Strong Porsche performance in Mexico goes unrewarded

21/06/2021 First a win followed by disqualification, then second place and a time penalty: The TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E Team experienced an eventful Puebla E-Prix in Mexico, with convincing performances in both the qualifying and race. However, despite a disappointing outcome, the Puebla E-Prix marked a promising start into the second half of the ABB FIA Formula E World Championship.

Race 9

At the premiere of the innovative electric racing series on the Autódromo Miguel E. Abed circuit, Pascal Wehrlein (GER) was the first across the line with the Porsche 99X Electric after an outstanding performance at race eight of the season – only to be disqualified by the race officials due to an irregularity in the tyre registration. Obviously unaffected, Wehrlein bounced back for the second race on Sunday to finish second after a tough fight. In the closing stages of the race, the additional power provided by the Fan Boost was not utilised, and Wehrlein was handed a five-second time penalty, which threw the German back to fourth place. For the first time in the current Formula E season, spectators were allowed at the circuit. 10,000 tickets were given away to staff of the Mexican health system.

Despite the huge disappointment after his disqualification, Pascal Wehrlein made a remarkable recovery. After his pole position the previous day and setting the second-fastest time in the Super Pole Qualifying, he took up race 9 from the first grid row. In lap seven he seized the lead in the No. 99 Porsche 99X Electric, only to lose the top spot shortly afterwards when he activated Attack Mode for the first time. After twelve laps, Wehrlein again picked up the 35 kW of additional power for four minutes and from fourth place went in pursuit of the top three. Thanks to a strong drive and efficient energy management, the Porsche driver moved up to second place by half time and kept his cool during the final phase in the Puebla summer heat. Having slightly overworked the front tyres during his charge on the abrasive asphalt of the 2.982-kilometre Formula E circuit in Puebla, it proved impossible for Wehrlein to chase down the leader. After 45 action-packed minutes plus one lap, the German crossed the finish line in second place. Due to a subsequent time penalty, he was classified fourth.

His teammate André Lotterer (GER), who had also been disqualified on Saturday, drove a solid race during the opening stages on Sunday. Taking up the race from the fifth grid row after qualifying on tenth, he was on course to score points with the No. 36 Porsche 99X Electric. However, after making contact with a competitor in the second half of the race, he fell back to finish 17th.

Comments on the Puebla E-Prix, Race 9

Amiel Lindesay, Head of Operations Formula E: “Except for the disqualification and the time penalty,

this was a very informative weekend for us. We made great progress, although this is not mirrored in the final results. On Saturday we showed that we're able to win races, and on Sunday we confirmed our strong performance. Pascal drove an incredibly efficient race. At the start, he lost some positions but regained them and put pressure on the leader over many laps. His tyres had deteriorated from the chase on the rough tarmac, but he couldn't get past and secured a commendable second place. Unfortunately, the time penalty cost him the podium result. André made up positions after the start but then plastic banners got stuck under the car, which completely changed the vehicle balance. We stand united as a team after Puebla and now we look forward to New York City."

Pascal Wehrlein, Porsche works driver (#99): "We were really strong over the entire weekend. Compared to the last race we took a huge step forward. I'm very happy about that. My relationship with the team gets better from race to race. I understand how to get even faster with the Porsche 99X Electric, and the team understands how I'd like the car to be. We can be proud of the progress that we've made together. First and second in qualifying, first and second in the race – without the disqualification and the time penalty we'd be on top of the championship right now. I look forward to the races in New York City."

André Lotterer, Porsche works driver (#36): "I had a good start and was very happy with the car. But then I picked up a lot of plastic ribbon from an advertising board at the side of the track, which altered the handling of the Porsche 99X Electric, especially in the fast banked corner. Unfortunately, that was the end of my race."

Next up

The next event for the TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E Team is the New York City E-Prix on 10/11 July with races 10 and 11 of the ABB FIA Formula E World Championship.

Porsche in Formula E

´The TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E Team contests its second Formula E season in 2021 with the Porsche 99X Electric. André Lotterer celebrated a successful racing debut in November 2019, finishing second at the season-opening race in Diriyah after meticulous preparation: a dream start and proof that Porsche had a competitive vehicle right from the outset with the Porsche 99X Electric. This was impressively underlined by the first pole position in Mexico City and another second place on home turf in Berlin. Formula E is the world's first fully-electric street racing series and, as an accelerator for innovative and sustainable mobility technologies, it has brought thrilling motorsport to people living in major cities since 2014. This season, in which a driver and team world champion will be crowned for the first time, more automobile manufacturers compete than in any other racing series. As such, the races are fascinating and fiercely contested.

Race 8

At the Puebla E-Prix in Mexico, Pascal Wehrlein crossed the finish line first on Saturday after an inspired drive at the wheel of the Porsche 99X Electric. However, both Wehrlein and his TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E Team colleague André Lotterer were disqualified straight after round eight of ABB FIA Formula E World Championship. The stewards decision was made because the team did not declare the race tyres.

Comments on the Puebla E-Prix, Race 8

Amiel Lindesay, Head of Operations Formula E: "Pascal did a flawless job today. After setting pole position, he was the first across the line in the race. Unfortunately, we made a mistake that cost us our first Formula E victory. Such things must not happen. We'll work through this incident together. We're a team after all: We win and we lose together. Tomorrow is another day. We'll come back even stronger."

Pascal Wehrlein (GER), Porsche works driver (#99): "It's hard to find the right words for what happened today. After qualifying on pole, we deserved the first win and we did it too on this track. Ultimately, a mistake was made in the tyre registration, which wouldn't have changed the performance. In my opinion, disqualification is a very tough penalty. But now we're looking ahead and we'll attack again tomorrow."

André Lotterer (GER), Porsche works drivers (#36): "That was not an easy day for us. First of all, it's a shame that Pascal and our team were denied today's victory. After such a convincing performance, we were not rewarded for it, unfortunately. My race was a mixed bag. I didn't feel particularly comfortable in the car today so it was difficult to maintain my position. We get another chance on Sunday."

The preview: Q&A on the Puebla E-Prix

The ABB FIA Formula E World Championship heads into the second half of the season with a premiere: On 19 and 20 June, the twelve teams and 24 drivers contesting the innovative electric racing series will compete for the first time in Puebla, Mexico, with two races held on the Autódromo Miguel E. Abed circuit.

The TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E Team fields two Porsche 99X Electric on the racetrack at an altitude of around 2,300 metres in the shadow of the Popocatépetl volcano. André Lotterer (GER) helms the No. 36 car, with his teammate Pascal Wehrlein (GER) at the wheel of the No. 99 vehicle.

"A new circuit also means a new challenge," says Amiel Lindesay, Head of Operations Formula E. "We're well prepared and, in Puebla, we expect to continue the strong performances that we've already shown this year." In its second Formula E season, Porsche has so far notched up two podium results thanks to

Pascal Wehrlein in Rome and André Lotterer in Valencia. The Puebla E-Prix is the first event of the season held on the American continent. The second is the New York City E-Prix doubleheader on 10 and 11 July.

Amiel Lindesay (Head of Operations Formula E)

After the strong performances in Rome and Valencia, how confident are you heading into the second half of the season?

“The team feels extremely motivated. We know what we're capable of and we're concentrating on improving from race to race. In the first half of the season, we've shown that we're strong in qualifying and that we're also able to match the pace of the leaders in the race. However, we've occasionally missed out on reaping the rewards of our untiring efforts. That shouldn't happen to us in the future. I'm convinced that we'll continue to make progress and that we'll soon manage to convert our solid performance into our first win.”

The Puebla track lies at around 2,300 metres. Does the altitude have an influence?

“The air density is lower at this altitude and therefore the cars generate less downforce. When the ambient temperature is higher than 25-degrees Celsius, battery cooling can be an issue. We're well prepared for this. Despite the thin air, the drivers shouldn't have a problem. They're highly trained to handle this. Tyre wear is definitely greater on the Puebla circuit, however this has nothing to do with the altitude. It's the rough asphalt, which is really hard on the tyres. That's why we have a spare set available this time. Tyre management is the key to success on this track.”

André Lotterer (Porsche works driver, #36)

The circuit in Puebla is new for everyone. Is that an advantage for you?

“It's not a disadvantage at any rate. A new racetrack is always better for us than one where the other teams have already competed and therefore have a headstart when it comes to experience. For us drivers, preparing for Puebla was predominantly about familiarising ourselves with the layout in the simulator at Weissach and getting an idea of what to expect. We travel to Mexico well prepared. I'm looking forward to this new challenge and I hope for a successful start into the second half of the season.”

Pascal Wehrlein (Porsche works driver, #99)

You started the season with the aim of winning races. What's needed to score the first victory?

“Not much. We have the speed in qualifying and the race, so that’s not it. We’ve shown that we can be up the front. It’s really only minor aspects that we have to improve on. But in such a competitive field like Formula E, it’s precisely the small things that make a difference in the end. We need weekends where everything comes together perfectly, from the practice sessions to the races. We’re working on this and I hope that Puebla will be such a weekend. We’re learning things from every race and I’m confident that we’ll soon bring home our first victory.”

The racetrack

The Autodromo Miguel E. Abed features several track variants and an oval. Formula E, which has been held five times on the Autódromo Hermanos Rodríguez in Mexico City, will race on the 2.982-kilometre International Short Course. This version includes parts of the oval and the infield with a total of 15 corners. One of the country’s most active volcanoes, the 5,426-metre-high Popocatépetl, towers majestically on the horizon. “The first impression of the racetrack is very positive,” says Pascal Wehrlein. “The last corner is particularly fast and really tough on the tyres. We drive through the oval onto the long start-finish straight, where we’ll hopefully get a good chance to overtake. Attack mode is also exciting because we have to drive a significantly longer racing line and therefore lose more time over a lap compared to other tracks.” André Lotterer adds: “It’ll be important to find the optimal balance, particularly for the semi-fast and fast corners. The braking points will also be crucial.”

Live TV and internet coverage

The worldwide broadcasting schedule of the Formula E event in Puebla is available on:
https://www.fiaformulae.com/watch/ways-to-watch

The media service

The first photos from Puebla are available on the Porsche Press Database on 18 June. Comments from the Head of Operations Formula E and drivers will be included in the race reports on 19 June (race 8) and 20 June (race 9). All times EST. Further information about the TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E Team will be posted live on the Twitter channel @PorscheFormulaE. All relevant information about the team, the drivers and the racing series can be found in the Porsche Formula E Media Guide. The content will be regularly updated over the course of the season and expanded with additional interactive material.

The Porsche 99X Electric

Campaigning the Porsche 99X Electric, Porsche returned to open-wheel single-seater racing in 2019 after more than 30 years and celebrated a successful debut scoring second place at the season-opener in Saudi Arabia’s Diriyah. The fully-electric racing car sporting the Weissach-developed Porsche E

Performance Powertrain also serves as a development platform for the sports car manufacturer's fully-electric production models. Energy management and efficiency are important factors of success in Formula E and in the development of production cars. The Porsche 99X Electric produces a maximum output of 250 kW (340 hp) in qualification mode and 200 kW (270 hp) in normal race mode. Attack Mode boosts the output to 235 kW (320 hp), with Fanboost increasing the performance to 250 kW (340 hp). Maximum recuperation is 250 kW; the usable battery capacity is 52 Kilowatt hours.

Formula E

Formula E is the world's first fully-electric street racing series and has been treating people living in major cities to thrilling motorsport since 2014. As an accelerator for innovative and sustainable technologies of mobility, it promotes the worldwide acceptance of electric vehicles with the aim to counteract climate change. The format is compact: practice, qualifying and race all take place on one day. Each race is contested over 45 minutes plus one lap. Formula E, which features a team and driver world championship for the first time this year, has attracted more automobile manufacturers than any other racing series. This makes for interesting and hotly contested races. In 2021, the TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E Team tackles its second season running the Porsche 99X Electric.

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