

Porsche announces drivers for Le Mans

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05/02/2015 Impressive performances in the GT works campaign and during testing of the Porsche 919 Hybrid have earned two drivers a spot in the 2015 LMP1 squad.

Following its maiden win at the 2014 season's final race in Brazil, more podium finishes are the aim for the future for the Porsche 919 Hybrid in the 2015 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC). This is the objective the company announced today at the annual press conference held by the Le Mans organisers, the Automobil Club de l'Ouest (ACO), in Paris. To reach that goal the 919 Hybrid has been significantly developed in many areas.

This year Porsche enters a third prototype for the 24-Hours of Le Mans on June 13th and 14th, as well as in the previous championship round, the Six-Hours of Spa-Francorchamps on May 2nd. In Paris, Porsche announced who will be driving that third car alongside Formula One driver Nico Hülkenberg

(27, Germany), whose participation was announced at the end of 2014. The company has selected Earl Bamber (24, New Zealand) and Nick Tandy (30, Great Britain) to join him. Both Bamber and Tandy have been testing the 919 Hybrid and remain active as Porsche works drivers in the GT category.

Two GT drivers have earned a spot in the LMP1 squad

Earl Bamber, who received support as part of Porsche's youth development programme, managed to climb the career ladder into the top tier of long distance racing in record time. After winning the Porsche Motorsport International Cup Scholarship shootout, he went on in 2014 to clinch the title in the Porsche Mobil 1 Supercup as well as in the Porsche Carrera Cup Asia for the second time since 2013. Furthermore, the "Kiwi" won a round of the Carrera Cup Deutschland and secured second place at Petit Le Mans at Road Atlanta, one of the long distance classics in the USA.

These successes earned him a contract as a works driver just prior to the 2015 season and he then quickly climbed the next step on the ladder into the LMP1 programme. In addition to his commitments at the wheel of the 919 Hybrid at Spa-Francorchamps and Le Mans, Bamber tackles the Tudor United SportsCar Championship in the USA and Canada with the 911 RSR. "Receiving support from Porsche was the chance of a lifetime as a race driver," he said. "I've reached new levels in every aspect and I'll do my utmost to justify this trust again this season."

Nick Tandy also celebrated his first great success in Porsche brand trophy racing. In 2010 he contested the Porsche Mobil 1 Supercup and the Carrera Cup Deutschland where he promptly snatched vice-championship honours in both series. In 2011 he secured overall victory in the Carrera Cup Deutschland and the following year picked up the Porsche Cup as the most successful private Porsche driver in the world. 2013 saw him promoted into the factory pilot squad and he went on to win Petit Le Mans as well as 2014 season-opener at the Daytona 24 Hours and the WEC race in Silverstone. He too will continue contesting GT races with the 911 RSR parallel to his LMP1 engagement.

Wolfgang Hatz: "In 2015 we want to compete with an able-to-win package."

Wolfgang Hatz, who is Porsche AG's board member for research and development and also responsible for motorsport, commented about the expectations before the press conference: "The LMP1 programme's most important target is the research and development of future technologies for our road cars. For Porsche as a sports car manufacturer the credo always is to pair maximum sportiness with the highest possible efficiency. The WEC's revolutionary consumption regulations form an ideal research field for this. In 2014 we introduced a very brave powertrain concept for the 919 Hybrid and it instantly proved itself. This enabled us to make the car's second generation a comprehensive evolution instead of an entirely new development. In 2015 we want to compete with an able-to-win package."

Fritz Enzinger, LMP1 Vice President, explained: "In every regard, I have full faith in our driver line-up."

Team Principal Andreas Seidl added: “We are very happy to be allowed to enter a third car in what is only our second season. This shows once more how strongly the company backs the LMP1 programme.”

2015 Porsche 919 Hybrid will be officially presented on March 26

During the Paris press conference the ACO confirmed the car numbers requested for the Porsche 919 Hybrid. The trio of Timo Bernhard (33, Germany), Brendon Hartley (25, New Zealand) and Mark Webber (38, Australia) gets number 17. Number 18 goes to the – also unchanged from 2014 – driver combination of Romain Dumas (37, France), Neel Jani (31, Switzerland) and Marc Lieb (34, Germany). The third car with Hülkenberg, Bamber and Tandy will compete in Spa and Le Mans with number 19.

The evolution of the Porsche 919 Hybrid will be officially presented on March 26th on the Circuit Paul Ricard circuit in Southern France. The next two days will see the first joint test for the entire 2015 WEC field, the so called prologue. Porsche is excited to experience the first encounter with the competition's works cars.

Class GT: drivers for the Porsche 911 RSR announced

Porsche Team Manthey has reshuffled its factory driver lineup in its two Porsche 911 RSR entries in the Sports Car World Endurance Championship WEC and at the 24 Hours of Le Mans. From the season-opening round at Silverstone on 12 April, Michael Christensen (Denmark) and Richard Lietz (Austria) will join forces in the 911 RSR with the starting number 91. Sharing driving duties in the #92 911 RSR are the Frenchmen Frédéric Makowiecki and Patrick Pilet, who already teamed up last year to contest the second half of the season. Germany's Wolf Henzler (#92) and Jörg Bergmeister (#91) will support the pairings as the third driver to contest the 24 hour classic at Le Mans.

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