

Pfaff leads customer teams to seven WeatherTech titles for Porsche

14/11/2021 WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, GTLM: Round 10, GTD: Round 12

Porsche customer teams have swept all the GTD class championship titles available at Saturday's 2021 WeatherTech SportsCar Championship season finale: the 24th Running of the Petit Le Mans. Every Porsche in the field left the Braselton, Georgia race track with reason to celebrate with seven championships, a race win and a second-place finish among the accolades. The ten-hour endurance classic at Michelin Raceway Road Atlanta saw five customer-entered Porsche 911-based race cars: two Porsche 911 RSR-19s in the GTLM class – which was running its last race at the November 13 event – and three Porsche 911 GT3 R racers entered in the highly competitive Pro-Am style GTD class. Porsche earned Manufacturer Championships in GTD and the Michelin Endurance Cup.

Porsche customer team Pfaff Motorsports captured the GTD Team Championship as well as the Driver Title for Porsche factory driver Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium) and Zacharie Robichon (Canada). Porsche earned the GTD class Manufacturer Championship with the Porsche 911 GT3 R race car. The team representing the largest Porsche dealership in Canada finished in second-place in the race with

Vanthoor, Robichon and Porsche Test and Development driver Lars Kern (Germany) sharing the cockpit. The finish was successful enough to secure the team its first Team title and the second driver IMSA titles for both Vanthoor (2019, GTLM) and Robichon (2019, GTD Sprint Cup). Over the course of the season, the No. 9 "Plaid Porsche" won three times (Sebring, Monterey and VIR).

Wright Motorsports had a harder path to its Michelin Endurance Cup title. The team, which just the day before secured its first IMSA Michelin Pilot Challenge GS Team and Driver (Jan Heylen) Championships with a Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport, had to replace its fully prepped Porsche 911 GT3 R machine after an incident in the first practice on Thursday. With the primary car totaled, the John Wright-owned operation traveled to its Ohio shop, transported a back-up car to Georgia and prepped it in time for Friday's qualifying session. With their best opportunity for a title being the Michelin Endurance Cup – a championship within a championship which awards leaders during pre-set hours during the four major endurance races (Daytona, Sebring, Watkins Glen and Petit Le Mans) – the team planned its strategy to have the No. 16 at the front of the field at the four and eight-hour marks. North American Porsche factory driver Patrick Long (Westlake Village, California), making his final fulltime start after announcing a new role within Porsche on Thursday, led the driver lineup of Trent Hindman (West Long Branch, New Jersey) and Jan Heylen (Belgium) to hit its mark each time. As a result, the team captured the Michelin Endurance Cup adding to the longtime Porsche cutomer's trophy case and a fifth-place finish in class in the race.

Team Hardpoint, with drivers Rob Ferriol (Fayetteville, North Carolina), Katherine Legge (United Kingdom) and Andrew Davis (Athens, Georgia), finished in eighth-place in the class. The season-long effort by the No. 88 Porsche 911 GT3 R race car earned Ferriol the GTD class Trueman/Akin Award for gentleman drivers. The award guarantees Ferriol an invitation to the 2022 24 Hours of Le Mans.

GTLM. Porsche Closes 911 RSR History in IMSA Having Won First and Last Races.

To top-off the weekend, the German marque finished one-two in the GTLM class with the No. 79 WeatherTech Racing Porsche 911 RSR-19 leading its sister car, the No. 97, across the finish line. The victory bookends the history of the GTLM class with German marque winning both the first race for the category in 2014 – the Rolex 24 At Daytona with drivers Nick Tandy/Patrick Pilet/Richard Lietz in a Porsche 911 RSR – and now the last.

Drivers of the No. 79 have won two of the biggest endurance races in the world this year with Cooper MacNeil (Hinsdale, Illinois), Matt Campbell (Australia) and Mathieu Jaminet (France) earning the full-season car victories at the Mobil 1 Twelve Hours of Sebring and here at the Petit Le Mans. The No. 97 led late in the race with the lineup of "works" drivers Michael Christensen (Denmark), Kévin Estre (France) and Frédéric Makowiecki (France) dropping just behind the No. 79 in the last laps.

With the 2021 WeatherTech season now closed, the teams will begin to turn their focus to the 2022

race season. The traditional Roar Before the 24 at Daytona International Speedway will open the year on January 21 – 23. The first race of the season, the Rolex 24 At Daytona, will take the green flag on January 29, 2022.

Comments after the race

Laurens Vanthoor, Driver, No. 9 Pfaff Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3 R.

“That was mega! So much happened in this long race. We tried to stay out of any problems at all times. Our car was really good. Unfortunately, we couldn't overtake the Aston Martin and celebrate a class win. I gave it a try at the end, but of course didn't risk everything. It was all about the championship. We achieved that. I'm very proud of the team and my colleagues!"

Zach Robichon, Driver, No. 9 Pfaff Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3 R.

“It has been an absolute pleasure to work with this team. Everything about this championship was won as a team. It is pretty special right now to end the season on such a high note at such a great race just culminates the last three years. I couldn’t be more proud of the team. I am very happy. From the beginning of the year, we knew we had all the parts to finish it. As we see in endurance racing so many things can go wrong so to have everything fall into place seems too good to be true right now.”

John Wright, Team Owner, No. 16 Wright Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3 R.

“What a weekend for our team. In Michelin Pilot Challenge, we celebrated two titles, and then today in WeatherTech, we earned two more. I’m immensely proud of everyone on this team. An incident in the second practice really threw a wrench into our weekend, and an early race incident pushed us two laps down, but we climbed our way back to lead when we needed to lead and put in a really strong race. Incredible effort by everyone here.”

Patrick Long, Driver, No. 16 Wright Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3 R.

“Today was a measure of teamwork. We went to work on the strategy. We easily did the most pit stops of any team today with an eye on a prize and goal [the Michelin Endurance Cup]. It wasn’t the overall championship but the next best thing. I am so proud that Porsche took both titles in GTD. This is a great way to cap-off a fulltime driving career. I am going to enjoy tonight.”

Trent Hindman, Driver, No. 16 Wright Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3 R.

“That was more than just an eventful day. That was an eventful weekend and an eventful season. There were a lot of challenges this year and it did nothing but fight through them and make it happen. A massive thanks to everybody at Wright Motorsports for making the entire year possible. We fought through some hard times and still came away with some hardware. It is a pleasure working with these

guys and I am grateful to be a part of this team."

Jan Heylen, Driver, No. 16 Wright Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3 R.

"We won a bunch of championships this year, two this weekend. I think, given what happened at the beginning of the race, this is more than we thought we were going to do. To come back and play the strategy just right, to come away with the endurance championship is really amazing. It has been an amazing season and I hope we can do it again next year."

Rob Ferriol, Driver/Team Principal, Team Hardpoint Porsche 911 GT3 R.

"Coming into this, we knew it was our first full season and in a new car coming back to Porsche, so we knew we had a steep hill to climb. But we knew that the Bob Akin award was an achievable goal for us to set. I'm elated that we were able to achieve that. I have to thank Katherine and Andrew, who came in for the long races, and most of all thank the team for all the work they put in each and every weekend. Ultimately, if the right opportunity exists to go to Le Mans, I will absolutely pursue it."

Cooper MacNeil, Driver, No. 79 WeatherTech Racing Porsche 911 RSR-19.

"To get my third Petit Le Mans win, this one in GTLM, is spectacular. Some of the best teams and drivers are out there so to beat them, especially at a race track like this, is amazing. Hats off to the team, the WeatherTech guys and girls, for an amazing job not only all day and all weekend but all season. A one-two for the team to send the RSR off in the last GTLM race is the best way possible. I couldn't be happier for everybody. It feels great. This one is really nice to get."

Matt Campbell, Driver, No. 79 WeatherTech Racing Porsche 911 RSR-19.

"A fantastic result, one-two for the team. It is what we dreamed of, and that dream became a reality today. Definitely, a team effort. Both cars worked together the whole race. To get a finish like this, a photo-finish, is fantastic for WeatherTech and a great end to the year and the last ever race for GTLM."

Mathieu Jaminet, Driver, No. 79 WeatherTech Racing Porsche 911 RSR-19.

"It was a little bit crazy, especially with the Corvette. We had pace early on in the race but in the night, we really struggled with the car. They were a little quicker, the sister car and the Corvette. I could come back on the four [the number 4 Corvette]. We were fighting and he had contact with the DPi. It was a great result for the team, one-two. Really pleased with that."

Michael Christensen, Driver, No. 97 WeatherTech Racing Porsche 911 RSR-19.

"I did the middle part of the race and tried to stay out of trouble. The car was good. One thing was clear, that it was difficult to overtake and that was something we noticed over the time of the race. We decided to do something different with the strategy in order to get in front and that worked out until the

end."

Kévin Estre, Driver, No. 97 WeatherTech Racing Porsche 911 RSR-19.

"It was a great race, really. We had the pace, but it was very difficult to overtake the BMW and the Corvette. We did it some on track and the last move was in the pits with a different strategy to the Corvette because it was tough on track. I had a nice door banging with Nick again, but I have to say it was on the edge but OK. This race you don't give up; it is an important one. I am really, really happy for the WeatherTech and Proton team and Porsche too for getting this one. The last one for the 911 RSR."

Frédéric Makowiecki, No. 97 WeatherTech Racing Porsche 911 RSR-19.

"It was a tough race. Really proud of the effort on track. We pushed to do the best. It was a strong race for us. It was a single shot and I think we can be proud of that."

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



Frank Wiesmann

Manager, Product Communications, Motorsport and Brand Heritage
Porsche Cars North America
404-539-5031
frank.wiesmann@porsche.us

Image Sublines

Path: media/Images/img_1.jpg
Title: Porsche 911 GT3 R, Pfaff Motorsports #9, Laurens Vanthoor (B), Zacharie Robichon (CDN), Lars Kern (D), IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, Petit Le Mans, Road Atlanta, 2021, PCNA
Subline: Pfaff Motorsports No. 9 "Plaid Porsche"

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Subline: Wright Motorsports No. 16 Wright Motorsports

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Subline: Team Hardpoint No. 88

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Subline: WeatherTech Racing Porsche 911 RSR-19

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Dr. Ing. h.c. F. Porsche Aktiengesellschaft
Porscheplatz 1
70435 Stuttgart