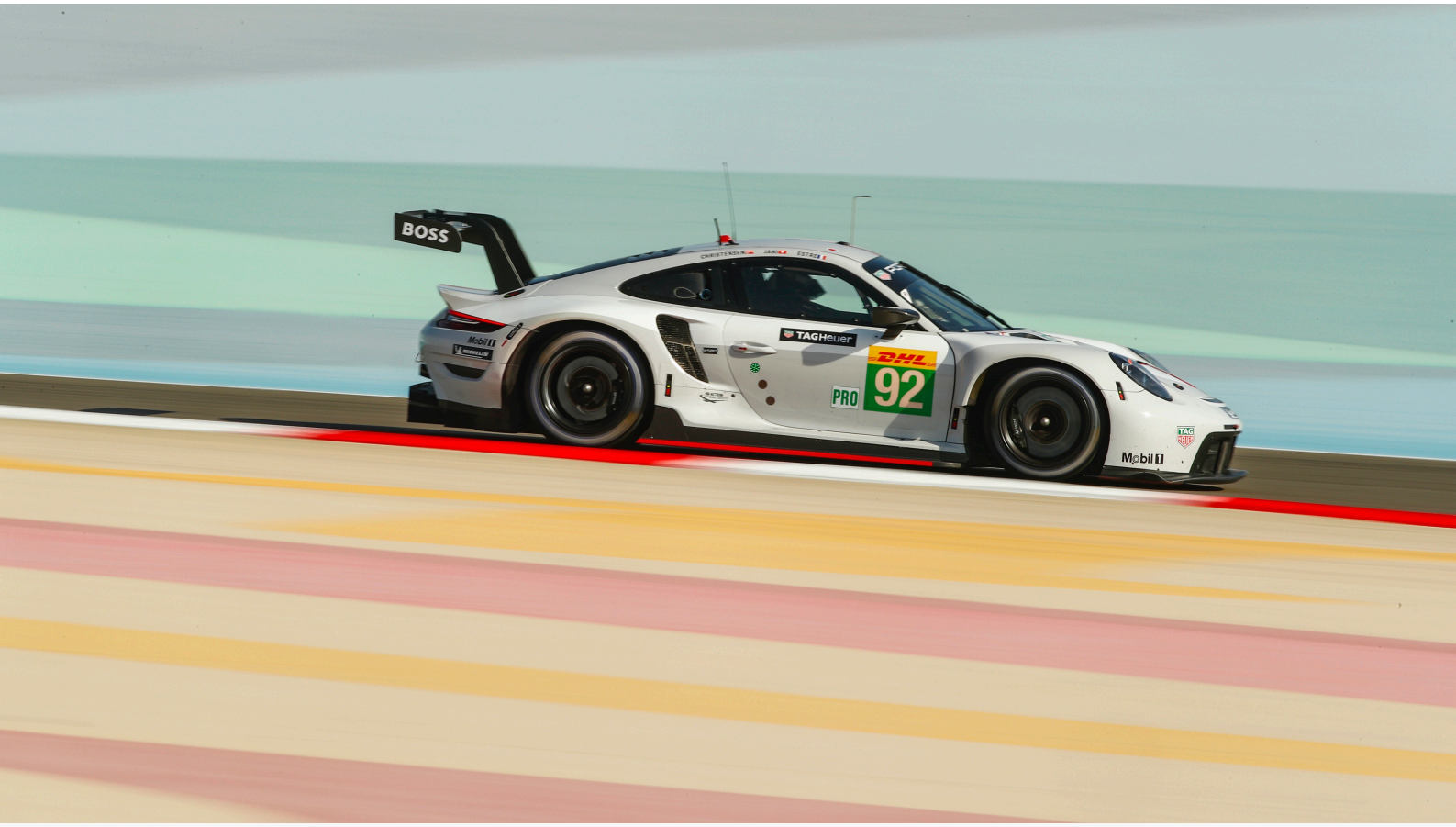


Porsche loses duel for the world championship title in the very last metres

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06/11/2021 The Porsche GT Team finished the last race of the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) in positions two and four.

Race 6

At the eight-hour race in Bahrain, the No. 92 Porsche 911 RSR driven by Kévin Estre (France), Neel Jani (Switzerland) and Michael Christensen (Denmark) held a well-earned lead in a gripping final sprint to the flag and was on course for the title when a Ferrari shunted the Porsche into a spin. Race Control did not penalise the competitor. The identical sister car shared by Gianmaria Bruni from Italy, Richard Lietz

from Austria and Frédéric Makowiecki from France concluded the sixth and final race of the season on fourth place in the GTE-Pro class. In the manufacturers' classification, Porsche wrapped up the endurance season in second place. The customer teams Dempsey-Proton Racing and Project 1 notched up another success, each planting their 911 RSR on the podium in the GTE-Am category.

"It's a sad day for Porsche Motorsport," comments Thomas Laudenbach, Vice President Motorsport. "Our rival nudged our leading car into a spin and drove on to victory. We can't understand why the race director first issued a penalty and then withdrew it. Our drivers and teams deserve the utmost respect. Everyone drove a fair and clean race for eight hours and gave spectators a great show. I'd like to thank them all for this. Right up until the end, the race was a really great promotion for motor racing."

"It was a sad end to an extremely exciting race for us. Unfortunately, we were spun off the track by a competitor," remarks Alexander Stehlig, Head of Operations FIA WEC, giving an account of his impressions. "We can't understand the race stewards' decision. First, the two leading cars were supposed to switch positions after the contact which would've put our Porsche back in the lead. A little later, they withdrew this announcement during the No. 92's pit stop. So, despite our fair and clean race, we couldn't achieve our goals. That's why we've lodged a protest."

Up until the final stage, the protagonists had been locked in a wheel-to-wheel battle and treated fans to spirited fights over 7:45 hours. After the start, polesitter Estre retained his front spot, and as the race progressed, the frontrunners took turns at the lead. Clever decisions by strategists in the Porsche GT Team pits and flawless performances by the drivers enabled Christensen to head into the final 15 minutes of the season finale as the leader – only to have Alessandro Pier Guidi (Italy) shunt the rear of the Porsche 911 RSR with his Ferrari.

Bad luck hampered the crew in the No. 91 sister car in the second half of the race. The 911 RSR driven by Bruni, Lietz and Makowiecki took the lead multiple times in the first four hours but then lost time due to a pit-stop penalty. A little later, a loose rear wheel caused significant vibrations and, as a result, the rear left wheel sustained minor damages. The team had to make an unscheduled pit stop, and Bruni then brought the struggling nine-eleven home in fourth place.

In the GTE-Am class, the German customer teams Dempsey-Proton Racing and Project 1 repeated their successes from the previous week at the same racetrack. Germany's Christian Ried, works driver Matt Campbell from Australia and New Zealander Jaxon Evans finished second in their No. 77 Porsche 911 RSR. The identical car shared by Norway's Egidio Perfetti and the two Italians Matteo Cairoli and Riccardo Pera achieved third place. The British team GR Racing came tenth, with the No. 88 entry of Dempsey-Proton Racing retiring early after a spin.

The Porsche GT Team concluded the 2021 season after six races with 277 points as runner-up in the manufacturers' classification. In the world drivers' championship, Kévin Estre and Neel Jani earned 166 points on their way to second place. Their team colleagues Gianmaria Bruni and Richard Lietz wrapped up the year in third with 111 points. In the team classification, Dempsey-Proton Racing finished the season in third place.

Drivers' comments after the race

Michael Christensen (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "What a huge disappointment! Our team did a perfect job and got us to the front with a great strategy. In the last 30 minutes of the race, our tyres deteriorated rapidly. I had to pull out all stops to stay in the lead. I fended off the Ferrari and was fair at all times – but then it pushed me off the track. And that was the end of our chance to win and title dream."

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "Our fight was tough and fair and we held a well-deserved lead. With a few minutes to go, a Ferrari hit our car. At first, race control ordered that he should hand first place back to us. While we were driving to the scheduled refuelling pit stop, they then retracted this decision and we didn't get our position back. I don't think that's fair."

Neel Jani (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "We were champions until eight minutes before the flag and then we lost it. If someone overtakes us fair and square we don't have a problem with this and they're the deserved winner – but not with a shunt. The team did a terrific job, the strategy and pit stops were super. I can only thank Kévin and Michael for this season."

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "After such a race, I can honestly say I'm glad it's over. Things were looking so promising for us. We were in the lead and were really fast. Then came a botched pit stop, followed by a defect and then a penalty. Many things didn't go as we'd hoped. Unfortunately, that's the way it is in motorsport sometimes. But let's just forget this one."

Richard Lietz (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "I think you can't race long enough to have seen it all. The entire event was pretty exciting and great to watch – until the No. 92 was hit. From a sporting point of view, what came afterwards was very questionable. Our own pace was good, the Porsche handled well. But we put our bet on a risky strategy and unfortunately lost."

Frédéric Makowiecki (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "I feel really sorry for my teammates in the number 92 car – that's not the way to decide a world championship title. We go racing; fairness is part of the sport. And I didn't see that at the end of this race. I can imagine how terribly disappointed they are in the team right now. With us, things went well initially. We had an extremely fast car but we weren't able to turn that into a win. That hurts. Our chances looked really good, but it wasn't meant to be."

Christian Ried (Porsche 911 RSR #77): "That was a super race and a great end to the season. We moved up to third place in the championship so it couldn't have gone better for us. Jaxon Evans and especially Matt Campbell put in an awesome fight – I thought I'd have a heart attack. Matt wasn't completely happy with the car during the last stint, but he fought hard and managed to gradually close the gap. Then on the last lap, in the last corner, he snatched second place! Super cool!"

Matteo Cairoli (Porsche 911 RSR #56): "We would've preferred third place in the championship but unfortunately Dempsey-Proton Racing's car overtook us on the last lap – at least it was a Porsche. I

must admit, though, I'm very disappointed. We'll be back in full force next year."

Race result

GTE-Pro class
1. Calado/Pier Guidi (GB/I), AF Corse, Ferrari 488 GTE #51, 233 laps
2. Estre/Jani/Christensen (F/CH/DK), Porsche GT Team, Porsche 911 RSR #92, 233 laps
3. Serra/Molina (BR/E), AF Corse, Ferrari 488 GTE #52, 233 laps
4. Lietz/Bruni/Makowiecki (A/I/F), Porsche GT Team, Porsche 911 RSR #91, 231 laps

GTE-Am class
1. Perrodo/Nielsen/Rovera (F/DK/I), AF Corse, Ferrari 488 GTE #83, 230 laps
2. Ried/Campbell/Evans (D/AUS/NZ), Dempsey-Proton Racing, Porsche 911 RSR #77, 229 laps
3. Perfetti/Cairoli/Pera (N/I/I), Team Project 1, Porsche 911 RSR #56, 229 laps
10. Wainwright/Barker/Gamble (GB/GB/GB), GR Racing, Porsche 911 RSR #86, 224 laps
DNF. Andlauer/Jefferies/Al Qubaisi (F/GB/UAE), Dempsey-Proton Racing, Porsche 911 RSR #88, 90 laps

Full results and points' standings on: fiawec.alkamelsystems.com

Qualifying

The Porsche GT Team tackles the final round of the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC from pole position. Works driver Kévin Estre turned the fastest GTE-Pro class lap in the final qualifying session for the eight-hour race on Bahrain International Circuit. For the Frenchman, this was the fifth pole position from the sixth event this year at the wheel of the No. 92 Porsche 911 RSR. Given that the 911 fielded by the customer team HubAuto Racing was the fastest vehicle in the hunt for top times at the highlight in Le Mans, the racer from Weissach remains unbeaten in qualifying for the entire 2021 season – a record in the history of the FIA WEC. The Italian Gianmaria Bruni set the third quickest time with the No. 91 car.

"That was a very close and gripping qualifying," states Alexander Stehlig. The Head of Operations for the FIA WEC adds: "We achieved exactly what we wanted with our No. 92 car – to start from pole position and earn the extra point for it. Every point counts. This qualifying was much closer than last weekend, which gives us a taste of what's to come in the race. It's going to be quite a fight. We're looking forward to it and we can hardly wait to get going."

The final qualifying session of the season was held in Bahrain in the early evening at 5:20 pm. Conditions were different in the previous two free practices, with air temperatures of well over 30 degrees Celsius. The Porsche GT Team still managed to find an optimal setup for cooler conditions for both 911 RSR in the final qualifying. Estre topped the timesheets right from the start of the session, but

his time was cancelled when he veered from the track. At his second attempt, the Frenchman pulled out all stops and achieved the top time in 1:56.041 minutes, narrowly beating the sister car and rivals from Ferrari. For pole position, Estre and his Swiss teammate Neel Jani receive an additional point towards the world championship. The duo, who share the cockpit of the No. 92 car with Michael Christensen from Denmark, are now tied for points with the best Ferrari pair at the top of the drivers' classification rankings. Two of Gianmaria Bruni's lap times were voided. Due to these setbacks, the Italian ended up in third place. For the race, Bruni joins forces in the No. 91 cockpit with Richard Lietz from Austria and Frédéric Makowiecki from France.

In the GTE-Am class, Egidio Perfetti repeated his feat from last weekend at the same venue and was the fastest driver of a Porsche 911 RSR in the GTE-Am class. The Norwegian set the fourth-fastest qualifying time at the wheel of the No. 56 car fielded by the Project 1 customer squad. The two identical nine-eleven run by Dempsey-Proton Racing will take up the race from positions seven and nine. The car campaigned by the British squad GR Racing lines up on the grid on P12.

The final round of the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC season on the Bahrain International Circuit gets underway on Saturday 6 November at 2:00 pm local time (midday CET). The free-TV station Eurosport 1 broadcasts the race in full length live. Viewers can also watch extensive coverage of the event from Bahrain on RTL Nitro and Sport1. For a fee, the official FIA WEC app offers live streaming and live timing.

Drivers' comments after the qualifying

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "I'm very pleased. It was extremely close and a real nail-biter. We earned the extra point for pole position and are now tied for points with our colleagues from Ferrari at the top of the drivers' world championship standings. The situation before the final race couldn't be more exciting. We start from pole – which is good, but of course, it's no guarantee of anything. I'm sure it'll be a very tough race over eight hours, especially since our competitors are clearly faster than they were last week. I hope we keep the upper hand at the final."

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "I had to fight to the last second in the qualifying because two of my lap times were cancelled. Our car is well set up for the race so I'm feeling confident. One thing is certain, though: Our competitor has become faster. I'm curious how this will pan out on race day."

Egidio Perfetti (Porsche 911 RSR #56): "We have the best-placed Porsche 911 RSR in the GTE-Am class – I'm satisfied with my performance. The qualifying was tough. I'm pleased that we improved in some respects compared to the Aston Martin. But we're heading into a long eight-hour race. We'll now concentrate on that and hope for a good result."

Qualifying result

GTE-Pro class
1. Estre/Jani/Christensen (F/CH/DK), Porsche GT Team, Porsche 911 RSR #92, 1:56.041 minutes
2. Calado/Pier Guidi (GB/I), AF Corse, Ferrari 488 GTE #51, 1:56.201 minutes
3. Lietz/Bruni/Makowiecki (A/I/F), Porsche GT Team, Porsche 911 RSR #91, 1:56.541 minutes
4. Serra/Molina (BR/E), AF Corse, Ferrari 488 GTE #52, 1:56.603 minutes

GTE-Am class
1. Lacorte/Sernagiotto/Fuoco (I/I/I), Cetilar Racing, Ferrari 488 GTE #47, 1:58.712 minutes
2. Perrodo/Nielsen/Rovera (F/DK/I), AF Corse, Ferrari 488 GTE #83, 1:58.759 minutes
3. Frey/Bovy/Legge (CH/B/GB), Iron Lynx, Ferrari 488 GTE #85, 1:58.958 minutes
4. Perfetti/Cairoli/Pera (N/I/I), Team Project 1, Porsche 911 RSR #56, 1:58.989 minutes
7. Andlauer/Jefferies/Al Qubaisi (F/GB/UAE), Dempsey-Proton Racing, Porsche 911 RSR #88, 1:59.359 minutes
9. Ried/Campbell/Evans (D/AUS/NZ), Dempsey-Proton Racing, Porsche 911 RSR #77, 1:59.936 minutes
12. Wainwright/Barker/Gamble (GB/GB/GB), GR Racing, Porsche 911 RSR #86, 2:01.282 minutes

Full results and points' standings on: fiawec.alkamelsystems.com

Race 5

Facing difficult conditions, the Porsche GT Team has achieved its third win of the season in the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC. At the six-hour race in Bahrain, Frenchman Kévin Estre and Neel Jani from Switzerland in the No. 92 Porsche 911 RSR narrowly beat their works driver colleagues Gianmaria Bruni from Italy and Austrian Richard Lietz. Thanks to the one-two result in the Kingdom of Bahrain on the Persian Gulf, Porsche has moved into the lead of the manufacturers' championship before the final round of the season. In the GTE-Am class, the customer teams Dempsey-Proton Racing and Project 1 claimed podium steps with their nine-eleven cars.

"It was a difficult weekend because there was a lot of pressure – we definitely had to perform today," explains Alexander Stehlig, Head of Operations FIA WEC. "We needed to earn maximum points in order to stay in the fight for the championship heading to the final round. It worked. I'd like to thank all the mechanics, engineers and drivers – that was a perfect performance. From the outside, perhaps this double victory looked easy – it was anything but that. The tyres had to endure long stints in intense heat. It always hangs on the knife's edge. We balanced this beautifully. Now we go up against our rivals on an equal footing for the big finale next weekend. I'm really looking forward to it!"

In an air temperature of 35 degrees Celsius and with a considerably hotter track surface, round five of the season turned into the expected heated battle in the truest sense. Taking up the race from positions

one and two on the grid, Kévin Estre and Gianmaria Bruni kept their cool and successfully fended off their competitors' attacks. The next challenge was to manage their Michelin tyres over long distances on the extremely demanding asphalt, which the experienced drivers did perfectly – thanks as well to the first-class work of their pit crews. The experiences from the three practice sessions helped to maintain the pace over the hour-long stints. The No. 92 car in the GTE-Pro class crossed the finish line a mere 0.690 seconds ahead of the identical sister car. With this result, Estre and Jani managed to slash the gap in the drivers' world championship to just one point as they head to the final round in Bahrain next weekend. Bruni and Lietz rank third. In the manufacturers' classification, Porsche has recaptured the lead.

In the GTE-Am class, the race on the Bahrain International Circuit was not only marked by tyre management but also by lap times of the amateur drivers. In the tight competition among 13 vehicles, Christian Ried and Egidio Perfetti gave a particularly impressive performance. The Dempsey-Proton team owner from Germany delivered strong stints at the wheel of the No. 77 racer, with his teammates Matt Campbell from Australia and New Zealander Jaxon Evans among the fastest in the field on the way to claiming second place in their class. Perfetti shared the cockpit of Project 1's No. 56 car with the Italians Matteo Cairoli and Riccardo Pera. In the decisive stint midway through the race, the Norwegian maintained a steady podium course with his customer RSR and laid the foundation for third place. The No. 88 technically identical 911 fielded by Dempsey-Proton Racing achieved position 13. GR Racing's entry took the flag in sixth place.

The FIA WEC finale takes off next Saturday, 6 November, again on the Bahrain International Circuit. The sixth and final round of the season will be contested over eight hours.

Drivers' comments after the race

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "That was a very critical victory for us in the No. 92 car and an extremely important one-two result for Porsche. This gives us every chance to fight for the title at the finale. As a team, we gave a perfect performance. I'd like to thank our teammates in the sister car for not making life too difficult for us. That really helped. Now I'm looking forward to the decisive race. We definitely want to achieve a similar top result again."

Neel Jani (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "A one-two success for the Porsche 911 RSR – it couldn't be better. We drove with our sister car in formation for the entire race. Right at the end, they stopped their attack. Many thanks to our colleagues! First place today is hugely important for us to be in the best position in the drivers' world championship for the final round. We're now just one point behind the leaders. Next weekend we'll do everything to scoop the title pool at the season finale."

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "Mission accomplished. We wanted positions one and two – and we did it. It couldn't be better for Porsche. I'm very grateful to be part of this big Porsche family. We've taken another step towards the possible title win. Hopefully, we'll take a much bigger step next Saturday."

Richard Lietz (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "It was crucial to preserve the tyres over the distance. Bahrain is extremely demanding so you have to take care. If you overexploit the peak grip at the start on fresh tyres, you pay the price at the end of the stint. That's why our focus was always on not putting too much energy into the tyres. This worked well. We also decided not to fight against our team colleagues because that would have cost us a lot of time. From my point of view, this was a perfect race for Porsche."

Race result

GTE-Pro class
1. Estre/Jani (F/CH), Porsche GT Team, Porsche 911 RSR #92, 174 laps
2. Lietz/Bruni (A/I), Porsche GT Team, Porsche 911 RSR #91, 174 laps
3. Calado/Pier Guidi (GB/I), AF Corse, Ferrari 488 GTE #51, 174 laps
4. Serra/Molina (BR/E), AF Corse, Ferrari 488 GTE #52, 174 laps

GTE-Am class
1. Keating/Pereira/Fraga (USA/L/BR), Aston Martin Vantage GTE #33, 172 laps
2. Ried/Campbell/Evans (D/AUS/NZ), Dempsey-Proton Racing, Porsche 911 RSR #77, 172 laps
3. Perfetti/Cairoli/Pera (N/I/I), Team Project 1, Porsche 911 RSR #56, 172 laps
Wainwright/Barker/Gamble (GB/GB/GB), GR Racing, Porsche 911 RSR #86, 171 laps
6. Wainwright/Barker/Gamble (GB/GB/GB), GR Racing, Porsche 911 RSR #86, 171 laps
13. Andlauer/de Leener/Al Qubaisi (F/B/UAE), Dempsey-Proton Racing, Porsche 911 RSR #88, 166 laps

Qualifying

Works driver Kévin Estre has planted the No. 92 Porsche 911 RSR on pole position in qualifying for the six-hour race in Bahrain. In the close hunt for top times, the Frenchman only just outpaced his Italian brand colleague Gianmaria Bruni in the identical nine-eleven with the starting number 91. For Kévin Estre and Neel Jani, who currently rank second in the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC, this is the fourth pole position from the fifth and penultimate race of the season. In the GTE-Am class, the best 911 RSR takes up the race from third place.

"The result looks good. Considering the narrow gap, it's clear that both drivers turned strong laps," said Alexander Stehlig, Head of Operations FIA WEC. "We did a good job in the free practice sessions. In hot conditions, we managed to get the tyres within the operating window – over long distances and a flying lap. First and second are ideal starting positions. We have to try everything in the race to hold on to these positions until the flag. That would improve our ranking in the championship considerably."
Thanks to their pole position, Estre/Jani have slashed the gap in the drivers' standings to eleven points. In the manufacturers' classification, 15 points separate Porsche from the lead.

Conditions were tricky in the ten-minute qualifying on Friday evening on the Bahrain International Circuit. Due to the very abrasive asphalt and high temperatures of over 30-degrees Celsius in the desert, the Michelin tyres on all GTE-Pro cars only allowed optimal grip for a single flying lap. About 90 seconds after the session started, Estre was the first GTE-Pro driver to head out onto the 5.412-kilometre racetrack. His works driver teammate Bruni followed shortly after. Flying in formation, the two seasoned specialists promptly clocked top times in the Porsche 911 RSR, which the competition was unable to undercut. In a time of 1:56.144 minutes, Estre beat Bruni in the sister car by a mere 0.034 seconds.

The qualifying in the GTE-Am class

In the GTE-Am class, the Project 1 squad scored a commendable grid spot with third place for the race in Sakhir. Setting a lap time of 1:59.404 minutes, the Norwegian Egidio Perfetti missed out on a front-row spot by less than a tenth of a second. The two Porsche 911 RSR fielded by Dempsey-Proton Racing tackle the six-hour race from positions seven and nine. GR Racing's technically identical car takes up race five of the season from P12.

The six-hour race of the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC on the Bahrain International Circuit gets underway on Saturday 30 October at 11:00 am local time (10:00 am CEST). For a fee, the official FIA WEC app offers live streaming and live timing.

Drivers' comments after the qualifying

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "My lap might not have been perfect but it was enough for pole position – and I'm very happy about that. It was very tight between us and our sister car. This shows that Porsche is very good here, especially in qualifying. The manufacturers' world championship is very important for us, so the No. 91 car also plays a major role. And it stands between us and the 'reds'. I hope we also manage to maintain the upper hand in the race."

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "The qualifying result is really good: Our lap times were almost the same. Our Porsche 911 RSR felt fantastic on the flying lap, which was a result of our perfect preparation. I'm feeling very confident about the race. We have a strong car and we can definitely fight at the front."

Egidio Perfetti (Porsche 911 RSR #56): "Third isn't as good as first of course, but I'm happy we managed to beat most of the Ferraris and Aston Martins. We face two races in ten days. It's good that we are at the front. We were strong here in Bahrain last year and we won our class. I hope we'll make it back to the podium tomorrow, preferably on the top step."

Qualifying result

GTE-Pro class
1. Estre/Jani (F/CH), Porsche GT Team, Porsche 911 RSR #92, 1:56.144 minutes
2. Lietz/Bruni (A/I), Porsche GT Team, Porsche 911 RSR #91, 1:56.178 minutes
3. Serra/Molina (BR/E), AF Corse, Ferrari 488 GTE #52, 1:57.327 minutes
4. Calado/Pier Guidi (GB/I), AF Corse, Ferrari 488 GTE #51, 1:57.573 minutes

GTE-Am class
1. Mastronardi/Piccini/Cressoni (I/I/I), Ferrari 488 GTE #60, 1:58.687 minutes
2. Dalla Lana/Farfus/Gomez (CDN/BR/BR), Aston Martin Vantage GTE #98, 1:59.331 minutes
3. Perfetti/Cairoli/Pera (N/I/I), Team Project 1, Porsche 911 RSR #56, 1:59.404 minutes
7. Andlauer/de Leener/Al Qubaisi (F/B/UAE), Dempsey-Proton Racing, Porsche 911 RSR #88, 1:59.923 minutes
9. Ried/Campbell/Evans (D/AUS/NZ), Dempsey-Proton Racing, Porsche 911 RSR #77, 2:00.294 minutes
12. Wainwright/Barker/Gamble (GB/GB/GB), GR Racing, Porsche 911 RSR #86, 2:00.939 minutes

Full results and points' standings: fiawec.alkamelsystems.com

Preview

At the last two rounds of the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) season, the Porsche GT Team has its sights firmly set on winning the world championship title. The 2021 season wraps up with back-to-back races in Bahrain over the next two weekends. This is the first doubleheader event in the history of the World Endurance Championship. Round five on 30 October runs over six hours, with the Bahrain International Circuit hosting an eight-hour race a week later. Porsche contests the notoriously cutthroat GTE-Pro class with two 911 RSR. In the GTE-Am class, three customer teams field five identical nine-eleven racers.

"We're tackling the last two races of the season in Bahrain with very clear goals: We want to win the manufacturers' championship and we're also aiming to take home the drivers' trophy with our number 92 crew," explains Pascal Zurlinden, Director Factory Motorsport. "Last year we clinched a double victory on this desert racetrack. We're eager to repeat this feat. If we can do this at the final two races of the year, the championship will be ours. Our Porsche 911 RSR is well suited to the special characteristics of this racetrack – and that makes me hopeful."

"We're very much looking forward to the two races in Bahrain. Our double victory there last year bodes well for a strong performance at the first-ever doubleheader event for the WEC," says Alexander Stehlig, Head of Operations FIA WEC, outlining his expectations. "The six-hour race will be held in daylight. We have to be prepared for the heat. Plus, managing the tyres over a full stint will be decisive.

The final eight-hour race will finish in the dark. The challenge here will be a little different because we're anticipating cooler asphalt temperatures and we need to respond accordingly. It's sure to be exciting and spectacular for fans, drivers and teams. When the doubleheader is over, we'd like to celebrate our world championship title win."

Post-season rookie test

Following the final two races, the WEC has organised a post-season rookie test at the Bahrain International Circuit on 7 November. The Bahrain International Circuit has hosted the Formula 1 Grand Prix regularly since 2004. The FIA WEC was first contested on the 5.412-kilometre circuit close to the capital Manama in its 2012 inaugural season. The only time the endurance race was not held in Sakhir was in the 2018/2019 season. High daytime temperatures, falling temperatures at dusk and fine sand at times covering the asphalt make the race a huge challenge for teams, engineers and drivers.

Tyre wear is a major consideration on the Grand Prix circuit with its 15 turns. A consistent pace over a full stint is regarded as the key to success. At the first of two races in Bahrain, points will be awarded following the conventional FIA formula (25-18-15-12-10-8-6-4-2-1). For the second race, the points are multiplied by a factor of 1.5 and rounded up (38-27-23-18-15-12-9-6-3-2). Moreover, achieving pole position yields an extra point towards the world championship.

The Porsche GT Team drivers

Sharing driving duties in the No. 91 Porsche 911 RSR at the six-hour race in Bahrain are the regular WEC drivers Gianmaria Bruni from Italy and Richard Lietz from Austria. Works driver Frédéric Makowiecki supports the duo at the final eight-hour round. The Frenchman has already joined forces with the pair in Portimão and Le Mans. The No. 92 sister car is manned by Frenchman Kévin Estre and Neel Jani from Switzerland. They are joined in the cockpit for the last race of the season on 6 November by Michael Christensen from Denmark. The regular crew of the No. 92 car currently ranks second in the drivers' championship with their brand colleagues in the No. 91 vehicle in third place. In the manufacturer's classification, Porsche ranks second.

The customer teams

The experienced German customer teams Project 1 and Dempsey-Proton Racing each field two Porsche 911 RSR at the two WEC races in Bahrain. The British squad GR Racing fields another vehicle. One of the crew in Dempsey-Proton Racing's No. 77 entry is the works driver Matt Campbell from Australia.

An overview of teams and drivers (in italics: only round six)

GTE-Pro class
Porsche GT Team #91 – R. Lietz (A) / G. Bruni (I) / *F. Makowiecki (F)*
Porsche GT Team #92 – K. Estre (F) / N. Jani (CH) / *M. Christensen (DK)*

GTE-Am class
Team Project 1 #46 – D. Olsen (N) / TBA / TBA
Team Project 1 #56 – E. Perfetti (N) / M. Cairoli (I) / R. Pera (I)
Dempsey-Proton Racing #77 – C. Ried (D) / M. Campbell (AUS) / J. Evans (NZ)
GR Racing #86 – M. Wainwright (GB) / B. Barker (GB) / T. Gamble (GB)
Dempsey-Proton Racing #88 – K. Al Qubaisi (UAE) / A. de Leener (B) / J. Andlauer (F) / *A. Jefferies (GB*

Drivers' comments before the race

Richard Lietz (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "Two races will be held at the same venue, but the characteristics are very different. The different starting times and distances require specially adapted strategies. It'll definitely be interesting. In terms of the championship, we don't have much to lose with our number 91 car so we'll go all-out. Hopefully, we'll finally have racing luck on our side again."

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "The back-to-back races in Bahrain this year will make things very interesting. The first race is contested in daylight. The sun beats down mercilessly on the asphalt and we're expecting a real scorcher of a race. The second event goes into the night, so with our engineers, we have to predict as precisely as possible how the track will change as the temperatures drop. We're have big goals and we'll do everything in our power to make sure that Porsche wins the manufacturers' title. Fred will provide reinforcement for the final eight-hour race. I'm really looking forward to that."

Frédéric Makowiecki (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "I think it's fantastic that I'll climb into the No. 91 cockpit again for the eight-hour race. We want to bring home maximum points and help Porsche win the manufacturers' title. If we can also support our brand colleagues in the sister car to clinch the drivers' trophy, then that would be even better. The race is going to be tough. We always face sweltering temperatures in Bahrain and the racetrack is demanding on the brakes and tyres. Still, I'm optimistic – also because I won there in 2015."

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "It's a shame that we had to relinquish the lead in the drivers' championship at the previous race in Le Mans. At the same time, this also gives us huge motivation. We still have an iron in the fire: If we win both races, the title is ours. That's our big goal. We've always been strong in Bahrain with the Porsche 911 RSR. So that gives us a lot of confidence heading into these two races. Plus, I'm pleased that Michael will be sharing driving duties in our car again for the final race."

Neel Jani (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "I really like the track and the setting in Bahrain. I've enjoyed some great successes there during my time racing the Porsche 919 Hybrid. I'm keen to build on that this year with the 911 RSR. We'll do everything possible to clinch the big trophy. It's a two-way battle between our car and the No. 51 Ferrari. Let's see how the competition goes in both races. It's entirely possible that the first race is used as strategic preparation for the second race, where you can earn a lot more points. We'll just have to wait and see.

Michael Christensen (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "It's great fun driving the Porsche 911 RSR. So that makes me all the more excited about my return to the WEC team. I hope that in the first of the two Bahrain races, the squad can lay the foundations for a gripping battle for the crown. The 911 RSR set the benchmark in the GTE Pro class last year. We scored a double victory there – and we want to achieve nothing less this year. This could hand Porsche and my colleagues Kévin and Neel the world championship title. That's precisely my big goal."

The schedule (all times CEST/CET)

Thursday, 28 October
2:30 – 4:00 pm: Free practice 1

Friday, 29 October
7:00 – 8:30 am: Free practice 2
11:30 am – 12:30 pm: Free practice 3
3:30 – 3:40 pm: Qualifying GTE

Saturday, 30 October
10:00 am – 4:00 pm: Race 5

Thursday, 4 November
2:30 – 4:00 pm: Free practice 1

Friday, 5 November
6:00 – 7:30 am: Free practice 2
10:20 – 11:20 am: Free practice 3
2:20 – 2:30 pm: Qualifying GTE

Saturday, 6 November
11:00 am – 7:00 pm: Race 6

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



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Video

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Subline: Pascal Zurlinden, Director Factory Motorsport

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