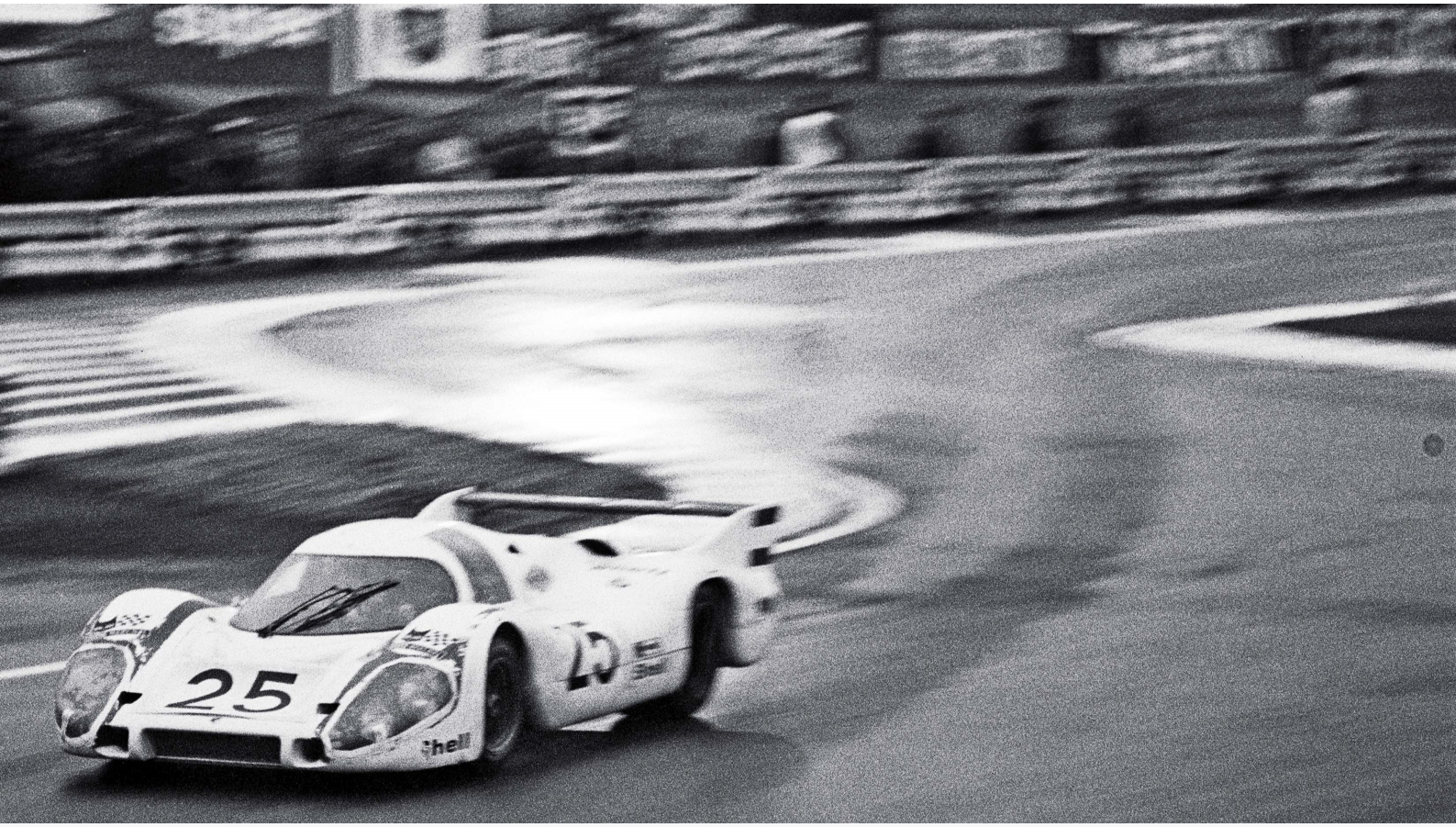


3:19.08 min.

23/01/2017 Never in the storied history of Le Mans had someone driven a lap as fast as Kurt Ahrens did in the 917 Langheck. The top qualifying time that enabled the first overall victory for Porsche at Le Mans.

Le Mans, France. June 11, 1970. Training: The day is hot and humid, as was the day before. But now cooler air from the Atlantic is streaming in – a boon to the air-cooled, 4.9-liter engine in Kurt Ahrens's Porsche 917. The thirty-year-old German race-car driver shares this long-tail car with Englishman Vic Elford. But for now the Braunschweig native is making his preparations in the cockpit. His goal is to take the pole position.

The heart of the renowned Circuit de la Sarthe – then 13.469 kilometers long – is the legendary Mulsanne straight, which at the time was untroubled by even the slightest chicane. It was a 6-kilometer slash through the landscape – a straightaway made for the 400 km/h barrier, says Ahrens. He feels no fear. Ahrens never feels nervous in the 917, as long as the tires last north of 350 km/h. Tires have been known to part ways with their treads at such speeds. Ahrens goes for it anyway. The clock stops at 3:19.08. Three seconds faster than the pole sitter the year before. Ahrens and Elford are at the front of the pack.

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