Campbell and Porsche GT Team celebrates first win of the IMSA season at “Petit Le Mans”

19/10/2020 At “Petit Le Mans” on the Road Atlanta racetrack, the Porsche GT Team has achieved its first win in this year’s IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship. Works drivers Nick Tandy (Great Britain), Frédéric Makowiecki (France) and Matt Campbell (Australia) won the ten-hour race in the US state of Georgia by a narrow 1.779 seconds.

The race

The second Porsche 911 RSR, driven by Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium), Earl Bamber (New Zealand) and Mathieu Jaminet (France), became entangled in an accident in the turbulent final phase and reached the finish line in fifth place. After nine of eleven races, Porsche ranks third in the GTLM manufacturers' championship.

Due to the safety car phases, the frontrunners in the GTLM class never lost sight of each other over the entire “Petit Le Mans” distance. Most of the time, they lapped the 4.088-kilometre racetrack separated by just a few seconds. Depending on the individual pit-stop cycle, the lead changed multiple times. Shortly before the halfway mark, Matt Campbell withstood a nail-biting moment when his Porsche 911 RSR was forced into a spin in a slight collision. Fortunately, the works car from Weissach sustained only light damages. The young Australian was able to continue.

In the No. 912 sister car, Laurens Vanthoor turned the fastest lap of all GTLM teams, however, Mathieu Jaminet was handed a drive-through penalty for a minor collision with a GTLM rival, which cost the squad around 30 seconds. As a result, the No. 911 took over the task of staying close to the leader. When the leading BMW, which had held the top spot over a long period, had to make an unscheduled pit stop half an hour before the end of the race, Frédéric Makowiecki grabbed his chance and swept into the lead.

minutes left on the clock, a collision involving the No. 912 Porsche 911 RSR triggered one last full course yellow. Although Laurens Vanthoor managed to bring the car over the finish line, he lost two laps. The race did not restart and ended behind the safety car.

As well in the GTD class for vehicles complying with the FIA GT3 regulations, no team was able to pull clear of the field. After ten hours, the seven fastest vehicles were within one lap. The Porsche 911 GT3 R fielded by the Wright Motorsports customer team and driven by the American works driver Patrick Long, his compatriot Ryan Hardwick and Jan Heylen from Belgium, took the flag in fourth place. Fifth

went to the Porsche 911 GT3 R campaigned by the Pfaff Motorsports customer squad, with Porsche development driver Lars Kern (Germany), the Norwegian Dennis Olsen and the Canadian Zacharie Robichon sharing driving duties.

The next and penultimate round of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship will be contested on November 1, 2020, at Laguna Seca in the US state of California.

Comments on the race

Pascal Zurlinden (Director Factory Motorsport):"What a fantastic result for the team. We've suffered many setbacks during this IMSA season. This victory at 'Petit Le Mans' is the reward for all the hard work that everyone in the team has done. That includes both the team here in the USA and our Weissach squad."

Steffen Höllwarth (Head of Operations IMSA Championship):"The monkey's finally off our back. Those were some tough and intense ten hours with ups and downs. We had to deal with some minor setbacks, but we didn't let it ruffle our feathers and were in the right place at the right time in the end. I'm thrilled for the boys. Unfortunately, in the fight for GTLM victory, the number 912 car was involved in an accident while lapping a GTD vehicle, otherwise we could have brought home an even better result. Still, a huge compliment to the whole team. Today we benefited from the necessary racing luck several times, which has evaded us in the past. We're happy with this victory and we're looking forward to the last two races of the season."

Further comments to the race you can find in the press release.

Race result

Result GTLM class
1. Tandy/Makowiecki/Campbell (GB/F/AUS), Porsche 911 RSR, 431 laps
2. Garcia/Taylor/Catsburg (E/USA/NL), Chevrolet Corvette C8.R, 431 laps
3. Krohn/Edwards/Farfus (FIN/USA/BR), BMW M8 GTE, 431 laps
4. Gavin/Milner/Fässler (GB/USA/CH), Chevrolet Corvette C8.R, 431 laps
5. Vanthoor/Bamber/Jaminet (B/NZ/F), Porsche 911 RSR, 429 laps
6. Spengler/De Phillippi/Herta (CDN/USA/USA), BMW M8 GTE, 399 laps

Result GTD class
1. MacNeil/Balzan/Westphal (USA/I/USA), Ferrari 488 GT3, 413 laps
2. Hawksworth/Telitz/De Queseda (GB/USA/USA), Lexus RC F GT3, +413 laps
3. Lally/Potter/Pumpelly (USA/USA/USA), Lamborghini Huracan GT3, 413 laps
4. Long/Hardwick/Heylen (USA/USA/B), Porsche 911 GT3 R, 413 laps
5. Kern/Robichon/Olsen (D/CDN/N), Porsche 911 GT3 R, 413 laps

6. Parente/Giokhberg/Hindman (P/RUS/USA), Acura NSX GT3, 413 laps

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

The qualifying

The ninth round of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship run over ten hours is called “Petit Le Mans“. The Porsche GT Team has secured grid positions four and six in the GTLM category. Belgium's Laurens Vanthoor lapped the 4.088-kilometre Road Atlanta circuit in the No. 912 Porsche 911 RSR in 1:15.657 minutes. His works driver colleague Nick Tandy from Great Britain set a lap time of 1:15.858 minutes in the No. 911 sister car.

Vanthoor and Tandy took up the chase for top times after about a third of the 15-minute qualifying session. The two ca. Porsche 911 RSR stayed out on the track for eight and nine laps respectively. In dry conditions, an air temperature of 19 degrees Celsius and a track temperature of 41 degrees, Vanthoor posted his best time in lap five. Tandy's set his fastest time on the storied racetrack on the outskirts of Braselton in the US state of Georgia in lap seven. At the same venue five weeks prior, the British racer had claimed the top time in the GTLM qualifying at the sixth IMSA round – thus, expanding his pole record in the IMSA series.

In the GTD class for vehicles complying with the FIA GT3 regulations, Zacharie Robichon planted the Porsche 911 GT3 R fielded by the Pfaff Motorsports customer team on P8. The Canadian shares driving duties in the No. 9 car with Porsche development driver Lars Kern (Germany) and the Norwegian Dennis Olsen. The customer squad Wright Motorsports takes up the GTD category from position ten. The No. 16 Porsche 911 GT3 R is shared by the American factory driver Patrick Long, his compatriot Ryan Hardwick and the Belgian Jan Heylen.

“Petit Le Mans” takes off on Saturday, 17 October, at 12.40 p.m. local time (6:40 p.m. CEST). Like the previous six-hour race at the Michelin Raceway Road Atlanta, the 24 Hours of Daytona and the Sebring 12-hour race, this ten-hour event counts towards the IMSA Michelin Endurance Cup. In this competition, Porsche currently ranks second in the manufacturers' classification of the GTLM category.

Qualifying quotes

Steffen Höllwarth (Head of Operations IMSA Championship):“We're not entirely happy with this result, but we're not going to let it get us down. In the practice sessions we've always put less emphasis on finding a setup for one fast qualifying lap and instead focused on the endurance runs. The pace that we managed to set over the distance during the night practice makes us confident for the race. We expect the temperature to drop on Saturday. I think we're well-positioned for a long and tough ten hours at Road Atlanta.”

Laurens Vanthoor (Porsche 911 RSR #912):"I'd actually hoped for a better qualifying result. With a view to the race, we tried something out, but it didn't really work. Still, the qualifying isn't so important for a ten-hour race. Now we'll go back to a setup that we've already tried. Let's see if it's enough to successfully fight against the competition."

Nick Tandy (Porsche 911 RSR #911):"Okay, the qualifying result doesn't look particularly great, but in a way, I'm not completely unhappy. During Thursday's night practice we had a problem with the car so we weren't able to prepare optimally for the qualifying. The mechanics changed some parts, which seemed to do the trick. In any case, the positive outcome of the qualifying is that our Porsche 911 RSR now runs perfectly. I feel significantly more optimistic for the race than I did prior to the qualifying."

Results

Result GTLM class
1. Garcia/Taylor/Catsburg (E/USA/NL), Chevrolet Corvette C8.R, 1:15.163 minutes
2. Spengler/De Phillippi/Herta (CDN/USA/USA), BMW M8 GTE, + 0.271 seconds
3. Krohn/Edwards/Farfus (FIN/USA/BR), BMW M8 GTE, + 0.452 seconds
4. Vanthoor/Bamber/Jaminet (B/NZ/F), Porsche 911 RSR, + 0.494 seconds
5. Gavin/Milner/Fässler (GB/USA/CH), Chevrolet Corvette C8.R, + 0.693 seconds
6. Tandy/Makowiecki/Campbell (GB/F/AUS), Porsche 911 RSR, + 0.695 seconds

Result GTD class
1. Farnbacher/McMurry/Michimi (D/USA/JPN), Acura NSX GT3, 1:19.291 minutes
2. MacNeil/Balzan/Westphal (USA/I/USA), Ferrari 488 GT3, + 0.173 seconds
3. Montecalvo/Bell/Kirkwood (USA/USA/USA), Lexus RC F GT3, + 0.272 seconds
8. Kern/Robichon/Olsen (D/CDN/N), Porsche 911 GT3 R, + 0.483 seconds
10. Long/Hardwick/Heylen (USA/USA/B), Porsche 911 GT3 R, + 1.108 seconds

Full results and championship standings at imsa.alkamelsystems.com

The preview

In 2015, the team scored a spectacular outright victory with the Porsche 911 RSR at the so-called Petit Le Mans – the tradition-steeped ten-hour race in the US state of Georgia. Under most challenging conditions, Porsche left the otherwise much faster prototype vehicles behind. This coming Saturday, the American factory team Core Autosport tackles the GTLM class with two of the latest generation Porsche 911 RSR. In the GTD category, the two customer squads Wright Motorsports and Pfaff Motorsports each campaign a Porsche 911 GT3 R.

Since 1998, "Petit Le Mans" has been contested annually on the 4.088-kilometre Road Atlanta circuit, which characterised by 12 turns and spectacular passages. On top of the overall victory of 2015,

Porsche has notched up a total of 23 class wins. Most recently, works driver Nick Tandy from Great Britain and his French teammates Frédéric Makowiecki and Patrick Pilet won the fiercely competitive GTLM class in 2018 with the Porsche 911 RSR. “We have always been strong at Petit Le Mans at Road Atlanta and have scored many successes at this event. It’s also home turf for our works team because Porsche North America has its headquarters in Atlanta. So, there is no better place to get back on the road to success with our latest Porsche 911 RSR,” says Pascal Zurlinden, Director Factory Motorsport.

“After the accidents in Charlotte, our main priority was to repair the extensive damage to both cars within a very short time,” explains IMSA Head of Operations, Steffen Höllwarth. “We’re heading to the ten-hour race well prepared. During a successful test at Road Atlanta a couple of weeks ago, we worked on critical set-up details. We made good progress towards increasing our chances. I’m also delighted that we have our strong, young works drivers Matt Campbell and Mathieu Jaminet with us. They will help us harvest the fruits of our hard work. It’s time for our first win of the season.”

The ten-hour race at Road Atlanta counts towards the IMSA Michelin Endurance Cup – a special competition encompassing the four longest races of the season. After successful outings at the 24 Hours of Daytona in January and the six-hour event at Road Atlanta in September, Porsche currently ranks second in the Endurance Cup.

The Porsche GT team drivers

Regular drivers Nick Tandy and Frédéric Makowiecki share driving duties in the No. 911 Porsche 911 RSR with the young Australian Matt Campbell. The trio achieved third place at the season-opening round in Daytona. Earl Bamber from New Zealand and Belgium’s Laurens Vanthoor join forces with Mathieu Jaminet at the wheel of the No. 912 sister car. Like his works driver colleague Campbell, Jaminet contests the endurance races at Daytona, Sebring and Road Atlanta. The Frenchman finished the Daytona 24 Hours in January in second place with the reigning IMSA champions Bamber and Vanthoor. In the manufacturer’s classification, Porsche ranks third after eight of eleven rounds.

The customer teams

In the GTD category, Wright Motorsports fields the Porsche 911 GT3 R with the starting number 16. Joining works driver Patrick Long and his American compatriot Ryan Hardwick in the cockpit is the experienced Belgian Jan Heylen. Wright Motorsports currently lies second in the championship category for GT3 vehicles. The Canadian squad Pfaff Motorsports fields an identical model in the race. Porsche development driver Lars Kern (Germany) shares driving duties with Canada’s Zacharie Robichon and the Norwegian Dennis Olsen, who won the drivers’ title in the 2019 Intercontinental GT Challenge at the wheel of the Porsche 911 GT3 R.

Drivers' comments prior to the race

Nick Tandy (Porsche 911 RSR #911): "It's good that there's no time to ruminate after last week's disappointment. We head straight into a real classic – the ten-hour race at Road Atlanta. We've always been strong over such big distances. For this reason, I'm heading to Petit Le Mans feeling confident. Whenever I go there I'm reminded of our overall victory of 2015 – an experience I'll never forget, and one that motivates me for the task ahead."

Earl Bamber (Porsche 911 RSR #912): "When we contested the six-hour race at Road Atlanta in early September, we had problems with tyre wear over the full stint. We then took a good look at this issue with Michelin during tests at the track. I think we've made good progress in this area, and we can feel optimistic about the upcoming race. We'll do our absolute utmost to finally climb to the top step of the podium."

Live streaming of the race

Round nine of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship at Road Atlanta takes off on Saturday, 17 October, at 12.40 p.m. local time (6:40 p.m. CEST). The ten-hour race can be viewed outside the USA and Canada on www.imsa.com.

The schedule (loacl time, CEST: -6 hours)

Thursday, 15 October
11:15 am - 12:15 pm: Free practice 1
3:45 - 5:00 pm: Free practice 2
7:30 - 9:00 pm: Free practice 3

Friday, 16 October
12:30 – 12:45 pm: Qualifying GTD
12:55 – 1:10 pm: Qualifying GTLM

Saturday, 17 October
9:10 – 9:30 am: Warm-up
12:40 – 10:40 pm: Race

The Porsche 911 RSR

The Porsche 911 RSR (2019 model year) celebrated its debut in the IMSA SportsCar Championship at the 24 Hours of Daytona in January. Compared to its extremely successful predecessor model, the

Weissach engineers made improvements to the car, most notably in areas such as drivability, efficiency, ergonomics and serviceability. About 95 per cent of all components are new. The 911 RSR is powered by a 4.2-litre, six-cylinder boxer engine.

This is the IMSA SportsCar Championship

The IMSA SportsCar Championship was founded in the USA and Canada in 2013 after the merger of the American Le Mans Series and the Grand-Am Series. A year later the new sports car race series, which is organised by the International Motor Sports Association (IMSA), was contested for the first time. Sports prototypes and sports cars start in four different classes: GTLM (GT Le Mans), GTD (GT Daytona), Dpi (Daytona Prototype international) and LMP2 (Le Mans Prototype 2). The new Porsche 911 RSR is fielded in the GTLM class, and the Porsche 911 GT3 R contests the GTD class.

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