

Four titles for Porsche

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21/11/2015 In the last race of the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) in Bahrain, the team of Bernhard, Hartley and Webber has won the drivers' title in the LMP1 class. In the GTE classes, Porsche has also won three championship titles.

Porsche has concluded the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) in Bahrain by taking the sixth consecutive race win and the second title this year. For Timo Bernhard (DE), Brendon Hartley (NZ) and Mark Webber (AUS) fifth place in the six-hour race was enough to win the drivers' world championship. Romain Dumas (FR), Neel Jani (CH) and Marc Lieb (DE) took their long awaited first race win this season with the second Porsche 919 Hybrid. The eighth and final WEC round was a thriller, and this also applied to the drivers' championship battle.

Bernhard/Hartley/Webber had started with a 13-point lead ahead of the best placed Audi trio. Given the great season Porsche had had so far with the Le Mans victory and the early win of the manufacturers' title, it looked possible to win the drivers' title in Bahrain. But half an hour into the race

the number 17 car had to come into the pits for a long repair stop. After that the trio had to go flat out to catch up from the very back of the pack, and eventually they finished fifth. It was the sister car that took the lead and the crucial points away from the Audi.

How the race went for car number 17:

Start driver Timo defends the lead up to lap 16. On lap 17, nearly half an hour into the race, he radios in that he has a loss of engine power and pits. The mechanics fix an engine actuator problem in 8 minutes 43 seconds. Timo rejoins the race four and a half laps behind the leader. The leader had completed 52 laps when Timo comes in for his first planned stop, still four laps behind but back in the top ten in the 32 car field. Brendon takes over the big job of catching up on fresh tyres.

After 83 race laps – 79 for his car – he comes in for fuel and tyres and remains in the car. At the end of lap 114 (110 for car number 17) Brendon hands over to Mark Webber, who continues in fifth because the number 8 Audi has had a long stop for repairs. He pits for fuel and fresh tyres after 144 laps.After race lap 158 (154 for the car) Mark is called in for another unscheduled pit stop with an actuator problem. He rejoins the race without losing a position. After 183 laps he has his final splash and dash, before he crosses the line in fifth – and becomes world champion.

How the race went for car number 18:

Romain Dumas stays second behind the leading sister car for the first nine laps. On lap ten he is overtaken by the number 8 Audi. When the Porsche teammates have their long repair stop, Romain moves back into P2 and takes the lead when the Audi refuels. After 29 laps Romain comes in for fuel and tyres, and stays in the car. After 59 laps he hands the car over to Marc Lieb, who gets fresh rubber again after 89 laps.

At a restart after a full course yellow on lap 100, Marc manages to outpace the number 7 Audi but drops back again. The following thrilling duel ends with Lieb taking the lead. On lap 119 the rivals both use a full course yellow to pit for a driver change. Neel Jani takes over the leading Porsche. He refuels and picks up fresh tyres after 147 laps. His last pit stop is after 176 laps, and after 199 laps he takes the long awaited first race win this season.

What an end to the season for the Porsche 911 RSR

On Saturday at the six-hour race in Bahrain, the Porsche 911 RSR driven by Frenchmen Frédéric Makowiecki and Patrick Pilet not only scored the fourth GTE-Pro class win of the season – Porsche also netted three championship titles with the winning racer from Weissach, which is based on the iconic 911 sports car.With this victory at the Bahrain International Circuit, Porsche overtook Ferarri in the manufacturers' classification.

The Porsche Manthey squad secured the team championship, and Porsche works driver Richard Lietz convincingly defended his title in the FIA World Endurance Cup for Drivers. Fifth place at today's race with his teammate Michael Christensen from Denmark was enough for the Austrian to secure this honour. With this, Porsche continues on its winning path after also scoring three GT titles at this season's North American Tudor United SportsCar Championship. The success on the Grand Prix circuit in the desert, a racetrack known to put extreme stresses on the tyres, was also a race for strategists.

A strong drive

The tactic of not going all-out in qualifying to clinch pole position but instead to concentrate on preparing for the race and save a fresh set of tyres also worked perfectly at this season finale. Patrick Pilet took up the race from the fifth grid spot and immediately put the GT-class frontrunners under pressure. Third place after one lap, second after two – and after eleven laps he had taken the lead. Putting in a strong drive and clocking consistently fast lap times, the champion of the Tudor United SportsCar Championship and his teammate Frédéric Makowiecki fended off repeated attacks from their rivals over the rest of the race. At the flag, the duo held a comfortable lead of almost 40 seconds.

In the sister 911 RSR fielded by the Porsche Manthey team, start driver Michael Christensen and his teammate Richard Lietz, who have notched up victories this season at the Nürburgring, in Austin and Shanghai, initially took things a little cautiously. In the first half of the race they kept out of any trouble, with the plan of catching the leading group at nightfall. But right to the end they held back from taking unnecessary risks, and were satisfied with fifth place, which secured Porsche all three GT championship titles.

A successful season finale

With two podium spots in the GTE-Am class, Porsche customer teams also celebrated a successful season finale. Klaus Bachler (Austria), Khaled Al Qubaisi (Abu Dhabi) and Marco Mapelli (Italy) saw the flag in second place with their 911 RSR campaigned by Abu Dhabi Proton Racing. For Dempsey Proton Racing, Patrick Long (USA), Christian Ried (Germany) and Marco Seefried (Germany) finished third. This season, the squad with US actor and racing driver Patrick Dempsey in the cockpit, won the race at Fuji and finished second at the Le Mans 24-hour race. Due to filming commitments in Great Britain, Patrick Dempsey was unable to compete in Bahrain.

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