

Porsche 911 RSR from Dempsey-Proton Racing wins GTE-Am class

10/07/2022 The Porsche 911 RSR fielded by Dempsey-Proton Racing has won the GTE-Am class at the six-hour race of the FIA WEC in Monza.

The race

In the No. 77 car, team owner Christian Ried and the two UK drivers Sebastian Priaulx and Harry Tincknell beat the opposition over the line. In the GTE-Pro class, the two works cars took the flag in positions four and five.

The German Porsche customer team Dempsey-Proton Racing has won the GTE-Am class at the six-hour race in Monza. Christian Ried and the two UK drivers Sebastian Priaulx and Harry Tincknell crossed the finish line first in the No. 77 car. Project 1's No. 46 entry wrapped up round four of the FIA World Endurance Championship third in the amateur class. In the GTE-Pro category, the two factory-run 911s finished in fourth and fifth against tough competition in the Monza Temple of Speed. With this result, Porsche has defended its lead in the manufacturers' championship.

In bright sunshine and temperatures of over 30 degrees Celsius, a heated battle unfolded immediately

after the start on the high-speed Formula 1 circuit. Again and again, the yellow flags came out after incidents, which bunched the field together. About two and a half hours into the race, the safety car was deployed and again the gap in the field was neutralised. At that point, opting for the best strategy for the remaining race time proved critical. The customer squads Dempsey-Proton Racing and Project 1 managed this perfectly, and the final stint drivers Harry Tincknell (No. 77) and Matteo Cairoli (No. 46) put in a spirited performance in a fiercely contested final sprint. At the flag, the winning Porsche car was almost 20 seconds faster than its closest pursuers. “That’s the second win within a week for Dempsey-Proton Racing in Monza – last weekend in the ELMS race here, and now in the FIA WEC. That cheers us up a bit after a difficult day,” says Alexander Stehlig, Director Factory Motorsport FIA WEC.

Things did not run quite as smoothly on Sunday for the Porsche factory squad in the GTE-Am class. The two 911 RSR were unable to match the pace of their rivals and despite a daring strategy and total commitment, the drivers had no chance of a podium result. “Our cars had a great setup, the drivers did their utmost and the tyre choice was ideal,” explains Stehlig and adds: “But that was the end of the good news, the rest was a big disappointment. Before the race weekend, the cars were reclassified. We didn’t agree with this change to the Balance of Performance right from the outset – and rightly so, as we clearly saw in the qualifying and race. Because of this rating, we barely had a chance. Under these conditions, we weren’t able to achieve more than fourth and fifth place.”

Ultimately, the No. 92 car driven by Kévin Estre (France) and Michael Christensen (Denmark) crossed the finish line ahead of the sister car. In Monza, the No. 91 cockpit was shared by local hero Gianmaria Bruni from Italy with Frenchman Frédéric Makowiecki, who stood in for regular driver Richard Lietz (Austria) due to illness.

In the GTE-Am class, the No. 88 crew from Dempsey-Proton Racing scored many championship points. The two American drivers Fred Poordad and Patrick Lindsey as well as Jan Heylen from Belgium concluded the race in sixth place. Both Porsche 911 RSR fielded by Project 1 (No. 56) and GR Racing (No. 86) were thrown out of contention for a class podium due to incidents early in the race and finished tenth and twelfth.

In the overall rankings, Porsche as the Le Mans class winner defended its lead in the manufacturers’ classification. Works driver Gianmaria Bruni now occupies second place in the drivers’ world championship standings. His brand colleagues Kévin Estre and Michael Christensen rank third. Round four of the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC will be held on 11 September at the Fuji Speedway in Japan.

Drivers’ impressions of the race

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 911 RSR #91):“At first we found it difficult, but then our pace improved a little. But we were still miles away from the lap times of our rivals. Still, we’ve at least scored a few points for the championship today. Thank you to Fred, who gave me great support today. At the next race, I’ll be back in full force with Richard.”

Frédéric Makowiecki (Porsche 911 RSR #91): “We simply didn’t have the pace to keep up with the frontrunners. And the strategy with our car wasn’t ideal either. We did the exact opposite of everyone else. The chance of being the only one to get it right isn’t very high – but we had to try something.”

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 RSR #92): “I fought as hard as I could. We simply didn’t have the speed it took today. But we pulled out all stops and were able to keep within striking distance for long stretches. Pulling out all stops, we managed to stay within striking distance over long stretches. I don’t agree with the pit-lane drive-through penalty towards the end of the race – that was tough but respectful racing. It wasn’t enough for a podium result today.”

Michael Christensen (Porsche 911 RSR #92): “We did everything right but the conditions weren’t there for us today so we had no chance of a podium result. It's a very disappointing day for us.”

Christian Ried (Porsche 911 RSR #77): “Our Porsche drove beautifully and our strategy was spot on. We’re over the moon about this class win. We decided at the end to go for broke: go flat out and make a splash-and-dash pit stop. That worked perfectly because Harry set a blistering pace. It's a wonderful day for us.”

Nicolas Leutwiler (Porsche 911 RSR #46): “Third place is a great and, above all, hard-earned result. We made bold strategic decisions that even put us at the top for a while. Unfortunately, this advantage disappeared during the safety car phase – a real shame. In the end, we had to drive without telemetry – so we scored third place flying almost blind – that’s not bad.”

Race result

GTE-Pro class:
1. Milner/Tandy (USA/UK), Corvette C8.R #64, 181 laps
2. Molina/Fuoco (E/I), Ferrari 488 GTE #52, 181 laps
3. Pier Guidi/Calado (I/UK), Ferrari 488 GTE #51, 181 laps
4. Christensen/Estre (DK/F), Porsche 911 RSR #92, 181 laps
5. Bruni/Makowiecki (I/F), Porsche 911 RSR #91, 180 laps

GTE-Am class:
1. Ried/Priaulx/Tincknell (D/UK/UK), Porsche 911 RSR #77, 179 laps
2. Frey/Gatting/Bovy (CH/DK/B), Ferrari 488 GTE #85, 178 laps
3. Cairoli/Pedersen/Leutwiler (I/DK/CH), Porsche 911 RSR #46, 178 laps
6. Poordad/Lindsey/Heylen (USA/USA/B), Porsche 911 RSR #88, 177 laps
10. Iribe/Millroy/Barnicoat (USA/UK/UK), Porsche 911 RSR #56, 176 laps
12. Wainwright/Barker/Pera (UK/UK/I), Porsche 911 RSR #86, 163 laps

The qualifying

The two 911 RSR fielded by the Porsche works team will take up the six-hour race in Monza (Italy) from positions four and five. During the qualifying session for round four of the FIA World Championship WEC, the two drivers Gianmaria Bruni from Italy and Michael Christensen from Denmark made the most of what was possible but were unable to assert themselves in the hunt for top times against the tough competition in the GTE-Pro class. Qualifying third in the GTE-Am category, Germany's Christian Ried set a promising grid spot for Sunday's race with Dempsey-Proton Racing's No. 77 entry. The ten-minute qualifying session in temperatures of 30-degrees Celsius and asphalt temperatures of around 50 degrees was marked by heavy traffic and numerous infringements of the track limits. With all competitors using the full driving time, the situation out on the five-kilometre Formula 1 racetrack was tight. Bruni and Christensen squeezed every last ounce out of their two ca. 378 kW (515 PS) nine-elevens from Weissach but ultimately had to make do with fourth and fifth on the grid.

"It's disappointing for us," concluded Alexander Stehlig, Director Factory Motorsport FIA WEC. "Both of our cars were within a tenth of a second. That shows that our drivers obviously made the most of what was possible. The balance of our cars was good but we didn't stand a chance against the competition over one fast lap. I'm afraid we have a very difficult race ahead of us tomorrow."

In the GTE-Am class, in which professionals share a car with amateurs, Germany's Christian Ried put in an impressive performance. The experienced owner of the Dempsey-Proton Racing team set a formidable time at the wheel of the No. 77 Porsche 911 RSR, which left several rivals struggling to match his pace. Consequently, Ried and his UK teammates Harry Tincknell and Sebastian Priaulx will take up the race from position three. The No. 88 sister car qualified on P12. The two cars fielded by Project 1 achieved positions seven and ten, with the UK team GR Racing tackling round four of the season from position eight.

The six-hour race at Monza takes off on Sunday, 10 July, at midday.

Qualifying quotes from the drivers

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "I did everything I could, but more just wasn't possible. We found a good setup for the track during free practice but we're still not close enough. Perhaps we could find another tenth of a second but definitely not five or six tenths – the gap is just too big. Hopefully, if we maintain a steady pace, we can still achieve a decent result in the race. We never give up."

Michael Christensen (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "That was a difficult qualifying. We saw this already in the free practice and unfortunately it became reality in the qualifying. Our car is set up well and we feel really good at the wheel of our nine-eleven. We can only hope that this gap is so large on a flying lap and not over the distance. There's hope that things might look a little better in the race."

Christian Ried (Porsche 911 RSR #77): “Our car ran superbly. For me personally, it was a really good lap. So I’m totally satisfied with it. But what makes me stop and think is that the gap to the two top-placed drivers is so big. I have no idea why they were suddenly so much faster in qualifying.”

Qualifying result

GTE-Pro class:
1. Pier Guidi/Calado (I/UK), Ferrari 488 GTE #51, 1:45.270 minutes
2. Milner/Tandy (USA/UK), Corvette C8.R #64, 1:45.324 minutes
3. Molina/Fuoco (E/I), Ferrari 488 GTE #52, 1:45.328 minutes
4. Bruni/Makowiecki (I/F), Porsche 911 RSR #91, 1:45.804 minutes
5. Christensen/Estre (DK/F), Porsche 911 RSR #92, 1:46.024 minutes

GTE-Am class:

1. Frey/Gatting/Bovy (CH/DK/B), Ferrari 488 GTE #85, 1:47.431 minutes
2. Keating/Chaves/Sörensen (USA/P/DK), Aston Martin #33, 1:47.658 minutes
3. Ried/Priaulx/Tincknell (D/UK/UK), Porsche 911 RSR #77, 1:48.206 minutes
7. Iribe/Millroy/Barnicoat (USA/UK/UK), Porsche 911 RSR #56, 1:48.813 minutes
8. Wainwright/Barker/Pera (UK/UK/I), Porsche 911 RSR #86, 148.842 minutes
10. Cairoli/Pedersen/Leutwiler (I/DK/CH), Porsche 911 RSR #46, 1:48.966 minutes
12. Poordad/Lindsey/Heylen (USA/USA/B), Porsche 911 RSR #88, 1:50.221 minutes

The preview

The Porsche works team is well prepared as it heads to round four of the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC in Monza. This marks the second time that the Italian high-speed circuit hosts the WEC. For the six-hour race, the squad from the Stuttgart sports car manufacturer has set itself a clear goal: After winning its class at Le Mans and last year’s Monza win, the team is keen to extend its lead in the world championship on 10 July. The Porsche GT Team fields two Porsche 911 RSR in the GTE-Pro class. In the GTE-Am class, the customer squads Project 1, Dempsey-Proton Racing and GR Racing campaign five other nine-elevens.

“Last year in Monza, we achieved an unexpected win at our main rival’s home race – we’d like to do that again next weekend,” exclaims Alexander Stehlig, Director Factory Motorsport FIA WEC. “We’re currently leading all world championship rankings. We want to build on that and focus on clinching the manufacturers’ and drivers’ titles. We’ve already achieved our first major goal of securing the class win at Le Mans with the latest Porsche 911 RSR. Now we’ve set our sights on taking home the really big trophies at the end of the year.”

The race

The Autodromo Nazionale di Monza can look back on a long and illustrious 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 71 Formula 1 Grands Prix have been held on the circuit near the northern Italian metropolis of Milan.

The FIA WEC conducted its official tests – the so-called prologue – at the Monza "Temple of Speed" before the 2017 season. In 2021, a six-hour race was held for the first time – at which the Porsche 911 RSR promptly won the battle in the GTE-Pro class after a close duel. At the midway mark of the FIA World Endurance Championship season, Porsche leads the manufacturers' classification. The two driver pairings currently rank first and second in the drivers' category.

The Porsche GT Team drivers

The two Le Mans class winners, Richard Lietz from Austria and Italy's Gianmaria Bruni, join forces in the No. 91 Porsche 911 RSR. These two currently lead the drivers' championship. Their brand colleagues Kévin Estre from France and Michael Christensen from Denmark rank second in the standings. The two drivers in the No. 92 cockpit won the season-opening round in Sebring (USA).

The customer teams

Dempsey-Proton Racing fields two Porsche 911 RSR racers at the third WEC round of this year's WEC. Team owner Christian Ried (Germany) shares driving duties in the No. 77 car with the two British racing drivers Harry Tincknell and Sebastian Priaulx. The No. 88 sister car is shared by Americans Fred Poordad and Patrick Lindsey with support from Belgium's Jan Heylen. The No. 46 entry of Project 1 is driven by Switzerland's Nicolas Leutwiler, Mikkel Pedersen from Denmark and Italy's very own Matteo Cairoli. Ben Barnicoat and Oliver Millroy from the UK join forces in the No. 56 car fielded by the German customer team with the American businessman Brendan Iribe. GR Racing's No. 86 car is helmed by the British drivers Michael Wainwright and Ben Barker as well as Riccardo Pera from Italy.

Drivers' comments before the race

Richard Lietz (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "Monza is a track where I suspect our competitors will be slightly stronger. Last year we had a chance, now I think the others may have a slight edge due to their higher top speed. Nonetheless, we're obviously trying to achieve a good result. As is the case on every race weekend, we have to work on finding a good setup in the practice sessions. Perhaps we can propel ourselves to the front of the field with an alternative or more aggressive strategy."

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 911 RSR #91): “Monza is the ultimate high-speed racetrack – every driver looks forward to it. This is the last time the GTE-Pro class will be contested there. That’s a real pity, of course, but it also gives us extra motivation to bring home another victory with the Porsche 911 RSR. My fellow Italians love motorsport. I’m certain that countless Tifosi will be at the track next weekend cheering us on: all the ingredients are there for a great weekend on an extraordinary circuit.”

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 RSR #92): “Racing in Monza is always a highlight. We had a difficult race at Le Mans with our number 92 car, so we’re hoping to make amends. Our car should be competitive again this year. Last year, we prevailed in the face of tough competition. We want to repeat that performance next weekend. If we manage this, then maybe we can replace our colleagues in the sister car at the top of the championship standings and extend Porsche’s lead in the manufacturers’ championship. That's our big goal.”

Michael Christensen (Porsche 911 RSR #92): “After our disappointing run at Le Mans, it’s good that the next round of the season will continue after a brief break. We want to win the world championship. To do that, we have to bring home maximum points again this year in Monza. I’m particularly looking forward to it because I wasn’t in the squad last year, so this is my first WEC race in Monza. I’m super excited to see all the avid Italian fans.”

The schedule (all times CEST)

Friday, 8 July

3:30 pm – 5:00 pm: Free practice 1

Saturday, 9 July

9:00 am – 10:30 am: Free practice 2

1:30 pm – 2:30 pm: Free practice 3

5:30 pm – 5:40 pm: Qualifying GTE

Sunday, 10 July

Midday – 6:00 pm: Race

Link Collection

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