



Driving into the night in Austin

12/09/2014 At the Circuit of the Americas in Austin/Texas, the Sports Car World Endurance Championship WEC picks up momentum again on 20 September.

The six-hour race will start at 5pm with the sun setting at 7.43pm. This schedule makes it the maiden night race for COTA, while the six Porsche 919 Hybrid works drivers have all the experience from Le Mans in how to deal with twilight and darkness. The circuit in the US poses quite a variety of challenges: The start-finish-straight leads steeply up the hill and into a left-hand hairpin. Other exciting sections of the circuit are borrowed from famous racetracks of all over the world. They are reminiscent, for example, of the Esses at Suzuka, Maggots-Beckets at Silverstone and the Hockenheim Motodrom. The back straight is an impressive 1.2 kilometre stretch.

High targets for the remaining five rounds

With its hybrid powered Le Mans Prototype (LMP1), the Porsche Team enters the most innovative race car in the entire field and has set itself high targets for the remaining five rounds of the World Championship. To recall what has happened so far: At the Porsche 919 Hybrid's race debut in Silverstone (Great Britain), the team was instantly rewarded with a podium finish.

It was the trio in car number 20 who came third – Timo Bernhard (Germany), Brendon Hartley (New Zealand) and Mark Webber (Australia). At the second WEC round in Spa-Francorchamps (Belgium), again a six-hour race, the crew of the sister number 14 car got into the limelight by taking the first pole position. Number 14 is driven by Romain Dumas (France), Neel Jani (Switzerland) and Marc Lieb (Germany).

At the third and most famous WEC race, the Le Mans 24-Hours, the team put in a strong performance, but only car number 14 finished the race – in 11th place overall after time consuming gearbox repairs in the final hours. For Bernhard/Hartley/Webber it was even harder: car number 20 had been leading for 37 laps and was well on track for a second place finish when Mark Webber had to retire the car two hours before the end, because of an engine failure.

Summerbreak: Many details have been improved

Since that day, 15th of June, the Porsche Team has used the break well for development work at the headquarters in Weissach and for testing in Paul Ricard (France), at the EuroSpeedway Lausitz in Germany and, again in France, at Magny-Cours. A new aero package has been introduced to provide a higher downforce level for the remaining rounds in Austin, Fuji, Shanghai, Sakhir and Sao Paulo. Furthermore a lot of details have been improved, which wasn't possible before Le Mans as the team had to focus on reliability and had to freeze the car's specification.

Fritz Enzinger, Vice President LMP1, says: "We are highly motivated going into Austin and want to benefit from everything we have learnt so far."

Porsche 911 RSR in the GTE-Pro class

Porsche Team Manthey also fields a pair of 911 RSR in the most competitive GTE-Pro class and has reshuffled the driver pairings for the remainder of this challenging phase.

Jörg Bergmeister's (Germany) new teammate in the #91 Porsche 911 RSR is Richard Lietz (Austria), allowing Patrick Pilet (France) to join forces with his compatriot Frédéric Makowiecki in the 911 RSR with the number 92. Whether Richard Lietz is ready to race in time for the Austin round depends on how well he has recovered from his accident during a practice session at the Tudor United SportsCar Championship.

As a precaution, Porsche Team Manthey has also entered Nick Tandy (Great Britain) for Austin as the third driver of the #91 vehicle. In the GTE-Am class, Porsche junior Klaus Bachler (Austria) shares driving duties in the 911 RSR fielded by the Proton Competition customer team with Christian Ried (Germany) and Khaled Al Qubaisi (Abu Dhabi).

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