

Daytona Double. Porsche Podiums in IMSA Debut of 911 RSR-19.

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Porsche Profile. Event Story Lines.

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The new Porsche 911 RSR-19 celebrated a successful North American race debut in the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, January 25 – 26, with a double podium finish at the Rolex 24 At Daytona. After a strong team effort, the two ca. 515-hp Porsche 911 RSR-19 fielded by the Porsche GT Team finished in second and third-places of the GTLM class. In the GTD class, Porsche 911 GT3 R customer teams finished in fourth, fifth and 13th-places.

From start to finish, the factory GT racers from Germany ran like clockwork at their first 24-hour race. Not a single technical problem hampered the premiere as the two new 911 RSR-19 race machines took turns in the lead over most of the record distance. After 786 laps, Porsche was just shy of claiming a record-extending victory at the 24-hour classic in Daytona Beach, Florida.

GTLM at Daytona

The two Porsche 911 RSR-19 had already turned heads earlier in the weekend at the high-speed oval/road course combination track. The “works” cars swept the first-two positions on the GTLM class grid in qualifying with Nick Tandy (Great Britain) charging the No. 911 to the pole position just ahead of teammate and defending IMSA Champion Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium) in the No. 912. In the race, Vanthoor, Earl Bamber (New Zealand) and Mathieu Jaminet (France) followed on this performance, claiming second-place in the No. 912 race car, with the No. 911 sister car with the driver trio of Tandy, Frédéric Makowiecki (France), and Matt Campbell (Australia) finishing in third-place. With flawless stints, a perfect strategy and swift pit stops, both crews set the pace at the front.

GTD at Daytona

The Porsche customer teams also put in a strong performance at the season-opening round of the 2020 race season. Wright Motorsports with Porsche factory driver Patrick Long (Manhattan Beach, California), Ryan Hardwick (Atlanta, Georgia), Anthony Imperato (Brooklyn, New York) and Austrian Klaus Bachler made a dramatic comeback in the second half of the race, managing a fourth-place finish

in the GTD class despite sustaining slight damages to the underbody of their No. 16 Porsche 911 GT3 R. Behind them, Black Swan Racing also put in a spirited chase through the field to take fifth-place with drivers Sven Müller (Germany), Jeroen Bleekemolen (Netherlands), Timothy Pappas (Boston, Massachusetts) and Trenton Estep (San Antonio, Texas) at the wheel of the No. 54 entry. The team, with the assistance of Porsche Motorsport North America (PMNA) and Wright Motorsports, made the race start after a serious accident rendered the originally entered Black Swan Porsche 911 GT3 R unrepairable on-site. The end result was a impressive example of teamwork, tenacity and the Porsche "Family" spirit.

The GTD class pole-winning Porsche 911 GT3 R of Pfaff Motorsports experienced a frustrating ending to a strong weekend. After leading the pro-am style class for the majority of the first 12-hours, a drive-shaft defect relegated the No. 9 car shared by factory ace Patrick Pilet (France), Dennis Olsen (Norway), 2019 IMSA Sprint Cup Champion Zach Robichon (Canada) and Porsche Development Driver Lars Kern (Germany) down through the field. The quartet ultimately crossed the finish line in 13th-place.

Comments on the race

Pascal Zurlinden, Director GT Works Motorsport.

"That was a perfect debut for the new Porsche 911 RSR. At the first race in the USA – and one over 24 hours – we didn't experience a single technical problem and ended up on the podium with both cars. From the team effort to the strategy right through to the work in the pit lane, everything ran smoothly and flawlessly. At the next race in Sebring, we want to defend our victory from last year."

Nick Tandy, Driver, No. 911 Porsche GT Team Porsche 911 RSR-19.

"It's not often that you make it through a 24-hour race without making any mistakes. It's remarkable and a great start to the season for the new 911 RSR. Even though it wasn't quite enough today, we're all the more determined to go all-out and climb to the top step of the podium again in the future."

Frédéric Makowiecki, Driver, No. 911 Porsche GT Team Porsche 911 RSR-19.

"It was a clean race that we can be proud of. The car ran well from start to finish. Our pit crew did an awesome job. There's nothing to improve on. Our pace was good, too, but in the end it wasn't quite enough to win."

Matt Campbell, Driver, No. 911 Porsche GT Team Porsche 911 RSR-19.

"We pushed hard right from the start, stayed amongst the frontrunners for 24 hours and led for a long time. To kick off the season on the podium with the two new RSR is a fantastic start to the 2020 racing year."

Earl Bamber, Driver, No. 912 Porsche GT Team Porsche 911 RSR-19.

"We fought to the finish and tried everything. Our car ran excellently. However, one of our rivals was slightly faster. I'm still very proud, because the team worked brilliantly together and after 24 hours we're on the podium with the two new Porsche 911 RSR."

Mathieu Jaminet, Driver, No. 912 Porsche GT Team Porsche 911 RSR-19.

"I have mixed feelings after this race about whether I should be happy or not with second-place. We drove a perfect race and maintained a steady pace supported by a highly motivated team. But the competition was a little better and you have to acknowledge that."

Laurens Vanthoor, Driver, No. 912 Porsche GT Team Porsche 911 RSR.

"We had our eye on winning, but unfortunately it wasn't quite enough. I can't say what we did wrong. The new RSR ran beautifully, the team and drivers did a great job. I just have to come back next year to finally try to win at Daytona after my successes at Le Mans, Spa-Francorchamps and the 24-hour race at the Nürburgring."

Patrick Long, Driver, No. 16 Wright Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3 R.

"I'm actually quite satisfied with the race. We constantly had to catch up, but we did this very well as a team with the right pit-stop strategy. Towards the end of the race, we lacked the pace compared to the three competitors in front of us. All in all, it was a good start to the season for our team."

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