

Wright Rolling. Charlotte Yields Third Consecutive IMSA Podium for Wright Motorsports.

11/10/2020 In the one-hour, 40-minute sprint race on the Charlotte Roval, works driver Patrick Long and his teammate Ryan Hardwick earned a hard-fought second-place finish in the GTD class under difficult wet conditions.

Wright Motorsports continued its success streak in the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship on Saturday, October 10. In the one-hour, 40-minute sprint race on the Charlotte Roval, works driver Patrick Long (Manhattan Beach, California) and his teammate Ryan Hardwick (Atlanta, Georgia) earned a hard-fought second-place finish in the GTD class under difficult wet conditions. This marks the third straight podium result for the Porsche customer team based in Batavia, Ohio. The challenges for the Porsche GT Team – the official factory operation competing in the GTLM class – continued at round eight of North America's premier sports car racing series. For both Porsche 911 RSR race cars, the evening event in Concord, North Carolina ended after just 20 minutes as a result of damage to both cars.

The first race of the IMSA series at the combination oval and road course started an hour later than planned due to delays in the previous NASCAR Xfinity Series event. Facing heavy rain and poor visibility, Frédéric Makowiecki (France) initially managed to defend his second starting position in the No. 911 car, with Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium) working his way from sixth-place on the grid to fourth in the No. 912. However, after just four laps, the Belgian hit the track barriers with his ca. 515 hp GTLM car. The damages to the rear of the defending champion's 911 RSR were too serious to continue, and the car he shares with Earl Bamber (New Zealand) was out of the race after just ten minutes.

In the meantime, the Frenchman Makowiecki battled against several rivals and spun in the first corner on the seventh lap. Like his teammate Vanthoor, the resulting contact with the track barriers caused considerable damage, in this case to the front of the car. The damages to the No. 911 contender were also so severe that repairs needed to get the car back into the 100-minute sprint race would have taken longer than the remaining time would have warranted. The Porsche GT Team had to withdraw the second RSR from the race after around 20 minutes before Nick Tandy (Great Britain) could take the wheel for his first stint.

However, the privateer entrant Wright Motorsports continued its streak of success in the Pro-Am style class. Hardwick had qualified the 500+hp Porsche 911 GT3 R in a strong fifth position in for the final GT-only race of the season. In the first 30 minutes of the race, the amateur driver lost a little ground in the No. 16 car before handing the car over to North America's only Porsche factory driver at the first pit stop. Long quickly sliced his way through the field and crossed the finish line in second-place, Closing

on the leader in the closing moment of the race, Long was just a narrow 1.497-seconds behind the class winner. In the overall standings, the duo has advanced to second-place.

In the GTLM class of the manufacturers' championship, Porsche ranks in third-place after eight rounds. In the drivers' classification, the two crews Makowiecki/Tandy and Bamber/Vanthoor lie in fifth and sixth-place respectively.

Round nine of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, the so-called Petit Le Mans, is scheduled for October 17 at Michelin Raceway Road Atlanta in Braselton, Georgia.

Comments on the race

Steffen Höllwarth (Head of Operations IMSA Championship): "We had big plans and the race started well but then the event came to an abrupt halt for us after just 20 minutes. Both vehicles hit the barriers in heavy rain. We weren't able to do the necessary repairs within the short time available. That's bitterly disappointing for our entire team. We have a lot of work to do before the next race."

Frédéric Makowiecki (Porsche 911 RSR #911): "First I have to let this sink in. I'm deeply disappointed. After the qualifying, things seemed really good. The second grid spot looked promising for the race. But heavy rain threw a spanner in the works. We had massive problems with aquaplaning and the car just couldn't be controlled. We've had difficulties in heavy rain throughout the year."

Nick Tandy (Porsche 911 RSR #911): "I didn't turn a single race lap so I can't really comment on the events. Let me focus on the positive: I very much enjoyed the fact that we discovered uncharted territory in the IMSA series at Charlotte Roval. The course is a huge challenge. That became very obvious today. Now we'll throw ourselves into preparing for the upcoming race at Road Atlanta."

Laurens Vanthoor (Porsche 911 RSR #912): "Crash in qualifying, crash in the race. Quite honestly, that was my worst performance in years. I don't know what happened: it just didn't work. We had hardly any grip in the rain. We had nothing to lose so I tried everything to match the pace of the leaders. Unfortunately, it went terribly wrong."

Earl Bamber (Porsche 911 RSR #912): "It was not our day. Rain is always associated with difficulty for us. We had massive aquaplaning on the extremely wet track. The car very quickly ended up in one of the walls that stand very close to the track edge at Charlotte. Now we're looking forward to Petit Le Mans. The race runs over ten hours. That should suit us better – at least if it stays dry in Florida."

Race result

Result GTLM class

1. Garcia/Taylor (E/USA), Chevrolet Corvette C8.R #3, 62 laps

2. Krohn/Edwards (FIN/USA), BMW M8 GTE #24, 62 laps
 3. Spengler/De Phillippi (CDN/USA), BMW M8 GTE #25, 62 laps
 4. Gavin/Milner (GB/USA), Chevrolet Corvette C8.R #4, 54 laps
- DNF Tandy/Makowiecki (GB/F), Porsche 911 RSR #911, 8 laps
DNF Vanthoor/Bamber (B/NZ), Porsche 911 RSR #912, 4 laps

Result GTD class

1. Foley/Auberlen (USA/USA), BMW M6 GT3 #96, 61 laps
2. Long/Hardwick (USA/USA), Porsche 911 GT3 R #16, 61 laps
3. De Angelis/James (CDN/USA), Aston Martin Vantage GT3 #23, 61 laps

Full results and championship standings at imsa.alkamelsystems.com.

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