

Porsche 911 RSR celebrates successful USA premiere with double podium

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26/01/2020 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship: The new Porsche 911 RSR celebrated a successful North American debut with a double podium at the 24 Hours of Daytona.

The race

After a strong team effort, the two nine-elevens fielded by the Porsche GT Team finished on second and third place. Porsche, which won the manufacturers' championship in the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship last year, is now second in the points after Daytona.

From start to finish, the GT racers from Weissach ran like clockwork at their first 24-hour race. Not a single technical problem hampered the premiere, at which the two new 911 RSR took turns at the lead over most of the distance. In a top-class and gripping end phase, after 786 laps, Porsche was just several seconds shy of claiming another victory at the 24-hour classic in the USA after 2014.

The two Porsche 911 RSR had already turned heads, qualifying on the first two grid spots in the GTLM class. In the race, Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium), Earl Bamber (New Zealand) and Mathieu Jaminet (France) followed up on this top performance, claiming second place in the No. 912 vehicle, with the No. 911 sister car with the driver trio Frédéric Makowiecki (France), Nick Tandy (Great Britain) and Matt Campbell (Australia) finishing third. With flawless stints, a perfect strategy and swift pit stops, both crews set the pace at the front.

A spectacular finale

In the final few hours, things turned dramatic on the International Daytona Speedway. In bright sunshine, spectators were treated to a spectacular finale with overtaking manoeuvres and changes at the front. The six Porsche works drivers were rewarded with a double podium and their team for a successful weekend, making the outstanding debut of the new Porsche 911 RSR perfect.

The Porsche customer teams also put in a strong performance at the 24 Hours of Daytona. Wright Motorsports with the American drivers Patrick Long, Ryan Hardwick, Anthony Imperato and the Austrian Klaus Bachler made up many positions in the second half of the race, and managed to finish fourth 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 (USA) and Trenton Estep (USA) at the wheel of the No. 54 entry. The polesitters from the Pfaff Motorsports team experienced bad luck. After leading over a long stretch, a drive-shaft defect relegated the No. 9 car shared by Patrick Pilet (France), Dennis Olsen (Norway), Zach Robichon (Canada) and Lars Kern (Germany) far down the field, with the quartet ultimately concluding the Daytona 24-hour race on 13th.

Double podium for Porsche GT Team

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 pitlane, everything ran smoothly and flawlessly. At the next race in Sebring, we want to defend our victory from last year."

Nick Tandy (Porsche 911 RSR #911): "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 (Porsche 911 RSR #911): "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 (Porsche 911 RSR #911): "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."

You can find more comments about the race in the press release.

The race: Interim report 2

At the Daytona 24-hour race, both Porsche 911 RSR ran flawlessly through the night to further consolidate their position at the top.In cool temperatures, the Porsche GT Team without fail made the right tyre choice. Thanks to this, the six works drivers were able to take full advantage of the performance potential of the 2019-generation GT racer, which is based on the high-performance 911 GT3 RS road-legal sports car.

From the very start of the race, the Porsche 911 RSR repeatedly took the lead and set the pace in the GTLM class. Until the early morning hours, the No. 912 vehicle shared by Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium), Earl Bamber (New Zealand) and Mathieu Jaminet (France) swapped places at the front with the No. 911 sister car driven by the trio Frédéric Makowiecki (France), Nick Tandy (Great Britain) and Matt Campbell (Australia). Since both Porsche 911 RSR vehicles have already switched out the brakes – unlike many of their rivals – with about five hours of racing to go, the situation looks good for Porsche to claim its first win since 2014.

In the GTD-class, the Porsche customer team Wright Motorsports with the American drivers Patrick Long, Ryan Hardwick, Anthony Imperato and Klaus Bachler (Austria) managed to make up many positions during the night with the No. 16 GT racer and is currently within striking distance of the top. The No. 54 Porsche 911 GT3 R of Black Swan Racing fell behind after receiving a drive-through penalty, but is now making its way up the field. Bad luck hit the Pfaff Motorsports squad. After taking off from pole position, Patrick Pilet (France), Dennis Olsen (Norway), Zach Robichon (Canada) and Lars Kern (Germany) dominated the race in the GTD-class race over long stretches in their No. 9 vehicle. A broken drive shaft threw the team far down the order, robbing them of all chances of victory.

The race: Interim report 1

At the 24 Hours of Daytona, the two Porsche 911 RSR have settled in at the front after two hours.The No. 911 vehicle shared by pole-sitter Nick Tandy (Great Britain), the Frenchman Frédéric Makowiecki and Matt Campbell (Australia) underscores the excellent qualifying performance and sets the pace in the GTLM class. The No. 912 nine-eleven driven by Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium), Mathieu Jaminet (France) and Earl Bamber (New Zealand) took up the race from position two on the grid and now follows close on the bumper of the sister car in second place.

The Porsche customer team Pfaff Motorsports also got off to a perfect start. The Porsche 911 GT3 R (#9) with the driver quartet Patrick Pilet (France), Dennis Olsen (Norway), Zach Robichon (Canada) and Lars Kern (Germany) had taken up the endurance classic from position one and is now the GTD-class pacesetter. While the 911 fielded by Wright Motorsports is sitting at the rear of the midfield, the Black Swan Racing squad's Porsche GT3 R has made up several places. The No. 54 GT racer missed out on qualifying due to repair work and started from the last grid spot.

Qualifying

The new Porsche 911 RSR has made an impressive North American debut in qualifying for the 24-hour race at Daytona by claiming positions one and two on the grid. During the 15-minute session on the Daytona International Speedway, Nick Tandy in the No. 911 vehicle and Laurens Vanthoor in the No. 912 sister car fought a heated duel for the fastest lap time. Nick Tandy (Great Britain) and Belgium's Laurens Vanthoor tapped the full potential of the 2019-generation GT racer, which is based on the high-performance 911 GT3 RS road-legal sports car, and swapped places at the top of the time sheets. In the end, Tandy snatched pole position with a time of 1:42.207 minutes ahead of Vanthoor, thus beating his own GTLM-class qualifying record, which he set at Daytona in 2019.

In the GTD class, pole position also went to Porsche. Zach Robichon turned the fastest lap in his 911 GT3 R (#9) with a time of 1:45.237 minutes. Not only did the Canadian achieve pole position for his Pfaff Motorsports team with this result, he also set the fastest time ever in a GTD-class qualifying at Daytona. Driving for Wright Motorsports, Ryan Hardwick (USA) concluded the qualifying session on tenth. The No. 54 Porsche 911 GT3 R fielded by Black Swan Racing was unable to take part in the qualifying due to repairs after an accident in free practice. The vehicle will take up the race on Saturday from the last grid spot.

Qualifying quotes

Pascal Zurlinden (Director GT Factory Motorsport): "We couldn't have asked for a better qualifying result. Both of our vehicles are on the front grid row of the GTLM class. At its North American premiere, the new Porsche 911 RSR has underlined the great performance potential that we've already seen in

the FIA WEC. The teams and drivers made perfect use of this potential and performed flawlessly. In the GTD class, a customer team starts from pole position, as well. It was here at last year's Daytona race that the new Porsche 911 GT3 R celebrated its premiere. We're ready to tackle the 24-hour classic."

Nick Tandy (Porsche 911 RSR #911): "What a dream start into the IMSA season with the new Porsche 911 RSR. Positions one and two – a perfect qualifying result for the team. Still, the points have to be won in the race and we still have to work hard towards this. We haven't won the GTLM class since 2014. We want to change that on Sunday."

Laurens Vanthoor (Porsche 911 RSR #912): "The duel I had with Nick was close and tough. I don't like to lose, but Nick was slightly better today. Still, there's no reason to complain. Both 911 RSR on the front row and the car was incredible to drive."

Zach Robichon (Porsche 911 GT3 R #9): "The car was really strong in qualifying. Despite not having a lot of grip in the free practice sessions, we didn't change anything and simply trusted the setup we'd tested at the Roar. The plan worked. The car already felt great in the out lap, and I knew that it might work. I'm very proud, and I'm pleased for Porsche and the team to have claimed pole position here at Daytona. Although the race is long and a lot can happen, things look very good."

Qualifying result

GTLM class
1. Tandy/Makowiecki/Campbell (GB/F/AUS), Porsche 911 RSR, 1:42.207 minutes
2. Vanthoor/Bamber/Jaminet (B/NZ/F), Porsche 911 RSR, + 0.049 seconds
3. Garcia/Taylor/Catsburg (E/USA/NL), Corvette C8.R, + 0.338 seconds
4. Gavin/Milner/Fässler (GB/USA/CH), Corvette C8.R, + 0.594 seconds
5. De Phillippi/Eng/Spengler/Herta (USA/A/CDN/USA), BMW M8 GTE, + 0.734 seconds

GTD class
1. Olsen/Robichon/Kern/Pilet (N/CDN/D/F), Porsche 911 GT3 R, 1:45.237 minutes
2. MacNeil/Vilander/Westphal/Balzan (USA/FIN/USA/I), Ferrari 488 GT3, + 0.476 seconds
3. Parente/Goikhberg/Hindman/Allmendinger (P/RUS/USA/USA), Acura NSX GT3, + 0.600 seconds
10. Hardwick/Long/Imperato/Bachler (USA/USA/USA/A) Porsche 911 GT3 R, + 1.248 seconds

Preview

At the season-opening round of the IMSA SportsCar Championship, the new Porsche 911 RSR lines up on the grid for the first time in North America to tackle the 24 Hours of Daytona (25/26 January). In Florida, two 2019-generation GT racers will be fielded in the GTLM class. The new GT flagship from Weissach has already made a very successful debut, securing two one-two results and three pole positions from four races. At the first encounter with the competition in North America at the IMSA

tests, dubbed the “Roar before the 24”, in early January, the new Porsche 911 RSR turned the fastest laps multiple times. At Daytona, Porsche heads into the 2020 season in North America as the title defender of the manufacturers', drivers' and team classifications. The manufacturer is well represented in the GTD class with three Porsche 911 GT3 R.

The 24-hour race on the Daytona International Speedway in Florida has been contested every year since 1966. The 5.73-kilometre-long high-speed racetrack is a combination of fast, banked turns and tight, twisty infield passages. The endurance classic is the traditional season opener of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship and is a round of the North American Endurance Cup (NAEC).

The Porsche GT Team drivers

Nick Tandy (Great Britain) and Frédéric Makowiecki (France) share the cockpit of the No. 911 Porsche 911 RSR for the IMSA SportsCar Championship. The two receive support for the 24-hour race in Florida from Matt Campbell (Australia). The 24-year-old completed his training as a professional racer at Porsche and now contests his first season as a Porsche works driver. Sharing driving duties in the identical GT racer with the starting number 912 are Earl Bamber (New Zealand) and Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium), the title defenders in the drivers' classification. Frenchman Mathieu Jaminet, who came third at Daytona last year as a Porsche Young Professional, will reinforce the team at the long-distance classic – also as a newly-signed works driver.

The customer teams

Pfaff Motorsports competes with drivers Dennis Olsen (Norway) and Zach Robichon (Canada) in the No. 9 Porsche 911 GT3 R. In 2019, the successful duo scored the maiden GTD-class win for Pfaff Motorsports in the IMSA SportsCar Championship at Lime Rock. Porsche development driver Lars Kern (Germany) and Porsche works driver Patrick Pilet (France) round off the line-up, with Pilet contesting the GTD class for the first time. Porsche works driver Patrick Long (USA) joins forces with his compatriots Ryan Hardwick and Anthony Imperato at the wheel of Wright Motorsports' No.16 Porsche 911 GT3 R. Porsche specialist Klaus Bachler (Austria) supports the team as the fourth driver. The No. 54 Porsche 911 GT3 R campaigned by Black Swan Racing tackles the season-opener of the IMSA SportsCar Championship at Daytona with Porsche works driver Sven Müller (Germany), Jeroen Bleekemolen (Netherlands) and the two Americans Timothy Pappas and Trenton Estep.

Porsche successes at Daytona

Porsche is by far the most successful manufacturer at Daytona. The Stuttgart automobile manufacturer has notched up 18 overall wins as a constructor and four more as an engine partner. The impressive track record also includes 78 class victories. With five overall victories and one class win, the American racing legend Hurley Haywood is the Porsche driver with the most titles.

New partner

The Porsche GT Team receives backing for the 2020 season for the first time from the new team partner TAG Heuer. The collaboration with the Swiss luxury watchmaker will run for several years. Both manufacturers can look back on many joint successes in motor racing. One outstanding highlight for Porsche is the “TAG-Turbo made by Porsche”, an engine which powered Formula 1 cars in the 1980s and won two constructor world championships in 1984 and 1985 as well as three drivers' world championship titles from 1984 to 1986. TAG Heuer has been the title and timing partner of the TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E team since 2019.

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. The Porsche GT Team tackles the 2020 season in North America as the title defenders in the manufacturers', drivers' and team classifications.

The Porsche 911 RSR

The new Porsche 911 RSR (2019 model year) celebrates its debut in the IMSA SportsCar Championship at Daytona. The vehicle from Weissach, which produces around 515 hp depending on the air restrictor, is based on the high-performance 911 GT3 RS road-going sports car. Compared to its extremely successful predecessor model, the car received improvements, most notably to areas such as driveability, efficiency, ergonomics and serviceability. About 95 percent of all components are new. The 911 RSR is powered by a 4.2-litre, six-cylinder boxer engine.

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Image Sublines

Path: IMSA. Round 1/Images/img_2.jpg
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Subline: Porsche GT Team: Frederic Makowiecki, Nick Tandy, Matt Campbell (l-r)

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