

911 RSR takes second place at race debut

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30/01/2017 IMSA SportsCar Championship: At the 24 Hours of Daytona, Porsche factory drivers Pilet, Makowiecki and Werner secured second place with the 911 RSR for the Porsche GT Team factory squad. The Porsche 911 GT3 R won the GTD class.

A successful race debut for the new Porsche 911 RSR at the 24 Hours of Daytona: After 634 laps on the demanding Daytona International Speedway, they were just 2.988 seconds shy of claiming victory. However, a win at the season-opening round of the IMSA SportsCar Championship was celebrated by the Porsche customer team Alegra Motorsports: With the Porsche 911 GT3 R and supported by Porsche factory pilot Michael Christensen (Denmark), the squad won the GTD class. For Porsche, this was the 77th class victory at the world famous long distance classic in Florida.

The 55th running of the Daytona 24-hour race proved tremendously challenging for drivers and teams,

especially during Saturday night with steady rain and unusually cool temperatures. The race was repeatedly interrupted by safety car phases after many pilots lost control of their vehicles on the rain-soaked Daytona International Speedway and ended up trackside. The longest of the 21 safety car phases behind the pace car lasted over two hours. In the early hours of Sunday morning, the race director made the decision for safety reasons due to the flooding on the racetrack. More than two hours – even the safety car ran out of fuel.

In the first race hours on the storied racetrack featuring two fast banked corners and a twisty infield, the 510 hp 911 RSR racers, designed from scratch by Porsche Motorsport in Weissach, lost time and positions due to six unscheduled tyre changes. After the problem with the right front tyres was solved by further optimising the setup, both 911 RSR began to re-establish their rhythm. When heavier rain made conditions even more difficult, they fought their way to the top of the GTLM class and led the field over many laps on the 5.729-kilometre-long Speedway. Sports car fans did not let the bad weather spoil their fun and witnessed breathtaking fights for positions over the entire race distance, with constantly changing cars in the leader.

The #912 vehicle ultimately took the flag in sixth place

The race showed that the level of competition in the GTLM class is enormous. None of the vehicles of the five automobile manufacturers contesting this category could build a convincing lead over the course of the race. When the sun came up on Sunday, the field was as close as it had been the night before. Both 911 RSR had turned consistently fast laps to secure a good starting position, only to have an unscheduled pit stop for repairs on the right front suspension throw the #912 vehicle out of contention for a podium spot. Kévin Estre (France), Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium) and Richard Lietz (Austria) ultimately took the flag in sixth place. However, their team colleague Patrick Pilet crowned his impressive final stint after an ongoing four-way battle with Ford, Ferrari and Chevrolet with a well-deserved second place. Thanks to this result, he secured a good position for Porsche in the North American Endurance Cup, for which the long distance classics of Sebring, Watkins Glen and Petit Le Mans in addition to Daytona count.

In the GTD class, the Porsche 911 GT3 R mounted with the new ultra-modern, four-litre, flat-six engine with direct fuel injection, celebrated its first victory at Daytona one year after its race debut. With a spectacular charge through the field in the last hour of racing, Porsche works driver Michael Christensen swept into the lead with the 500+hp racer fielded by the Alegra Motorsports customer team and held onto the spot to the flag. Porsche had designed the customer sports racer for worldwide GT3 series on the basis of the 911 GT3 RS production sports car. After securing overall victory at the 14 Hours of Dubai on 14 January, the 911 GT3 R has now won the second major long distance race of the season.

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