

Porsche Motorsport Weekly Event Notes: Tuesday, June 18, 2019

18/06/2019 World Champions. Porsche Sweeps World Endurance Cup GT Titles. And more.

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Porsche race cars carried drivers and teams to four FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) titles in the 2018/2019 sports car racing "Super Season". Factory-prepared Porsche 911 RSR competition machines were used to take the Driver and Manufacturer LMGTE-Pro class championships while customer effort Team Project 1 earned LMGTE-Am Team and Driver accolades. After a full calendar year of competition, the championships came to a head at the season-ending 24 Hours of Le Mans in France on June 15 – 16.

In the all-pro category utilizing the most current Porsche 911 RSR race car, factory drivers Michael Christensen (Denmark) and Kévin Estre (France) won the drivers' world crown. The successful duo, who shared driving duties in the No. 92 Porsche GT Team Porsche 911 RSR throughout the season and with Belgian Laurens Vanthoor at the Circuit de la Sarthe, scored enough points at the 24-hour race in France to clinch the Drivers' title. Porsche had claimed the Manufacturers' championship at Spa-Francorchamps in May.

The Team Project 1 customer squad won the Drivers' and Team championship titles in the LM GTE-Am class of the WEC. The driving trio of Porsche factory driver Jörg Bergmeister (Germany), Patrick Lindsey (Santa Barbara, California) and Egidio Perfetti (Norway) clinched the championship for drivers by virtue of a delayed victory in class at the 24 Hours of Le Mans finale. The season-long performance gave the Team title to Project 1-prepared No. 56 Porsche 911 RSR. The operation, which has been a longtime regular entrant in the Porsche one-make championships, crossed the Le Mans finish line in second-place but following a post-race review of all entries, Team Project 1 was awarded the victory when it was discovered a competitor failed to meet the minimum refueling time for the GTE-Am class.

Fritz Enzinger, Vice President Porsche Motorsport.

"To win all titles at the last race of the season and to witness three driver crews on the podium is an incredible story. We've concluded the FIA WEC Super Season with the greatest possible success. Now we aim to secure more titles in the North American IMSA series. This is already one of the most successful seasons in the history of Porsche Motorsport. My thanks go to all the team members at the racetrack and to all the employees in Zuffenhausen and Weissach as well as all other locations who've made these successes possible."

French Performers. Porsche Extends Winning Record at Le Mans.

Nine Porsche 911 RSR race cars charged under the French tri-color as it waved over the field for the

start of the 87th edition of the 24 Hours of Le Mans. Throughout the June 15-16 classic, four factory-entered machines and five customer-prepared racers maintained an impressive pace in front of 252,500 spectators. A pair of works 911 RSR took two places on the LM GTE-Pro class podium at the Circuit de la Sarthe in Le Mans France while Team Project 1 earned its first class victory at Le Mans in the LM GTE-Am class to give the circa-510 HP mid-engine Porsche race cars three podium places in the grandfather of all sports car races. With the class win by the No. 56 Porsche 911 RSR, Porsche extends its record of Le Mans titles to 108 class wins along with the all-time overall record for manufacturer's of 19.

The best result in the 24-Hours was achieved by the No. 56 Team Project 1 Porsche 911 RSR customer program in the GTE-Am class. Works driver Jörg Bergmeister (Germany), IMSA GTD class driver/ team principal Patrick Lindsey (Santa Barbara, California) and Egidio Perfetti (Norway) ended the 24 Hours of Le Mans in second-place sharing the No. 56 Porsche 911 RSR. However, post-race inspection of the pit stops of all entrants showed the team that crossed the finish line first fell short of the mandated minimum refueling time. As a result, the second-year GTE-Am team was awarded its first Le Mans victory. It was Bergmeister's second career title at Le Mans – the first coming in the White Lightning Racing Porsche in 2004 – and the first victory for both the Lindsey and Perfetti, each of whom was making his second start at la Sarthe. In the process, Team Project 1 secured the Team and Drivers' titles in its first FIA WEC season in the Pro-Am style class.

In the all factory car LM GTE-Pro class, the No. 91 Porsche GT Team car piloted by Gianmaria Bruni (Italy), Richard Lietz (Austria) and Frédéric Makowiecki gave Porsche a second-place finish. Earl Bamber (New Zealand), Patrick Pilet (France) and Nick Tandy (Great Britain) followed closely behind in the Brumos Racing-inspired livery of the No. 93, the trio of IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship regulars clinched third-place. Both Porsche 911 RSR vehicles crossed the finish line less than 70-seconds behind the class winner. The margin was a result of being hampered by bad luck during the safety car phases of the twice-around-the-clock endurance event.

Over long stretches of the race, the No. 92 of the newly crowned World Champions, Michael Christensen (Denmark) and Kévin Estre (France) as well as IMSA WeatherTech GTLM class points-leader Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium), was on course to repeat last year's Le Mans class victory. After five hours, the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) car had swept into the lead of the GTE-Pro class to hold a convincing lead during the night. The decisive setback struck in the early hours of the morning. Repairs to a defective exhaust system threw the 2018 Le Mans-winning trio back six laps. In the end, the car crossed the finish line in tenth-place – enough to win the FIA WEC Drivers' Championship.

The Le Mans debut of Mathieu Jaminet (France) and Dennis Olsen (Norway) concluded with an eighth-place finish in the GTE-Pro category. The two Porsche Young Professionals, who shared the No. 94 car prepared by North American-based Porsche factory team CORE autosport with works driver Sven Müller (Germany), suffered several setbacks over the course of the world's toughest endurance race. Bad luck with the safety car interventions and repairs to the data systems mandated by the FIA WEC cost significant time for the entry.

Last year's GTE-Am class winners were less fortunate in 2019. The No. 77 Dempsey Proton Racing car fielded by Porsche Young Professional Matt Campbell (Australia), Porsche Junior Julien Andlauer (France) and Christian Ried (Germany) also led the race over long stretches, but dropped down the order to repair a damaged underbody. The three drivers finished the season finale of the FIA WEC in fifth-place.

In the No. 78 Proton Competition Porsche, Louis Prette, Philippe Prette (both Italy) and the Frenchman Vincent Abril concluded their Le Mans debut in seventh-place. Porsche Young Professional Thomas Preining (Austria) and his British teammates Michael Wainwright and Ben Barker brought their No. 86 Gulf Racing vehicle over the finish line in ninth-place. The Porsche 911 RSR with the starting number 88 retired early. Dempsey Proton Racing ultimately had to park the vehicle in the garage after Satoshi Hoshino was involved in several accidents. The Japanese driver shared the vehicle with Porsche Young Professional Matteo Cairoli (Italy) and Giorgio Roda (Italy).

Manhattan Beach, California's Patrick Long was unable to start his 16th career 24 Hours of Le Mans. 2004 class winner, and North America's only Porsche factory driver did not have the opportunity to start the race when his co-driver Tracy Krohn (Houston, Texas) was unable to secure clearance to drive after a practice session accident on Wednesday, June 12. The No. 99 Dempsey Proton Racing Porsche 911 RSR was scheduled to be the tenth Porsche competing, the sixth in the LM GTE-Am class, with two-time 24 Hours of Le Mans winner Long, Krohn and Nic Jönsson (Sweden). Krohn and Jönsson were set to make their 14th-consecutive start as teammates at Le Mans.

Pascal Zurlinden, Director GT Factory Motorsport.

"We were determined to win this race. Unfortunately, bad luck and minor mistakes prevented this. Still, we have two cars on the podium in the GTE-Pro class and one in the GTE-Am category. Porsche has won all four GT titles in the FIA WEC Super Season. What more do you want? I can only thank everyone in the team. It was a season I'll remember for a very long time."

Patrick Lindsey, Driver, No. 56 Team Project 1 Porsche 911 RSR.

"Well, it is certainly unexpected news. Winning the championship was the goal going into the race and having accomplished that with a second-place finish was beyond satisfying. With the news that we are now the [race] winners, it's a lot to wrap my head around. For starters, I felt like we had already executed the perfect race, so to be made the winners, even post-race, feels like the perfect reward to the team for such a monumental effort. It's the biggest race victory in my career and to go along with capping-off the super season championship is just too amazing to express. Pride in my teammates, relief of the past months of trying to maintain the championship and of course thankfulness of the full support of my wife, family and friends are emotions just swirling around that I can't really distinguish. I'm looking forward to digesting it all and getting a little perspective of the whole thing. Then figure out how to do it all again!"

Gianmaria Bruni, Driver, No. 91 Porsche GT Team Porsche 911 RSR.

"Like last year, we were very unlucky with the safety car phases. Because of these, we lost more than a minute to the top on two occasions – much more than our gap to the winners at the flag. This shows

that we could've won. We've made the most out of the conditions and achieved second-place. Hopefully it'll be our turn next year to win the race."

Richard Lietz, Driver, No. 91 Porsche GT Team Porsche 911 RSR.

"That was an incredibly tough race. We made the most out of our chances. Unfortunately, unlike last year, it wasn't enough for the first two places, but positions two and three are definitely not something to be ashamed of. On the contrary, the Porsche 911 RSR was one of the very best cars in the field. Next year we aim to be back at the very front of the field again with our new car."

Frédéric Makowiecki, Driver, No. 91 Porsche GT Team Porsche 911 RSR.

"It's always a great feeling when you get the chance to climb the podium at Le Mans. Second-place is a terrific result. On the other hand, this is the second time in a row that I've just missed out on the big victory. It is my great wish to finally be able to stand on the very top step next year."

Michael Christensen, Driver, No. 92 Porsche GT Team Porsche 911 RSR.

"What a rollercoaster ride! We were on track for victory, everything was perfect, but then we had to pit during the night for repairs to the exhaust. You feel as if the world has fallen out from under your feet. Still, we won the world championship and that's what counted for us; that was our aim. So we have very good reason to celebrate."

Kévin Estre, Driver, No. 92 Porsche GT Team Porsche 911 RSR.

"The first half of the race was sensational. Our Porsche 911 RSR was incredibly fast, we were very clearly the favorites to win. After the setback during the night, all that mattered was to bring the car home and win the drivers' title. That was strange. You hear every noise in the car, you sense every vibration, even though there might be none. So the relief and joy of winning the world championship are, of course, immense."

Laurens Vanthoor, Driver, No. 92 Porsche GT Team Porsche 911 RSR.

"Our car was perfectly prepared and setup for the race and the first half of the race was awesome. Initially, everything ran as smoothly as last year. We had the pace and luck with the safety cars. Unfortunately, a defect threw us back. That's a pity. Still, we'll celebrate. All titles have gone to Porsche. And with our victory together in 2018 and this weekend's race, I made a small contribution to Michael and Kevin being crowned world champions. That makes me proud."

Earl Bamber, Driver, No. 93 Porsche GT Team Porsche 911 RSR.

"We tried everything, but even though we had a very fast car, we couldn't do more. That's Le Mans, you simply have to have luck on your side. We're pleased with the podium finish and now we look ahead. Our focus is now on extending our points' lead in the IMSA series and to win more titles for Porsche."

Patrick Pilet, Driver, No. 93 Porsche GT Team Porsche 911 RSR.

"To finish in second and third with two cars is a very good result for the team and for Porsche. Not everything ran well. We made too many mistakes to win the race. But a podium result is still a wonderful success that we aim to enjoy."

Nick Tandy, Driver, No. 93 Porsche GT Team Porsche 911 RSR.

"It was hard work, a rollercoaster of emotions that ended with a podium result. Of course we wanted to be at the top of the podium, but it's a great honor for Porsche to have two cars in the top three at the world's toughest endurance race. We've demonstrated great team spirit in all four crews. That was incredible."

Sven Müller, Driver, No. 94 Porsche GT Team Porsche 911 RSR.

"We can be proud of our performance. During the race we improved constantly and got faster and faster. We could easily have finished in the top six, but unfortunately a technical problem threw us out of the front pack. It's a shame, but the Le Mans experience was still fantastic."

Mathieu Jaminet, Driver, No. 94 Porsche GT Team Porsche 911 RSR.

"We delivered a clean and strong performance. There were factors beyond our control that hampered us. That simply belongs to Le Mans. I thoroughly enjoyed my debut at this sensational race and I very much want to return next year."

Dennis Olsen, Driver, No. 94 Porsche GT Team Porsche 911 RSR.

"I finished my first Le Mans race in eighth-place. Given the setbacks, that's pretty good. Taking part in this race has made a dream come true for me. Hopefully I'll get another chance next year – preferably with the same driver line-up, because our teamwork was outstanding."

Jörg Bergmeister, Driver, No. 56 Team Project 1 Porsche 911 RSR.

"We won both titles in our maiden season. You don't get better than that – sensational. Towards the end, it may have looked from the outside as if we could still win the race, but unfortunately we had to come into the pits once more to refuel. The Ford deserved to win. With our podium result and after winning the title, we have plenty of reason to celebrate."

Matt Campbell, Driver, No. 77 Dempsey Proton Racing Porsche 911 RSR. "We wanted to win and we came fifth. It's not ideal, but that's just the way it is at Le Mans. The competition is intense, the rivals are incredibly strong and the race is very demanding. The effort in making it to the finish under such circumstances definitely deserves high respect."

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