Five Porsche 911 RSR qualify for the Hyperpole at Le Mans

17/09/2020 The Porsche GT Team has qualified for the Hyperpole, the final qualifying session at Le Mans, with the two 911 RSR. The six fastest cars from each of the four classes take part in this decisive shootout for the best grid spots on Friday.

The qualifying

In the 45-minute qualifying session, the Italian Gianmaria Bruni clocked the fifth-fastest lap time in the GTE-Pro class at the wheel of the No. 91 car. His works driver colleague Michael Christensen from Denmark turned the sixth quickest lap in the identical No. 92 sister car. In the GTE-Am category, three Porsche 911 RSR made it into the new Hyperpole qualifying session.

With an air temperature of 30 degrees Celsius and a track surface reaching almost 50-degrees, Bruni and Christensen opted for an early attack. Clocking a time of 3:52.036 minutes, the experienced Italian, who had set a qualifying record for GTE vehicles at Le Mans in 2018, initially achieved third place. Christensen lost valuable time in heavy traffic with 57 vehicles on the 13.626-kilometre circuit and slotted into fourth place, around a tenth of a second behind his teammate. When both Porsche 911 RSR launched a final attack shortly before the end of the session, neither Bruni nor Christensen managed to get a free run. Two rivals, however, improved their times and the two works cars from Weissach were relegated to fifth and sixth.

In the GTE-Am class, three Porsche 911 RSR in last year's specification will join the Hyperpole field on Friday. Britain's Benjamin Barker set the third quickest time with the No. 86 entry of Gulf Racing. Works driver Matt Campbell from Australia planted the No. 77 car fielded by Dempsey-Proton Racing on fifth. The Italian Matteo Cairoli secured position six in the No. 56 car of last year's winning team Project 1.

The new Hyperpole at Le Mans, which determines the final grid allocation of the six fastest cars per class, is held on Friday, 18 September, at 11:30 am. Prior to this, a total of 59 cars will take part in another free practice from 10:00 until 11:00 am. The 88th edition of the 24 Hours of Le Mans gets underway on Saturday, 19 September, at 2:30 pm.

Qualifying quotes

Alexander Stehlig (Head of Operations FIA WEC): "We had a lot of work to do today. The setup that we'd worked out in advance didn't really work at first. We made many changes so that the drivers could get more comfortable with the handling of the car. Things went significantly better in the second practice

session. We made it into the Hyperpole, but we have to do better because we don't want to start from fifth and sixth, we have to move up at least one more grid row."

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "I managed two clean laps. However, the vehicle balance was noticeably better at my first attempt that at the end of the session, so I didn't manage to improve. This is our first time at Le Mans with the latest Porsche 911 RSR. Our setup is not yet optimal. We'll look at the data and make improvements to the car for the upcoming sessions."

Michael Christensen (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "We're in the Hyperpole – that was our aim. Unfortunately, the gap to the fastest in the qualifying is much larger than we expected. We urgently need to work on that. Still, I see a lot more potential in the car, which we now need to tap into. I'm confident we'll manage this."

Qualifying result

GTE-Pro class
1. Sörensen/Thiim/Westbrook (DK/DK/GB), Aston Martin Vantage, 3:50.872 minutes
2. Lynn/Martin/Tincknell (GB/B/GB), Aston Martin Vantage, + 0.053 seconds
3. Calado/Pier Guidi/Serra (GB/I/BR), Ferrari 488 GTE, + 0.372 seconds
4. Rigon/Molina/Bird (I/E/GB), Ferrari 488 GTE, + 1.116 seconds
5. Lietz/Bruni/Makowiecki (A/I/F), Porsche 911 RSR, + 1.164 seconds
6. Christensen/Estre/Vanthoor (DK/F/B), Porsche 911 RSR, + 1.270 seconds
7. MacNeil/Vilander/Segal (USA/FIN/USA), Ferrari 488 GTE, + 1.636 seconds
8. Pla/Bourdais/Gounon (F/F/F), Ferrari 488 GTE, + 1.877 seconds

GTE-Am class
1. Gunn/Dalla Lana/Farfus (GB/CDN/BR), Aston Martin Vantage, 3:52.778 minutes
2. Yoluc/Eastwood/Adam (TR/GB/GB), Aston Martin Vantage, + 0.183 seconds
3. Wainwright/Barker/Watson (GB/GB/GB), Porsche 911 RSR, + 0.192 seconds
5. Campbell/Ried/Pera (AUS/D/I), Porsche 911 RSR, + 0.556 seconds
6. Perfetti/ten Voorde/Cairoli (N/NL/I), Porsche 911 RSR, + 0.820 seconds
8. Inthraphuvasak/Legeret/Andlauer (T/F/F), Porsche 911 RSR, + 0.892 seconds
9. Keating/Fraga/Bleekemolen (USA/BR/NL), Porsche 911 RSR, + 1.060 seconds
11. Preining/Bastien/de Leener (A/USA/B), Porsche 911 RSR, + 1.503 seconds
17. Felbermayr/Beretta/v. Splunteren (A/I/NL), Porsche 911 RSR, + 3.697 seconds
21. Brooks/Piguet/Laskaratos (F/F/GR), Porsche 911 RSR, + 7.913 seconds

Porsche's outright Le Mans victories

1970 – Herrmann (D) / Attwood (GB) – Porsche 917 KH

1971 – Marko (A) / Van Lennep (NL) – Porsche 917 KH

1976 – Ickx (B) / Van Lennep (NL) – Porsche 936

1977 – Ickx (B) / Haywood (USA) / Barth (D) – Porsche 936/77

1979 – Ludwig (D) / Whittington (USA) / Whittington (USA) – Porsche 935 K3

1981 – Ickx (B) / Bell (GB) – Porsche 936

1982 – Ickx (B) / Bell (GB) – Porsche 956

1983 – Schuppan (AUS) / Haywood (USA) / Holbert (USA) – Porsche 956

1984 – Pescarolo (F) / Ludwig (D) – Porsche 956

1985 – Barilla (I) / Ludwig (D) / Krages (D) – Porsche 956

1986 – Bell (GB) / Stuck (D) / Holbert (USA) – Porsche 962C

1987 – Bell (GB) / Stuck (D) / Holbert (USA) – Porsche 962C

1994 – Dalmas (F) / Haywood (USA) / Baldi (I) – Dauer Porsche 962 LM

1996 – Wurz (A) / Reuter (D) / Jones (USA) – TWR Porsche WSC-95

1997 – Kristensen (DK) / Alboreto (I) / Johansson (S) – TWR Porsche WSC-95

1998 – Aiello (F) / McNish (GB) / Ortelli (F) – Porsche 911 GT1

2015 – Bamber (NZ) / Tandy (GB) / Hülkenberg (D) – Porsche 919 Hybrid

2016 – Jani (CH) / Lieb (D) / Dumas (F) – Porsche 919 Hybrid

2017 – Bernhard (D) / Hartley (NZ) / Bamber (NZ) – Porsche 919 Hybrid

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