

Strong performance of the new 911 RSR goes unrewarded

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10/07/2017 Patrick Pilet had excellent chances to clinch the first victory with the 911 RSR at the IMSA race in Bowmanville, when he lost power just nine minutes before the finish and was forced to park his car in the pits.

Signs for the new Porsche 911 RSR's maiden victory could not have looked more promising: In qualifying for round six of the IMSA SportsCar Championship at the Canadian Tire Motorsport Park, Dirk Werner (Germany) posted the very first pole position with the 510 hp race car, which Porsche Motorsport at Weissach designed from scratch for this season. In the race, his teammate Patrick Pilet (France) turned the fastest lap in the GTLM class on the high-speed circuit close to the metropolis of Toronto. And with one fast and flawless pit stop, the Porsche GT Team managed to catapult the #911 Porsche 911 RSR past the frontrunner and into the lead in the final phase of the fiercely contested race.

The strong performance of the drivers and the team, however, was not rewarded. Patrick Pilet was within striking distance on second place and still had excellent chances to clinch the first victory with the 911 RSR, when he lost power due to a mechanical problem just nine minutes before the finish and was forced to park his car in the pits. The race for the sister 911 RSR (#912) was lost in the first hour of racing on Sunday: Just a few laps after Gianmaria Bruno (Italy) took over the vehicle from Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium), the Italian made an unscheduled pit stop to pick up a new right rear tyre. The time that was lost on this racetrack, where overtaking is virtually impossible, could not be regained against the strong opposition.

Strategists opted for full attack

For Patrick Pilet and Dirk Werner, everything was initialy running to plan. Heading into the race from pole position, they had to relinquish their lead in the first lap. Putting in a strong drive, they remained within striking distance of the lead. At the beginning of the final race hour, the strategists in the Porsche pits opted for full attack: Via radio, they instructed Patrick Pilet to try everything in his power to close the short gap to the frontrunner over the remaining three laps until the next pit stop – with the idea of catapulting him into the lead with a fast pit stop. It worked: Lap after lap, the Frenchman gained ground until he followed the leader into the pits and rejoined the race in first place with a five-second lead.

When rain set in, at first light before becoming heavier, he had to give up his position at the front, and was initially back in third place. However, with a spirited push, he recaptured second place with just a few laps left to the finish – and was poised to strike for the front again. The hopes of claiming the maiden victory with the new 911 RSR, however, remained unfulfilled.

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