

WEC: Porsche fully focused on preparing the 919 Hybrids for the race

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14/04/2017 The tension ahead of the first battle between Porsche's and Toyota's Le Mans Prototypes is increasing.

In the first free practice sessions of the FIA World Endurance Championship's curtain raiser on the 5.9 kilometre circuit in Silverstone (GB), Toyota topped the time sheets. However, this doesn't come as a surprise. While Porsche runs in low downforce in Silverstone to favour its overall 2017 aerodynamic strategy, the Japanese competitor is well equipped with a high downforce aero package in Silverstone.

In the first of the two 90-minute practice sessions in the morning, the two Porsche 919 Hybrids came

second and fourth. In the afternoon session, that was the overall faster one, the 919s finished third and fourth respectively. In both sessions the Porsche with car number 2 of Earl Bamber (NZ), Timo Bernhard (DE) and Brendon Hartley (NZ) was the faster one. This crew's best lap time was achieved by Bamber in 1:40.500 minutes. At the wheel of the number 1 sister car, shared by reigning world champion Neel Jani (CH), André Lotterer (DE) and Nick Tandy (GB), it was Lotterer who put in the fastest lap in 1:41.201 minutes. At ambient temperatures of around 13 degree Celsius and cloudy skies, the track was dry in both WEC sessions.

High tension expected for first duel of the season

Porsche, world champions and Le Mans winners in 2015 and 2016 respectively, targets the defence of both titles. But in England the LMP team expects a difficult start. In support of the aerodynamic strategy for the entire season, the Porsche 919 Hybrids will run at the Northamptonshire circuit with significantly less downforce than the fast bends of the challenging Grand Prix track realistically demand.

The race marks the return of the Porsche GT works team following a year-long development period. It runs two newly developed 911 RSR. The 510 hp race car from Weissach, which is based on the seventh generation of the iconic 911 sports car, celebrated its successful debut in January at the 24 Hours of Daytona. FIA, as the world's governing body of motorsport, has further enhanced the GT category of the WEC by officially giving it world championship status this season for the first time.

The eagerly anticipated first race for the 27-car field gets underway on Sunday at 12 hrs. Track action on the 5.9 kilometre long Formula One circuit can be followed live from basically all over the world.

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Dr. Ing. h.c. F. Porsche Aktiengesellschaft
Porscheplatz 1
70435 Stuttgart