Best Porsche finishes fourth at Bathurst, victory in the Pro-Am class

02/02/2020 At the season opening round of the Intercontinental GT Challenge at Bathurst, Absolute Racing finished on fourth place as the best Porsche customer team. The three Porsche works drivers Matt Campbell, Mathieu Jaminet and Patrick Pilet shared driving duties in the Porsche 911 GT3 R with the starting number 911.

The race

Three more identical nine-eleven racers finished the 12-hour race in Australia in the top ten on Sunday. Porsche achieved a one-two in the Pro-Am class, with Grove Racing winning ahead of the NED Racing Team.

The many safety car phases turned the long-distance classic on the Mount Panorama Circuit into a turbulent race, with the interruptions causing the field to bunch up several times. Last year's winner Campbell took up the race on home turf from pole position. Over long stretches, the Porsche 911 GT3 R ran amongst the leading pack. However, tyre damage in lap 117 relegated the No. 911 entry down a lap. Thanks to a clever pit stop strategy, the team was able to make up lost ground during a safety car phase. In the end, the gap to the podium was just 1.529 seconds after 314 laps.

The second vehicle run by Absolute Racing with the starting number 912 took the chequered flag in seventh. The driver of the final stint and Porsche Young Professional Thomas Preining (Australia) shared the vehicle with Porsche works driver Dirk Werner (Germany) and Matteo Cairoli (Italy). Porsche works driver Laurens Vanthoor crossed the finish line two positions behind them. The Belgian was joined in the cockpit of the No. 1 car fielded by EBM (Earl Bamber Motorsport) by his works driver teammate Earl Bamber (New Zealand) and the Australian motor racing legend Craig Lowndes. At the start of the race, the squad fought for the front spots on the 6.213-kilometre racetrack, however a time-consuming change of the brake pads prevented them from achieving a top result.

Grove Racing claimed first place in the Pro-Am class with drivers Stephen Grove, Brenton Grove (both Australia) and Ben Barker (Great Britain). The class win for the Australian squad (No. 4) represented tenth overall. The NED Racing Team secured second in the Pro-Am category and position eleven overall. Porsche works driver Romain Dumas (France), Porsche Junior Jaxon Evans (New Zealand) and David Calvert-Jones (Australia) shared the cockpit of the No. 12 vehicle.

Comments on the race

Fritz Enzinger (Vice President Porsche Motorsport and Group Motorsport Volkswagen AG):"Grove Racing's victory in the Pro-Am class is really great. All five of our Porsche 911 GT3 R finished in the top eleven. After claiming pole position, we thought we could possibly win. But the field was very evenly matched. As the group representative for Volkswagen Motorsport, I'm of course delighted with Bentley's win."

Pascal Zurlinden (Director Factory Motorsport): "It wasn't a great race in the pro-category. We had problems with the tyres and brakes. But the drivers and teams fought their way through and made the best of the situation. As such, everyone can go home with their heads held high. For our long-standing customer team Grove Racing, I'm absolutely thrilled about their huge success in the Pro-Am class."

Sebastian Golz (Project Manager Porsche 911 GT3 R): "We have five cars in the top eleven, a class win and a second place in the Pro-Am category. All in all, that result doesn't sound too bad, but we just didn't quite pull it all together against the competition today. Because of the punctures, brake problems and penalties we couldn't make the most of the potential that was available to us."

Mathieu Jaminet (Porsche 911 GT3 R #911): "All things considered, it was a tough race for us. We had two punctures that threw us back. We lost a lap but we battled hard to get back up into the action. Towards the end we hoped for the predicted rain, but unfortunately it arrived only after the chequered flag came out."

Earl Bamber (#1 Porsche 911 GT3 R): "We had a good car with an ideal setup, but unfortunately there was a problem with the brake pads in the middle of the race. We had to pit and that cost us two laps. We couldn't recover from that. Afterwards we had one of the fastest cars, which showed our potential, but after our win here last year we had simply expected more."

Dirk Werner (#912 Porsche 911 GT3 R): "Starting in the night at Bathurst is something special. However, starting from twelfth on the grid surrounded by so many vehicles makes it difficult to gain any positions at the start. We managed to work our way up the field and were in the top group for the last two hours. At the end we hoped for rain, perhaps then we might have achieved an even better result."

Stephen Grove (#4 Porsche 911 GT3 R): "First place in the Pro-Am class is fantastic. Ben's first stint was very important because it put us in a good position. We then fought our way through the field bit by bit. The secret here is that you have to be able to read the traffic on the track correctly. We tried to stay out of trouble and are grateful for a perfect car."

Jaxon Evans (#12 Porsche 911 GT3 R): "We started from a little further down the grid than we'd originally planned. The name of the game early on was to get through the dark hours of the race without any damage. After that we were able to manoeuvre ourselves further up the order. I'm really pleased with second place and eleventh overall in the Pro-Am class for the NED Racing Team."

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

Race result

Race result
1. Gounon/Soulet/Pepper (F/B/ZA), Bentley Continental GT3, 314 laps
2. Parente/Barnicoat/Blomqvist (P/GB/GB), McLaren 720S GT3, 314 laps
3. Van Gisbergen/Whincup/Götz (NZ/AUS/D), Mercedes AMG GT3, 314 laps
4. Jaminet/Pilet/Campbell (F/F/AUS), Porsche 911 GT3 R, 314 laps
7. Werner/Preining/Cairoli (D/A/I), Porsche 911 GT3 R, 314 laps
9. Bamber/Vanthoor/Lowndes (NZ/B/AUS), Porsche 911 GT3 R, 312 laps
10. S. Grove/B. Grove/Barker (AUS/AUS/GB), Porsche 911 GT3 R, 312 laps
11. Calvert-Jones/Dumas/Evans (USA/F/NZ), Porsche 911 GT3 R, 311 laps

The qualifying

An ideal qualifying for the Porsche customer team Absolute Racing at the opening round of this year's Intercontinental GT Challenge: Porsche works driver Matt Campbell turned the fastest lap of the day in qualifying for the Bathurst 12 Hour, thus handing Porsche its first pole position at the Mount Panorama Circuit. In the identical Porsche 911 GT3 R, Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium, No. 1) secured the fifth grid spot for Earl Bamber Motorsport (EBM) on Saturday.

On the 6.213-kilometre racetrack in the state of New South Wales, both Porsche drivers made it into the decisive pole shootout. Last year's winner Campbell kept his cool in temperatures of 39 degrees Celsius and underlined his intentions of claiming another home victory. The 24-year-old shares the vehicle with his two French works driver teammates Mathieu Jaminet and Patrick Pilet. The two IMSA champions Vanthoor and Porsche works driver Earl Bamber (New Zealand) share driving duties with the Australian motor racing star Craig Lowndes.

Matteo Cairoli narrowly missed out on taking part in the top 10 pole shootout by a mere 0.238 seconds. The driver from Como in Italy planted the Porsche 911 GT3 R, which is based on the high-performance Porsche 911 GT3 RS road-legal sports car, on twelfth. He shares the cockpit of the No. 912 vehicle with Porsche works driver Dirk Werner (Germany) and Porsche Young Professional Thomas Preining (Austria).

The qualifying in the Pro-Am class

The Grove Racing squad claimed the second grid spot in the Pro-Am class (16th overall) on the circuit about 200 kilometres west of Sydney. In the No. 4 car, Ben Barker (Great Britain) was only 0.088-seconds shy of the class leader. Stephen Grove (Australia) and his son Brenton Grove round off the

driver trio.

The qualifying for the NED Racing Team (No. 12) and Porsche works driver Romain Dumas (France) did not turn out quite as well. During his flying lap, the seasoned specialist encountered a red flag and was forced to stop. In the end, Dumas finished on fifth in the Pro-Am class (25th overall). For the race, Porsche Junior Jaxon Evans (New Zealand) and David Calvert-Jones (Australia) join the Frenchman at the wheel of NED Racing's 911.

Qualifying result

1. Jaminet/Pilet/Campbell (F/F/AUS), Porsche 911 GT3 R
2. Parente/Barnicoat/Blomqvist (P/GB/GB), McLaren 720S GT3
3. Fraga/Buhk/Marciello (BR/D/CH), Mercedes AMG GT3
4. De Oliveira/Liberati/Imperatori (BR/I/CH), Nissan GTR Nismo GT3
5. Bamber/Vanthoor/Lowndes (NZ/B/AUS), Porsche 911 GT3 R
12. Werner/Preining/Cairoli (D/A/I), Porsche 911 GT3 R
16. S. Grove/B. Grove/Barker (AUS/AUS/GB), Porsche 911 GT3 R
25. Calvert-Jones/Dumas/Evans (USA/F/NZ), Porsche 911 GT3 R

The preview

Porsche launches its Title Defence Mission in the Intercontinental GT Challenge at Bathurst, Australia. In 2019, the sports car manufacturer claimed the IGTC titles in the manufacturers' and drivers' classifications. The gruelling twelve-hour race (January 31 to February 2) traditionally marks the start of the most important championship for GT3 sports cars. In the race at Mount Panorama, five Porsche 911 GT3 R face strong opposition from vehicles from ten other manufacturers. Last year, Porsche won the long-distance event at Bathurst for the first time in its history thanks to the customer squad EBM (Earl Bamber Motorsport).

The race

This year marks the 18th running of the 12-hour race at the Mount Panorama Circuit in the Australian state of New South Wales. The endurance classic was first contested here in 1991. The 6.213-killometre circuit 200 kilometres west of Sydney consists of public roads with 23 curves. Per lap, vehicles have to cope with an elevation difference of 174 metres. The track layout poses a great challenge to drivers and engineers. The tight corner combinations to the south demand utmost concentration at the wheel. The fastest passages are the two long sections, Conrod Straight (1.916 km) and Mountain Straight (1.111 km). Around 40 vehicles will line up on the grid this year, 33 of which are GT3 cars – a Bathurst 12-Hour record.

The Porsche teams and drivers

At the event Down Under, four Porsche customer teams compete with a total of five Porsche 911 GT3 R. As last year's winners, EBM, the team of Porsche works driver Earl Bamber, tackles the race with the starting number one. Sharing the wheel of the 911 are the two reigning champions of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, Earl Bamber (New Zealand) and Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium) as well as the Australian motorsport legend Craig Lowndes. In the No. 12 vehicle fielded by NED Racing Team are Porsche works driver Romain Dumas (France), Porsche Junior Jaxon Evans (New Zealand) and David Calvert-Jones (Australia). Absolute Racing campaign two vehicles: Porsche works driver Matt Campbell (Australia) shares driving duties in the No. 911 car with the two Frenchmen Mathieu Jaminet and Patrick Pilet. Porsche works driver Dirk Werner (Germany) and Porsche Young Professional Thomas Preining (Austria) team up with Matteo Cairoli (Italy) in the No. 912 contender. Grove Racing tackles the event with Stephen Grove (Australia), his son Brenton Grove, and Ben Barker (Great Britain).

The Porsche 911 GT3 R

In the Intercontinental GT Challenge, the latest Porsche 911 GT3 R made its first appearance at Laguna Seca (USA) last year. It is based on the high-performance 911 GT3 RS* road-legal sports car. The flat-six engine in the rear puts out over 368 kW. This coming weekend, the current version of the Porsche 911 GT3 R makes its debut at the Mount Panorama Circuit.

Info

Round two of the Intercontinental GT Challenge is held at Spa in Belgium. From 23 to 26 July, the most important championship for GT3 sports cars will be contested at the legendary 24-hour race in Belgium's Ardennes region.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



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Image Sublines

Path: IGTC: Race, round 1/Images/img_1.jpg
Title: Mathieu Jaminet, Matt Campbell, Patrick Pilet, l-r, Intercontinental GT Challenge, Bathurst 12 Hour, Australia, 2020, Porsche AG
Subline: Best Porsche customer team: Mathieu Jaminet, Matt Campbell and Patrick Pilet

Path: IGTC: Race, round 1/Images/img_2.jpg
Title: 911 GT3 R, EBM, NED Racing, Grove Racing, Absolute Racing (911), Absolute Racing (912), Free Practice, Intercontinental GT Challenge, Round 1, Bathurst 12 Hour, Australia, 2020, Porsche AG
Subline: The Porsche teams and drivers in the Intercontinental GT Challenge 2020

Path: IGTC: Race, round 1/Images/img_3.jpg
Title: 911 GT3 R, Absolute Racing (911), Free Practice, Intercontinental GT Challenge, Round 1, Bathurst 12 Hour, Australia, 2020, Porsche AG
Subline: The 911 GT3 R (911) of Absolute Racing at the free practice in Bathurst

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