

One-two for Porsche at the WEC season finale with the 911 RSR

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14/11/2020 The Porsche GT Team has wrapped up the 2019/2020 season of the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC with positions one and two in the GTE-Pro category. Kévin Estre and Michael Christensen took up the eight-hour race on the Bahrain International Circuit from pole position and crossed the finish line in first place.

The race

Their teammates Richard Lietz (Austria) and Gianmaria Bruni (Italy) fought their way from fourth at the start to finish in second place. For the sports car manufacturer, this is the third victory out of eight WEC races with the newly developed 911 RSR. Fourteen months ago, Porsche won the season-opening round at Silverstone in Great Britain – on that occasion, Lietz/Bruni took the flag ahead of

Estre/Christensen. In August, the French-Danish duo reciprocated with a victory at the Spa-Francorchamps six-hour race.

“We managed to conclude the debut season of our latest 911 RSR as we began it in Silverstone, which now feels like an eternity ago: with a one-two result in the FIA WEC,” states Fritz Enzinger, Vice President Porsche Motorsport. “With a total of three victories in its maiden season, we’ve clearly showcased the potential of this racing vehicle. For this, I’d like to thank everyone involved here in Bahrain as well as those back at our workshop in Weissach.”

In a banner day, Porsche won both GT classes at the final round of the season: Porsche brand ambassador Jörg Bergmeister (Germany), Porsche Mobil 1 Supercup winner Larry ten Voorde (Netherlands) and Egidio Perfetti (Norway) claimed victory in the GTE-Am class for the Project 1 customer squad.

Like the two work teams in the GTE-Pro category, Porsche split the strategy of the two 911 RSR on the 5.412-kilometre Bahrain International Circuit, which is known for its particularly abrasive asphalt. Estre and Christensen tackled the qualifying each with new Michelin tyres and secured pole position. Lietz and Bruni, however, shared one set of new tyres. Taking up the race from fourth place, they were the fastest of the three vehicles who had implemented the same tactic. Their advantage: In the race, they had an additional set of fresh tyres at their disposal.

Accordingly, tyre strategy proved paramount at the eight-hour race. The race began with hot air and track temperatures in the daytime and ran into the cooler night. Start driver Estre immediately took the lead. The No. 92 Porsche only relinquished this position once: coming in for the first refuelling stop, the sister car only had to switch out two tyres, making the pit stop shorter. The third pit stop, which was brought forward as a result of a full course yellow situation, did not run as expected for the No. 91 car: when the race resumed quicker than anticipated, the hoped-for advantage evaporated. When the safety car was deployed for its one and only outing at the halfway point of the relatively incident-free season finale, the 911 RSR driven by Lietz und Bruni caught up with the leaders. On the cooling asphalt, the pair moved into second place behind Estre and Christensen with a good three hours to go and ultimately rounded off the one-two result for Porsche.

The result yielded Porsche second place in the manufacturers’ classification

In the GT manufacturers’ classification of the FIA World Endurance Championship, this result yielded Porsche second place.

Two Porsche teams also climbed the podium in the GTE-Am class, in which five 2017-spec 911 RSR competed. Jörg Bergmeister, Larry ten Voorde and Egidio Perfetti claimed victory. Porsche Junior Jaxon Evans (New Zealand), Germany’s Marco Holzer and Khaled Al Qubaisi (United Arab Emirates) planted

the 911 RSR fielded by Dempsey Proton Racing on third place in their class. In addition, positions five, six and seven in the GTE-Am class went to Porsche customer teams.

Comments on the race

Alexander Stehlig (Head of Operations FIA WEC): "A fantastic race – all in for Porsche! Pole position, first and second places in the Pro category and first in the Am class, what more do we want? The balance of the cars was super and, unlike the others, we didn't have any problems. We've experienced a long, tough year with several setbacks. This makes it all the more wonderful that we can head into the winter break with this success. It was 'summa cum laude' effort from the entire team. We'll take this motivation with us and do our utmost to build on this performance at Sebring next year."

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 RSR #92):"This was a very important success for Porsche. Unfortunately, we were out of contention for the championship but we knew this before the weekend. We defended first place at the start and led the field on almost every lap – although our huge advantage shrunk due to the safety car phase at halftime. After that, we had to work hard to eke out an advantage again. There were several different tyre strategies. The sister car kept a fresh set more for the race; we wanted to drive on the tyres as consistently as possible through the race. Ultimately, things got pretty exciting again between us. I'm very, very proud of this team."

Michael Christensen (Porsche 911 RSR #92):"It's terrific that we can end the season with a double victory. We did pretty well here in Bahrain last December, but we were hampered by a technical problem. We've now settled that score. It's wonderful that the year has ended like this."

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 911 RSR #91):"First and second – what a fantastic weekend for Porsche. After the 24 Hours of Le Mans, this result comes just at the right time. The team made a great comeback. Our strategy worked well, Richard drove a great race and I, too, had some gripping duels on the track, where I managed to overtake several cars."

Richard Lietz (Porsche 911 RSR #91):"A wonderful race, I'm happy for the Porsche Team. First and second: We did everything right with a great strategy. I'm very proud of the way we tackled this weekend. Saving a fresh set of tyres for the race was the key factor. The fact that we could then bring this result home safely for the team is ok, because that's what racing is about."

Larry ten Voorde (Porsche 911 RSR #56):"Incredible – my second class win in the WEC – and again in Bahrain of all places! I want to thank Egidio Perfetti and Jörg Bergmeister for allowing me to drive with them. I pushed hard. After making contact while lapping another car, it got really tight for us towards the end. The wonderful end to a mega season."

Jörg Bergmeister (Porsche 911 RSR #56):"What can I say? I assured Egidio before the race that we'd win here. He and Larry did a great job. My stint in the middle of the race was actually pretty easy. The Porsche was running well, perfect teamwork – a well-deserved victory."

Jaxon Evans (Porsche 911 RSR #88):"Words fail me right now. My debut in the WEC was great fun. We knew after the free practice that we had a fast car. In qualifying, we saved a set of fresh tyres. It's wonderful that we made it onto the podium."

Race result

GTE-Pro class

1. Christensen/Estre (DK/F), Porsche 911 RSR #92, 235 laps
2. Lietz/Bruni (A/I), Porsche 911 RSR #91, 235 laps
3. Rigon/Molina (I/E), Ferrari 488 GTE #71, 235 laps
4. Westbrook/Martin (GB/B), Aston Martin Vantage #97, + 1 lap
5. Sörensen/Thiim (DK/DK), Aston Martin Vantage #95, + 2 laps
6. Calado/Serra (GB/BRA), Ferrari 488 GTE #51, + 4 laps

GTE-Am class

1. Bergmeister/Perfetti/ten Voorde (D/N/NL), Porsche 911 RSR #56, 232 laps
2. Perrodo/Collard/Nielsen (F/F/DK), Ferrari 488 GTE Evo #83, 232 laps
3. Evans/Holzer/Al Qubaisi (NZ/D/UAE), Porsche 911 RSR #88, 232 laps
5. Wainwright/Barker/Picariello (GB/GB/B), Porsche 911 RSR #86, 232 laps
6. Keating/Pereira/Bleekemolen (USA/L/NL), Porsche 911 RSR #57, + 1 lap
7. Ried/Pera/Olsen (D/I/N), Porsche 911 RSR #77, + 1 lap

Full results: http://fiawec.alkamelsystems.com

The qualifying

The Porsche GT Team has secured a very strong starting position in the qualifying for the final round of the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC in Bahrain: The two Porsche 911 RSR take up the eight-hour race on Saturday from pole position and the second grid row of the GTE Pro category. Denmark's Michael Christensen and Kévin Estre from France claimed the first grid spot in their class with an average time of 1:56.505 minutes. This result was determined by the fastest lap of both drivers. Setting a time of 1:57.124 minutes, their teammates Richard Lietz (Austria) and Gianmaria Bruni (Italy) concluded the final 20-minute session on fourth place.

Porsche implemented two different strategies for the 911 RSR racers in the qualifying. In the No. 92 car, Estre and Christensen each had a set of brand new Michelin racing tyres at their disposal in their hunt for top times. In the sister car, Bruni and Lietz had just four tyres. Consequently, the pair has a fresh set up their sleeve for the final round on the 5.412-kilometre Bahrain International Circuit, which is known for its particularly abrasive asphalt. Over the entire race weekend, the teams contesting the GTE Pro class are permitted a total of 26 tyres per car.

Of the five 2017-spec 911 RSR contesting the GTE-Am category, the best-placed Porsche will take up the race from fourth place. Porsche ambassador Jörg Bergmeister (Germany) and Egidio Perfetti (Norway) set an average lap time of 1:58.896 minutes. They share the ca. 510 hp nine-eleven fielded by the customer team Project 1 with Larry ten Voorde. The Dutch driver is the reigning champion of the Porsche Mobil 1 Supercup and Porsche Carrera Cup Deutschland. Position six in the GTE Am class is occupied by the sister car driven by Dylan Pereira (Luxembourg), Ben Keating (USA) and Jeroen Bleekemolen (Netherlands).

The eight-hour race of the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC on the Bahrain International Circuit gets underway on Saturday (14 November) at 2 pm local time (midday CET).

Qualifying quotes

Alexander Stehlig (Head of Operations FIA WEC): "As expected, we experienced a close qualifying here in Bahrain. That makes us all the more thrilled about clinching pole position. Given that the track is very aggressive on the tyres, we've split our strategy between the two cars: The number 92 vehicle tackled the qualifying session on two new sets of tyres, while the 91 car had only one – for this reason, position one and four for the two cars is a very good result."

Michael Christensen (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "Our RSR drove very well in qualifying. Unfortunately, I made a minor mistake in my first flying lap, but the second lap went better. Now we're starting from pole position. Tyre use plays a major role in the race – I think we're well prepared for that."

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "In my first lap I made a small error. The second attempt ran more smoothly – and that earned us the pole. We managed to prepare well for the race during the first two practice sessions, our Porsche is okay. We're facing an eight-hour race and in order to win it's crucial to have a consistently fast car."

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "In the free practice sessions, our main emphasis was on preparing for the race. I think we worked in the right direction. Everything ran well in qualifying. I drove a very clean lap, despite the fact that this was my first time on the track with the qualifying set-up. We're trying a different strategy compared to our sister car – tomorrow will show whether this pays off."

Richard Lietz (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "We still need to improve the balance of our car a little because we have to preserve the rear tyres. The car handled well in the qualifying. We saved a new set of tyres for the race. That was a strategic decision, which is why we're now where we are on the grid. Tomorrow we have eight hours to get ahead."

Jörg Bergmeister (Porsche 911 RSR #56): "As the best amateur driver, Egidio Perfetti did a fantastic job with our Porsche. We managed to tweak the car a little for him after the last practice session, and things went much better for him after that. From fourth place, I hope we'll be able to make up positions in the GTE Am class."

Jaxon Evans (Porsche 911 RSR #88): "Heading into the qualifying on fresh rubber and little fuel in a car like the 911 RSR was a great experience for me. Even though we're starting from eighth place, we have a long race ahead of us and it won't be decided in the first corner. We three work very well together as a crew and we'll manage it."

Qualifying result

GTE-Pro class

1. Christensen/Estre (DK/F), Porsche 911 RSR #92, 1.56.505 minutes
2. Sörensen/Thiim (DK/DK), Aston Martin Vantage #95, + 0.016 seconds
3. Calado/Serra (GB/BRA), Ferrari 488 GTE #51, + 0.201 seconds
4. Lietz/Bruni (A/I), Porsche 911 RSR #91, + 0.619 seconds
5. Rigon/Molina (I/E), Ferrari 488 GTE #71, + 0.712 seconds
6. Westbrook/Martin (GB/B), Aston Martin Vantage #97, + 0.871 seconds

Klasse GTE-Am

1. Dalla Lana/Lamy/Gunn (CDN/P/GB), Aston Martin Vantage #98, 1:58.356 minutes
2. Yoluc/Eastwood/Adam (TR/GB/IRL), Aston Martin Vantage #90, + 0.443 seconds
3. Grimes/Cozzolino/Noble (GB/J/GB), Ferrari 488 GTE Evo #62, + 0.512 seconds
4. Bergmeister/Perfetti/ten Voorde (D/N/NL), Porsche 911 RSR #56, + 0.540 seconds
6. Keating/Pereira/Bleekemolen (USA/L/NL), Porsche 911 RSR #57, + 0.683 seconds
8. Evans/Holzer/Al Qubaisi (NZ/D/UAE), Porsche 911 RSR #88, + 1.068 seconds
9. Wainwright/Barker/Picariello (GB/GB/B), Porsche 911 RSR #86, + 1.197 seconds
10. Ried/Pera/Olsen (D/I/N), Porsche 911 RSR #77, + 1.309 seconds

Full results: http://fiawec.alkamelsystems.com

The preview

Porsche aims to conclude the debut season of the new Porsche 911 RSR with a win. At the eight-hour race in Bahrain, which marks the final round of the 2019/2020 FIA WEC season, the factory squad will again field two vehicles in the GTE-Pro class. In the GTE-Am class, three customer squads campaign a total of five Porsche 911 RSR in last year's spec. The race on the Formula 1 circuit in Sakhir is the second Bahrain event this season. At the first outing in December 2019, Porsche locked out the first grid row with its two vehicles, led the field, but ultimately was unable to reap the rewards of their good work at the finish line.

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 Super Season. High daytime temperatures, falling temperatures at dusk and sand at times covering the

asphalt make the race a big challenge for teams, engineers and drivers. Tyre wear is a major factor on the Grand Prix circuit with its 15 turns. A consistent pace over a full stint is regarded as the key to success.

The Porsche drivers

Sharing the cockpit of the No. 91 Porsche 911 RSR are works drivers Gianmaria Bruni from Italy and Richard Lietz from Austria. The pair won the season-opening round at Silverstone and head to the final round of the year ranking fifth in the drivers' classification. Sharing driving duties in the No. 92 sister car are the Spa winners Kévin Estre and Michael Christensen. The reigning GTE champions from France and Denmark occupy fourth place before the final race of the 2019/2020 season. In the manufacturer's classification, Porsche ranks second. At the eight-hour race on the Formula 1 circuit in the desert of Bahrain, competitors can earn more points than in a conventional six-hour WEC race: As the distribution of points is multiplied by a factor of 1.5 and rounded up, victory yields 30 points instead of the usual 25.

Intensified partnership

Porsche Motorsport has expanded its partnership with TAG Heuer to include factory campaigns in the FIA WEC. The intensive collaboration with the Swiss manufacturer of luxury watches began in 2019 at the start of the sixth FIA Formula E season with the inauguration of the TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E Team. This partnership was expanded over the last few months to include the national Carrera Cups, the works programme in the IMSA series and the e-sports arena.

The Porsche customer teams

In the GTE-Am class, three customer squads field a total of five of last year's spec Porsche 911 RSR for the last time before switching to the latest model for the upcoming season. Crewing the No. 57 car campaigned by Project 1 is the American Ben Keating, Felipe Fraga from Brazil and Jeroen Bleekemolen from the Netherlands. In 2019, the trio won the GTE-Am category in Bahrain. Sharing the cockpit of the No. 56 sister car is Norway's Egidio Perfetti, the recently crowned Porsche Supercup champion Larry ten Voorde from the Netherlands and Porsche brand ambassador Jörg Bergmeister from Germany.

The crew in Gulf Racing's No. 86 entry consists of the two British racing drivers Michael Wainwright and Ben Barker and the new ELMS champion Alessio Picariello from Belgium. Dennis Olsen competes for Dempsey-Proton Racing in the No. 77 car. The Norwegian joins forces with team owner Christian Ried from Germany and Riccardo Pera from Italy. Khaled Al Qubaisi from the United Arab Emirates and Germany's Marco Holzer share driving duties in the team's No. 88 sister car with Porsche Junior Jaxon Evans, who will compete in the WEC for the very first time.

Comments before the race

Fritz Enzinger (Vice President Motorsport): "It'll be a very special race weekend for Porsche Motorsport. In the North American IMSA series, our works team tackles the GTLM class at the 12 Hours of Sebring for the last time. In Bahrain, we want to shine at the final race of the FIA WEC season and at the same time secure the title at the last race of the GT World Challenge Europe in Le Castellet, France, with our customer team Dinamic Motorsport. Everyone involved will again do their utmost to reap maximum success at all three venues. I'm confident that our teams and drivers will once again deliver strong performances and be rewarded for their tremendous hard work at the end of the season."

Pascal Zurlinden (Director Factory Motorsport): "The first season with the new Porsche 911 RSR draws to a close with the eight-hour race in Bahrain. We won the first round in Silverstone and did it again mid-season at Spa-Francorchamps. A win at Sakhir would round off the season perfectly. Our car performed very well at the previous race on Bahrain's Formula 1 circuit, but unfortunately, that wasn't reflected in the race result. That should change next weekend. Our engineers, the mechanic crews and all drivers have prepared meticulously for the final round. We're ready and want to go into the winter break with a positive result."

Alexander Stehlig (Head of Operations FIA WEC): "Our Porsche 911 RSR suits the special characteristics of the track in Sakhir. We clearly underlined this last December with positions one and two in qualifying. We're preparing meticulously for the last race of the season so that we can conclude our campaign with a win. We also tested in Vallelunga to gain additional insights that will help us in Bahrain. I feel confident that we'll finish the year with a success. The team will once again pull out all stops – then we'll head into the well-deserved winter break."

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "The WEC season began for us in September 2019 with a win at the debut race of the new 911 RSR at Silverstone. We'd like to wrap up the season by repeating this feat in Bahrain. This is our second time here this season, after competing in Sakhir last December. At the first outing we locked out the front grid row with our two cars, but we couldn't maintain the fast pace over the entire race distance. Since then, we've gained a lot more experience with the cars, and I'm sure we have good chances."

Richard Lietz (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "Our Porsche 911 RSR is a real top car in the GTE-Pro class. If everyone in the team does strategically clever work, if the squad does quick pit stops and we drivers do a flawless job, then nothing stands in the way of success. It'd be great to end the season with another victory."

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "I really like the Bahrain circuit. We were fast there last year in December but unfortunately, we weren't able to win. We're determined to change that now. After the somewhat negative results at Le Mans, it's good to get another chance this season to finish on a high note. The winter break would be much more enjoyable with a win under our belt. We'll do everything to be at the forefront in the eight-hour race."

Michael Christensen (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "I'm totally convinced that we'll be as competitive in the coming race as we were in Bahrain last December. The foundations are laid for success at the end of the season. If we can just make it through the eight hours unscathed, there is a high chance we'll be successful. Unfortunately, we didn't earn enough points at Le Mans, so we're out of contention to defend the title. Still, that makes it all the more important to conclude the year with a highlight."

TV coverage and live streaming of the event

The final round of the 2019/2020 FIA WEC season will be televised in full length on www.sport1.de. On the pay-TV station Sport 1+, the race is aired live from start to finish. Eurosport covers the final phase from Sakhir. Motorsport.tv also offers a live stream, as does the official FIA WEC app, which also offers comprehensive live timing.

The schedule (all times CET)

Thursday, 12 November

03:30 – 05:00 pm: Free practice

Friday, 13 November

07:00 – 08:30 am: Free practice
11:45 am – 12:45 pm: Free practice
04:00 – 04:20 pm: Qualifying GTE
04:30 – 04:50 pm: Qualifying LMP

Saturday, 14 November

Midday – 08:00 pm: Race

Info

In the FIA WEC manufacturers' classification, Porsche now ranks second after seven of eight rounds. In the drivers' category, Bruni and Lietz lie fifth, with the defending GTE world champions Christensen and Estre on fourth place. The final round of the 2019-2020 World Endurance Championship season will be held in Bahrain on 14 November.

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Image Sublines

Path: Porsche targets third win this year for the 911 RSR at the WEC season finale /Images/img_1.jpg
Title: Larry ten Voorde, Egidio Perfetti, Jörg Bergmeister, l-r, Team Project 1, FIA WEC, Bahrain, 2020, Porsche AG
Subline: Customer team Project 1 claimed victory in the GTE-Am class.

Path: Porsche targets third win this year for the 911 RSR at the WEC season finale /Images/img_2.jpg
Title: 911 RSR, FIA WEC, 2019, Porsche AG
Subline: Porsche 911 RSR

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