



Pfaff fights from behind to score VIR victory

10/10/2021 WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, GTLM: Round 9, GTD: Round 11

Showcasing the true fighting spirit that Porsche customer programs have personified for over 70 years, Pfaff Motorsport came from behind to score their fourth victory of the season at VIRginia International Raceway (VIR) on October 9. The GTD class win by the “Plaid Porsche” in the Michelin GT Challenge At VIR keeps the driving pair of Porsche factory driver Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium) and Porsche one-make champion Zach Robichon (Canada) at the front of the Driver Standings with one race weekend remaining in the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship season. Pfaff remains at the top of the Team rankings. A fourth-place finish by Wright Motorsports placed a second Porsche 911 GT3 R privateer team in the top-five of the two-hour, 40-minute race at the Alton, Virginia race track keeping Porsche atop the Manufacturer standings as well.

Having been penalized during Friday qualifying for touching the car during the session – which is not allowed by IMSA regulations – Pfaff was forced to start at the back of the all GT-car field for Saturday’s race. Two other entries, including the Wright Motorsports machine, were also relegated to the back of

the field giving the No. 9 starting position 16 of 18 cars on the grid. The No. 88 Team Hardpoint Porsche 911 GT3 R of Rob Ferriol (Fayetteville, North Carolina) and Katherine Legge (United Kingdom) qualified 14th at the team's home race track.

The trio of Porsche race cars worked together to fight their way to the front of the field. Through pit strategy and expert driving, Robichon and Hindman drove to the front of the field before handing the respective cars over to Vanthoor and Long respectively. With less than 11-minutes remaining in the race, the leading BMW was spun off course allowing both Vanthoor in the No. 9 Porsche and Long in the No. 16 to move into the top-three. In a dramatic last lap fight, Long would be forced out for third-place dropping to fourth at the checkered flag. Vanthoor would be able to hold on for the win. Team Hardpoint earned a tenth-place finish.

The October 9 win at VIR helped strengthen the Canadian team's grasp on the GTD class Driver and Team Championship point standings in the last sprint race of the year. However, with one race – the ten-hour Petit Le Mans endurance event at Michelin Raceway Road Atlanta – still on the table, none of the GTD contenders can enter the finale casually.

In the GTLM class, two-time class race winners, WeatherTech Racing, earned a third-place finish. Cooper MacNeil (Hinsdale, Illinois) started the No. 79 Porsche 911 RSR-19 and chased the Corvette factory team until handing the Proton Competition-managed machine over to works driver Kévin Estre (France). Estre, making his first IMSA start since January's Rolex 24 At Daytona, took advantage of the pit call and lapped traffic to catch and then overtake both the Corvette C8-R race cars with just inside one-hour remaining. However, moments later, the second-place Vette pushed by the WeatherTech machine to retake the lead at Turn 11. Despite a strong effort to recapture the lead, which ultimately led to an "off" and return to the track after contact with a barrier at the "Oak Tree" corner, the No. 79 would finish in third-place at the final sprint race of the year.

The season-ending and champion-crowning race of the 2021 IMSA WeatherTech season will take place at Michelin Raceway Road Atlanta. The 2.54-mile road course is home to the ten-hour Petit Le Mans, the traditional season-finale for the championship, on November 12.

Comments after the race

Kévin Estre, Driver, No. 79 WeatherTech Racing Porsche 911 RSR-19.

"We got lucky with the yellow which helped and that put us up with the Corvettes. I think we had more pace than them. I had some banging doors with Nick (Tandy) at the restart which was unnecessary because I passed him already. I could also pass the three car and then Nick went hard again on my side. I went back to P2 and lost some time in traffic and then I pushed too hard trying to come back. I made a mistake in Oak Tree and hit the barrier. I was able to come back but it was too late. It's a shame."

Cooper MacNeil, Driver, No. 79 WeatherTech Racing Porsche 911 RSR-19.

"The track was damp for my stint at the beginning which made it a little tricky. The WeatherTech

Racing Porsche was handling well, and I was able to keep it on the track and in one piece for Kevin. We pitted early which was good as that put us on the same strategy as the Corvettes after the yellow. There was some good hard racing with those guys. Some fair and maybe some not so fair. That is GTLM, its hard and scrappy racing. You hope to be on the good end of it, but today we weren't. We have one more on the IMSA calendar left Petit Le Mans, which I have won twice before so hoping for some good luck there in November."

Steve Bortolotti, Manager, No. 9 Pfaff Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3 R.

"Total team effort top-to-bottom. Yesterday was one of the worst days we have had as a team and today everyone stepped up. Zach had an insane, insane first stint, made-up tons of ground. The crew absolutely rocked it on the pit stops. They were on a whole other planet. I am so proud of the Pfaff team. This was a complete team win. I can't think of a better time to be peaking than right before the final race at Petit Le Mans."

Laurens Vanthoor, Driver, No. 9 Pfaff Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3 R.

"This was an all-out team effort. There was no better example of teamwork than this. We made a mistake yesterday, but we came back twice as hard. Pit stops got us to the front and around a lot of cars really early. It was tough. I really didn't think I would be able to keep up with the BMW, but I did. We had a chance to show we are worthy of being champions and I think we did. There are ten-hours of racing still to go but we will do our best and we will get the result."

Zach Robichon, Driver, No. 9 Pfaff Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3 R.

"Yesterday we looked at ourselves. I made a mistake; the team made a mistake. We looked at today as an opportunity to prove why we deserve to be champions. Laurens made a great point that sometimes you don't win a championship by everything going your way. And when things look down, that is when people set themselves apart. That is what we did today. Everybody executed perfectly. The pit stops were unbelievable. To me, we saw yesterday, and we had to right our wrong. Today was a lot of fun. As much as you hate starting at the back, you kind of enjoy starting at the back. It can only go one way. I actually had fun and did what I had to do. There was a sense of urgency at the start. Our championship rivals were ahead of us so as far as I was concerned there was no time to waste so, go."

Patrick Long, Driver, No. 16 Wright Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3 R.

"That was an extreme high and low sporting event. Great execution of strategy and pit stops by the Wright Motorsports team with a really tough starting scenario. There was a lot of traffic for Trent and myself. Two key events cost us a top-two today. First, getting taken out by a lap down car coming out of the pits early in the race. We fought back and made it up to a podium position and on the last lap, unfortunately, as a GTLM car was coming through, opened the door to the car behind us and we got run over and had to settle-in a battle to even hold onto fourth-place. I am proud of the team but frustrated with the result. You can only control what is in your control."

Trent Hindman, Driver, No. 16 Wright Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3 R.

"Once again this was one that got away from us. It was completely out of our control. We had a great qualifying but unfortunately got moved to the back. That didn't seem to affect us much. The car was

super good in traffic, and we were able to move our way forward in the first stint. At the very end of the first stint, we had contact that set us back down the order. It was a big fight to move back forward from then on. A big thanks to the Wright team, 1st Phorm, Mountain Motorsports, obviously Ryan [Hardwick] for making everything happen and Pat for his excellent drive. It stings a little bit because we have all the speed in the world, and we have the potential, but we just aren't getting it done. I feel for the whole team."

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