all racetracks on the FIA WEC calendar – only the GTE-Pro class win at Le Mans is missing from our list of successes. We want to change this. There's no doubt that our RSR, the six works drivers and the team are capable of this. And our customer squads certainly have good chances to succeed in the 23-strong GT3-Am class field.”

Since its first race outing in the FIA WEC, the 2019-generation Porsche 911 RSR has notched up seven class wins from 16 races. The cars from Weissach have set pole position 14 times in the GTE-Pro category. In 2018, the predecessor model achieved a sensational one-two result at Le Mans.

“We've seen how strong our cars are at the previous FIA WEC races. We've learned a lot at Le Mans over the last two years. Now we want to implement these findings and bring home the long-awaited class win,” explains Alexander Stehlig, Director Factory Motorsport FIA WEC. “At the tests in Aragon, we prepared well for the highlight of the year. Plus, we have very experienced trios in our two works cars.

They're very familiar with the quirks of this special racetrack and the challenges of the endurance classic. Still, the pre-test in the week prior to the race is hugely important again this year: During these tests, we'll confirm the direction that we've taken in our preparations. There's one thing I'm particularly looking forward to: The fans are back and the great events like the public vehicle inspections and drivers' parade are on the programme again. It'll be a wonderful celebration for spectators, teams and drivers."

The event on the 13.626-kilometre Circuit des 24 Heures at Le Mans is extremely popular with motor racing fans and marks the highlight of the FIA World Endurance Championship. The storied circuit south of the city with its 150,000 inhabitants consists mainly of public roads. Normally, hundreds of trucks and cars drive over the legendary Mulsanne straight every day on their way from Le Mans to Tours. Treacherous ruts present special challenges, especially in the rain.

After extensive restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic, the 90th edition of the Le Mans 24- hour race will be contested in front of a large crowd. Up to 250,000 fans are expected at the Sarthe on the second weekend in June. For the first time since 2019, spectators will once again be treated to special events such the public technical scrutineering, the drivers' parade and the pit-lane tour with concerts and other highlights. Sunday 5 June is reserved for the so-called pre-tests on the Circuit des 24 Heures – the only chance for teams and drivers to familiarise themselves with the special characteristics of the circuit before the race week kicks off.

The Porsche GT Team drivers

Austrian Richard Lietz and Gianmaria Bruni from Italy share the No. 91 Porsche and, like last year, will receive support from Frenchman Frédéric Makowiecki. The No. 92 sister car is crewed by the GTE-Pro World Championship leaders Kévin Estre (France) and Michael Christensen (Denmark) as well as Belgium's Laurens Vanthoor. At the 2018 Le Mans race, the trio clinched a class victory with the 911 decked out in the historic "Pink Pig" livery. Ahead of the most important and longest race of the year, Porsche currently leads the manufacturers' classification.

The customer teams

The German customer squad Dempsey-Proton Racing fields a pair of Porsche 911 RSR vehicles. The outfit based in Baden-Württemberg will run two identical vehicles entered under the names WeatherTech Racing and Proton Competition. At his Le Mans debut, Hollywood star Michael Fassbender shares the car with works driver Matt Campbell from Australia and the reigning IMSA GTD champion from Canada Zacharie Robichon, who also tackles the endurance classic for the first time. The Project 1 customer team campaigns two 911, with Hardpoint and GR Racing each bringing one RSR to the highlight of the year.

Overview of teams and drivers

GTE-Pro class

Porsche GT Team #91 – Lietz (A) / Bruni (I) / Makowiecki (F)
Porsche GT Team #92 – Estre (F) / Christensen (DK) / Vanthoor (B)

GTE-Am class

Team Project 1 #46 – Cairoli (I) / Pedersen (DK) / Leutwiler (CH)
Team Project 1 #56 – Iribe (USA) / Millroy (GB) / Barnicoat (GB)
Dempsey-Proton Racing #77 – Ried (D) / Tincknell (GB) / Priaulx (GB)
WeatherTech Racing #79 – MacNeil (USA) / Andlauer (F) / Merrill (USA)
GR Racing #86 – Wainwright (GB) / Pera (I) / Barker (GB)
Dempsey-Proton Racing #88 – Poordad (USA) / Root (USA) / Heylen (B)
Proton Competition #93 – Fassbender (IRL) / Campbell (AUS) / Robichon (CDN)
Hardpoint Motorsport #99 – Picariello (B) / Haryanto (RI) / Rump (EST)

Drivers' comments before the race

Richard Lietz (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "The biggest race of the year is finally here once again. It'll be the last factory outing for the Porsche 911 RSR at Le Mans. I very much hope that, unlike in the past two years, we'll have close competition that gives us realistic chances of winning. Unfortunately, we're not alone in that hope. One thing is always guaranteed in this race – it's never easy. But of course, we're more than willing to accept this challenge."

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "After the disappointments of the past two years, we finally want to get back to the top. We have everything it takes to make that happen. Motivation is at an all-time high because everyone wants to crown the final outing of our factory RSR in Le Mans with a class win. I'm looking forward to driving the first laps, but I'm just as excited for the huge crowds that are expected. The event thrives on big spectator numbers. The return to normality after the peak of the coronavirus pandemic is good for everyone: fans, drivers, teams, manufacturers and last but certainly not least, the sport as a whole."

Frédéric Makowiecki (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "Absolutely every racing driver associates a home race with a range of emotions – that is especially true for a Frenchman at Le Mans. Friends and family are there, so there's a lot of support. This gives us an enormous boost and a lot of motivation. At the 24-hour classic, the atmosphere continues to build as the race week progresses. The tension and anticipation can be felt everywhere just before the start. It all comes to a culmination when we cross the finish line on Sunday. I really want to win my home race and I'll keep trying until it finally happens."

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 RSR #92): “Le Mans is always the biggest race of the season. In the past two years, we haven't achieved the results that do our 911 RSR justice. We are highly motivated to change this at the car's final Le Mans start in the GTE-pro class. The first two races of this year's FIA WEC season went well for us: we're leading the championship. We're bringing everything we have to the table to achieve a class victory. But at Le Mans, you always have to be prepared for anything, because the track has its own special characteristics.”

Michael Christensen (Porsche 911 RSR #92): “The track has a unique character. Top speed on the long straights is crucial for overall performance. There are five such passages at Le Mans. On the famous Mulsanne straight, we drivers put our foot to the floor for a very long time, only to brake at the very last moment for the chicanes and the Mulsanne corner – these situations determine whether the lap time is good or bad. However, for us drivers, the Porsche corners are more challenging and exciting: It's great fun driving through them in the 911 RSR every year.”

Laurens Vanthoor (Porsche 911 RSR #92): “For me, Le Mans is the most important race of the year. It's terrific to be a part of the No. 92 crew again. I get along very well with Kevin and Michael; we won the class together in 2018. I've also known our engineers for a very long time. We make a great team. I have a good feeling about this race. We will definitely have a chance to be up the front but there is still a long way to go with a lot of work ahead of us. I'm ready and I'm really looking forward to it.”

The schedule (all times CEST)

Friday, 3 June

10:00 am – 7:00 pm: Technical scrutineering (city centre)

Saturday, 4 June

10:00 am – 3:00 pm: Technical scrutineering (city centre)
2:00 pm – 3:00 pm: Technical scrutineering 911 RSR #91 and #92

Sunday, 5 June

09:00 am – 1:00 pm: Pre-test session 1
2:00 pm – 6:00 pm: Pre-test session 2

Tuesday, 7 June

2:00 pm – 5:00 pm: Pit walk

Wednesday, 8 June

2:00 pm – 5:00 pm: Free practice 1
7:00 pm – 8:00 pm: Qualifying
10:00 pm – midnight: Free practice 2

Thursday, 9 June

3:00 pm – 6:00 pm: Free practice 3
8:00 pm – 8:30 pm: Hyperpole
10:00 pm – midnight: Free practice 4

Friday, 10 June

5:00 pm – 7:00 pm: Drivers' parade (city centre)

Saturday, 11 June

10:30 am – 10:45 am: Warm-up
4:00 pm: Start 90th running of the 24 Hours of Le Mans

Sunday, 12 June

4:00 pm: Finish 90th running of the 24 Hours of Le Mans

Video

https://newstv.porsche.com/porschevideos/214371_en_3000000.mp4

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