Porsche 911 RSR wins thanks to the best tactics and top driving performance

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18/07/2021 Porsche has won the Monza round of the FIA World Endurance Championship. Kévin Estre from France and Neel Jani from Switzerland crossed the finish line first in the fiercely contested GTE-Pro class at the wheel of the No. 92 Porsche 911 RSR on Italy's high-speed circuit.

The race

For the works driver duo, this was the second win from the third race so far this season after their triumph at the opening round in Belgium. Gianmaria Bruni from Italy and the Austrian Richard Lietz concluded the gripping six-hour race on the home turf of their main rival Ferrari in third place. As the best customer team, Project 1 scored fourth place in the GTE-Am category with the No. 56 Porsche 911 RSR.

“Congratulations to the entire team! The drivers and crew put in an impressive performance. And they achieved this feat under the most difficult conditions because, of course, the disastrous flooding in Germany is on everyone's mind – especially since employees of our Manthey operations team have also been affected. I can't thank the crew enough,” concluded Pascal Zurlinden, Director Factory Motorsport. “Thanks to this victory in the home of our main rival Ferrari, we've reclaimed the lead in the drivers' classification and significantly reduced the gap in the manufacturers' championship. It was the perfect rehearsal for the 24 Hours of Le Mans, which we'll tackle with maximum motivation.”

“It's a great result that we hadn't expected in this form,” explains Alexander Stehlig, Head of Operations FIA WEC. “I'm really very relieved because we were under pressure after not achieving the desired result at the last race in Portugal. We took up this race knowing full well that Monza was not necessarily ideally suited to the Porsche 911 RSR. So, we set everything up to tap the full potential of what was possible. That worked perfectly. It's a huge achievement to stand at the top of the podium at Ferrari's home race in Monza.”

The limited number of spectators permitted to watch the FIA WEC race at the racetrack for the first time after the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, worked up a sweat in more ways than one – not only due to the hot temperatures of over 30 degrees Celsius but more because of the gripping action and nail-biting fight between Porsche and Ferrari in the GTE-Pro class. At the start, polesitter Kévin

Estre successfully fended off the red rivals and, despite the occasional yellow phase, maintained a small gap until the end of his double stint. Neel Jani then became embroiled in several duels, which saw him briefly lose the top spot, only to regain it again with an impressive effort. In the last third of the race, Estre brought home the second win of the season for Porsche thanks to a flawless driving performance, perfect tactics and top teamwork.

Meanwhile, the No. 91 sister car was at times hampered by bad luck in the thrilling race. Gianmaria Bruni put in a strong early pace but was unable to avoid a spinning GTE-Am car shortly before the end of his second stint. In the collision, the Italian's 911 RSR sustained minor damages to the front. However, Bruni and Richard Lietz managed to hold their own against the second Ferrari and ultimately achieved an important podium result. Thanks to the second class victory from the third race, Kévin Estre and Neel Jani have reclaimed the lead in the drivers' championship. In the manufacturers' classification, Porsche ranks second, just seven points off the lead as they head to the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

The GTE-Am category also treated fans to action-packed racing to the flag. Norway's Egidio Perfetti as well as the two Italians Matteo Cairoli and Riccardo Pera were in top form at Monza. The trio sharing the No. 56 Porsche 911 RSR fielded by the Project 1 customer team matched the pace of the leading pack in their class, but ultimately had to settle for fourth place due to a less than ideal pit stop strategy. The German squad's sister car took the flag in P13. The two vehicles campaigned by Dempsey-Proton Racing concluded the race in positions five and six, with the GR Racing's 911 finishing on ninth.

Round four of the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) is the highlight of the season: the 24 Hours of Le Mans on 21/22 August. The official test day on the 13.626-kilometre Circuit des 24 Heures du Mans will be held a week before the start of the 89th edition of the endurance classic.

Drivers' comments on the race

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "I'm extremely pleased because this win came as a complete surprise. We knew that our 911 RSR was really fast over one lap and we proved this with pole position. But at the same time, we had expected Ferrari to be faster than us over the whole distance. We delivered a flawless race – everyone did. Thanks to blisteringly fast pit stops, our team managed to win critical seconds over the competition. What's more, we had an ideal strategy and my teammate Neel Jani was in top form. That was one of the toughest WEC races I've ever contested."

Neel Jani (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "Mega! What a race – so gripping and so close. It was such a tough fight against the No. 51 Ferrari. The fact that we won the duel is simply sensational. We never anticipated this, so, of course, this just adds to the joy. This victory gives us huge confidence as we head to the highlight of the season at Le Mans."

Richard Lietz (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "We had a difficult weekend, particularly for some members of our Manthey operations team who were affected by the terrible flooding in their home country. Because

of this, we had to change our pit crew slightly. At this point, I'd like to thank our team, who worked under the most difficult conditions this weekend."

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "Quite frankly, I expected a little more because our Porsche 911 RSR was perfectly set up and very fast. Unfortunately, we weren't able to fully implement that in the race. Still, much more important than our position in the rankings is that the victims of the flooding disaster receive as much support as possible."

Egidio Perfetti (Porsche 911 RSR #56): "For many years I kept hearing that Monza was built for Ferrari. I didn't believe it until I saw it in today's race. Although we did our absolute best and fought hard to the end, it just wasn't enough. It's a shame. Now we have to analyse whether our tactical approach was correct. On a positive note, we were the fastest Porsche customer car. That was great but I'd have loved to be on the podium at Monza."

Result GTE-Pro class

1. Estre/Jani (F/CH), Porsche 911 RSR #92, 190 laps
2. Pier Guidi/Calado (I/GB), Ferrari 488 GTE #51, 190 laps
3. Bruni/Lietz (I/A), Porsche 911 RSR #91, 190 laps
4. Serra/Molina (BR/E), Ferrari 488 GTE #71, 190 laps

Result GTE-Am class

1. Perrodo/Nielsen/Rovera (F/DK/I), Ferrari 488 GTE #83, 187 laps
2. Dalla Lana/Farfus/Gomes (CDN/BR/BR), Aston Martin #97, 87 laps
3. Hoshino/Fujii/Watson (J/J/GB), Aston Martin #33, 187 laps
4. Perfetti/Cairoli/Pera (N/I/I), Porsche 911 RSR #56, 187 laps
5. Ried/Evans/Campbell (D/NZ/AUS), Porsche 911 RSR #77, 186 laps
6. Haryanto/Seefried/Picariello (RI/D/B), Porsche 911 RSR #88, 186 laps
9. Wainwright/Barker/Gamble (GB/GB/GB), Porsche 911 RSR #86, 185 laps
13. Olsen/Buchardt/Root (N/N/USA), Porsche 911 RSR #46, 183 laps

The qualifying

Porsche takes up round three of the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) from pole position on the Autodromo Nazionale di Monza. In the 911 RSR, works driver Kévin Estre from France turned the fastest qualifying lap on the high-speed circuit in 1:45.412 minutes. With this third consecutive top qualifying time, the Porsche GT Team celebrates a flawless hat-trick in the GTE-Pro category. Estre shares the car with Neel Jani from Switzerland. At the wheel of the sister car, which followed a different tyre strategy, Gianmaria Bruni (Italy) posted the third quickest time on home turf in 1:45.844 minutes.

For the race, he shares the cockpit with Austria's Richard Lietz. In the GTE-Am class, a 911 RSR fielded by the Project 1 customer team starts from P4. This event marks the first time the FIA World Endurance Championship races on the storied 5.793-kilometre racetrack just outside Milan.

Only ten minutes were available to the WEC teams to qualify. Estre held back on his first flying lap and instead used his second attempt to go for pole. His teammate Bruni drove a 1:46.009-minute lap on his first try and followed up with two more hot laps. Then, at his fourth attempt, he validated the third grid spot in the GTE-Pro class with a time of 1:45.844 minutes.

"From a sporting perspective, we're of course delighted about our third straight pole position in the current FIA WEC season," said Fritz Enzinger, Vice President Motorsport. "However, our thoughts are with the people who were badly affected by the disastrous flooding in the Nürburgring region – including many employees and their families of our operations team Manthey, whom we wish the strength they need to get through this difficult time."

"Third event of the season, third pole position: The reliability of our team's performance is impressive," underlines Alexander Stehlig, Head of Operations FIA WEC. "We tackled the weekend with a clear plan and we implemented it systematically during the practice sessions. As a result, we were perfectly prepared to go for top times in the qualifying. First and third on the grid – a great result. We'll build on this in the race and will try to put a spoke in the wheel of our rivals at Ferrari at their home race."

In the GTE-Am class, Egidio Perfetti planted the 911 RSR of the Project 1 customer squad on fourth place. The Norwegian turned his fastest lap in 1:48.057 minutes. In the race, he receives support from the Italians Matteo Cairoli and Riccardo Pera. P10 was claimed by the identical vehicle fielded by Dempsey-Proton Racing with team owner Christian Ried at the wheel. The German shares driving duties with Jaxon Evans from New Zealand and the Australian works driver Matt Campbell.

Round three of the World Endurance Championship WEC takes off on Sunday, 18 July 2021, at midday (CEST) and is contested over six hours.

Drivers' qualifying quotes

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "It's a great achievement to qualify ahead of the 'Reds' at Monza. It was difficult to predict because Ferrari is enormously strong on this racetrack. I got a bit of a draft at the right moment, the lap was clean and really fast. In the end, I was ahead by a mere six hundredths of a second. It was tight, exciting and, in the end, very good. Nevertheless, our thoughts are with the people in the Eifel region who were badly hit by the catastrophic floods. We know many of those affected, including friends from our team, many fans around the Nürburgring and numerous other squads from the region. We very much hope that the victims of this disaster receive a lot of support from the motorsport community."

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "We implemented a different tyre strategy than the crew of

the sister car. On this basis, I drove a flawless lap without any mistakes and that was great. Now we have to wait and see how strong our competitors are in the race. We're prepared for a tough fight."

Egidio Perfetti (Porsche 911 RSR #56): "On the one hand, I'm very happy to be the fastest 911 RSR driver in the GTE-Am category, but I'm not so thrilled about fourth overall. That was probably because we opted for a conservative approach with medium tyres. I would've been faster today with the soft compound. Still, let's wait and see. I'm optimistic that this choice will prove to be the better one for the early stages of the race."

Result GTE-Pro class

1. Estre/Jani (F/CH), Porsche 911 RSR #92, 1:45.412 minutes
2. Pier Guidi/Calado (I/GB), Ferrari 488 GTE #51, 1:45.477 minutes
3. Bruni/Lietz (I/A), Porsche 911 RSR #91, 1:45.844 minutes
4. Serra/Molina (BR/E), Ferrari 488 GTE #71, 1:46.214 minutes

Result GTE-Am class

1. Keating/Pereira/Fraga (USA/L/BR), Aston Martin #33, 1:47.272 minutes
2. Perrodo/Nielsen/Rovera (F/DK/I), Ferrari 488 GTE Evo #83, 1:47.541 minutes
3. Lacorte/Sernagiotto/Fuoco (I/I/I), Ferrari 488 GTE Evo #47, 1:47.950 minutes
4. Perfetti/Cairoli/Pera (N/I/I), Porsche 911 RSR #56, 1:48.057 minutes
10. Ried/Evans/Campbell (D/NZ/AUS), Porsche 911 RSR #77, 1:48.766 minutes
12. Haryanto/Seefried/Picariello (RI/D/B), Porsche 911 RSR #88, 1:49.211 minutes
13. Wainwright/Barker/Gamble (GB/GB/GB), Porsche 911 RSR #86, 1:49.244 minutes
14. Olsen/Buchardt/Root (N/N/USA), Porsche 911 RSR #46, 1:51.051 minutes

The preview

The Porsche works team is well prepared as it travels to round three of the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) in Monza. The high-speed circuit in Italy hosts the world endurance series for the first time. At the six-hour race on July 18, the squad of the Stuttgart sports car manufacturer has a clear goal: the Porsche GT team aims to recapture the top spot of the world championship rankings which it lost at the previous race in Portugal. In the GTE-Pro class for factory teams, Porsche fields two 911 RSR. In the GTE-Am category, the customer teams Project 1, Dempsey-Proton Racing and GR Racing campaign a total of five 911 racers.

"At the last race in Portimão, we struggled to find the right use of the tyres. The team looked at the causes and took appropriate measures to avoid something like this happening again," explains Pascal Zurlinden, Director Factory Motorsport. "We firmly believe that we'll find our way back to our former

competitiveness in time for the Monza race and that we'll reclaim the championship lead at the home race of our main rival Ferrari in Italy." After two of six rounds this season, Porsche ranks second in the manufacturer's classification, just 18 points off the top of the leaderboard.

"We're all excited about the event on the storied circuit with its very special flair. It's sure to be a highlight," says Alexander Stehlig, Head of Operations FIA WEC, as he looks ahead to round three of the season. "Still, we're facing a major challenge. Our Porsche 911 RSR is particularly strong in the semi-fast and fast corners. Unfortunately, there aren't many of these passages at Monza. The focus is not on downforce or
aerodynamic efficiency, but rather on the sheer top speed and braking performance of the cars. We have to respond to this with a special setup. I'm confident that we'll be competitive in Monza and score many world championship points."

The Autodromo Nazionale di Monza has a long and rich history. The first races in the Royal Park were contested as early as 1922, at that time on an oval circuit. The remnants of this are still admired today. The now 5.793-kilometre variant of the circuit with its long straights is geared towards high speeds. Since 1950, a total of 70 Formula 1 Grands Prix have been held on the circuit near the northern Italian metropolis of Milan. The FIA WEC conducted its official tests here prior to the 2017 season – the so-called prologue in Monza. This year, a six-hour race will be held for the first time. As part of the preparations, the Porsche GT Team can draw on data and insights from the customer teams contesting the European Le Mans Series (ELMS). The European endurance series has raced regularly on this spectacular circuit since 2017.

The Porsche GT Team drivers

Sharing driving duties in the No. 91 Porsche 911 RSR are Richard Lietz from Austria and his works driver teammate Gianmaria Bruni. This is the first time the Italian races on home turf with the FIA WEC. The duo currently ranks fourth in the drivers' championship. Their brand colleagues Kévin Estre and Neel Jani from Switzerland lie second in the world championship. Sharing the cockpit of the No. 92 car, the pair won the season opener in Belgium and has so far posted pole position at all GTE-Pro qualifying sessions in 2021.

The customer teams

Dempsey-Proton Racing fields two Porsche 911 RSR at round three of the WEC season. Works driver Matt Campbell from Australia joins forces in the No. 77 car with the team owner Christian Ried (Germany) and the former Porsche Junior Jaxon Evans from New Zealand. Alessio Picariello from Belgium and Andrew Haryanto from Indonesia helm the No. 88 sister car with Germany's Marco Seefried. Project 1 campaigns the No. 46 Porsche 911 RSR with Norwegians Anders Burchardt and Dennis Olsen as well as Axcil Jefferies from Britain. In the No. 56 car from the German customer team, Egidio Perfetti from Norway shares driving duties with the two Italians Matteo Cairoli and Riccardo Pera.

The all-British driver crew Michael Wainwright, Ben Barker and Tom Gamble compete for GR Racing in the No. 86 car.

Drivers' comments before the race

Richard Lietz (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "The Monza race is a home event for my Italian teammate Gimmi, so obviously we have to be at the very front. However, there's still a lot of work ahead of us. At the last race in Portimão, we had an issue with the tyres. I hope we can find a setup that allows us to turn good and consistent laps. If we succeed in this and we're spared bad luck with our number 91 car, then everything will be just fine."

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "I'm an Italian and I'm competing for Porsche on Ferrari's home turf in Monza – that's hugely motivating. The event has a very special meaning for me. It may sound strange, but the truth is: although Monza is a famous track in my home country, I've not raced there often. I know the circuit, but not much better than many other motor racing venues in Europe. The anticipation is high and so are the expectations. After failing to achieve the success we'd hoped for with our number 91 car, it's now time to bring home maximum points."

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 RSR #92):"The excitement is huge for me for various reasons. I immediately liked the track at my first race there in 2009 with the Porsche Carrera Cup France. I also have fond memories of the 2017 prologue there. Thousands of spectators turned up – just to watch the test drives! That was fantastic. What's more, I think Monza is perfect for WEC races with its different classes. The many straights and the occasional long braking zone make lapping traffic much easier. Plus, Monza is practically a home race for me this year. The circuit is only about 300 kilometres from where I live in Austria. No other racing venue is closer."

Neel Jani (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "Monza is a classic, old-school racetrack. I really like that. I'm curious to see how the WEC competition will be on this extremely fast circuit. The forecast is for very hot temperatures. I hope we cope okay with the tyres and that we ultimate celebrate a success."

The schedule (all times CEST)

Friday, 16 July
15:30 to 17:00 – Free practice 1

Saturday 17 July
09:35 to 11:00 – Free practice 2
14:00 to 15:00 – Free practice 3
18:00 to 18:10 – Qualifying GTE-Pro and GTE-Am

Sunday 18 July

12:00 to 18:00 – Race

Internet coverage of the race

For a fee, the official FIA WEC app offers live streaming and live timing.

2021 WEC calendar

26/27 April – Prologue in Spa-Francorchamps (Belgium)
1 May – 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps (Belgium)
13 June – 8 Hours of Portimão (Portugal)
18 July – 6 Hours of Monza (Italy)
21/22 August – 24 Hours of Le Mans (France)
26 September – 6 Hours of Fuji (Japan)
20 November – 8 Hours of Bahrain (Bahrain)

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



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