

Exciting start to the race weekend in Austin

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19/09/2014 The Porsche Team, with the two Le Mans Prototypes Porsche 919 Hybrids, enjoyed a smooth first free practice session on Thursday at the beginning of the weekend of the fourth round of the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) in Austin, Texas.

While in the first of the two 90-minute practice sessions the entire job list to prepare for Saturday's six-hour race was able to be ticked off, the night session was hampered by bad weather. A delay of one hour due to thunder and lightening was followed by a wet session. All the drivers reported poor visibility and, especially early in the session, way too much standing water on the track. Nevertheless, the team stayed focussed and made sure all six drivers got their mandatory three timed laps in the dark.

The crew of car number 14 covered 40 laps during the first session in bright sunshine in the afternoon, with the fastest lap being 1:53.020 minutes (sixth position). At night they did 20 laps (2:11.248

minutes, eighth position). Car number 20 completed 35 laps in the afternoon (1:51.919 minutes, third position) and 16 laps at night (2:07.342 minutes, fifth position) after a problem with a cooling pump had to be fixed.

Largest ever Porsche factory campaign

All in all twelve Porsche works drivers will share driving duties in Austin for the Porsche squad, Porsche Team Manthey and Porsche North America in seven 919 Hybrid and 911 RSR works vehicles: Jörg Bergmeister (Germany), Timo Bernhard (Germany), Michael Christensen (Denmark), Romain Dumas (France), Brendon Hartley (New Zealand), Neel Jani (Switzerland), Marc Lieb (Gremany), Patrick Long (USA), Frédéric Makowiecki (France), Patrick Pilet (France), Nick Tandy (Great Britain) and Mark Webber (Australia). As the 13th factory pilot, Wolf Henzler (Germany) drives the 911 RSR for the Falken Tire customer outfit. Richard Lietz (Austria) from the Porsche Manthey team has to stand down in Austin due to an injury.

With the Tudor United SportsCar Championship also holding a round on the Grand Prix circuit on the outskirts of the Texas city, fans are treated to the largest ever Porsche factory campaign. 67 Porsche vehicles compete on the Circuit of the Americas this weekend including the support races.

Quotes:

"In the first practice session it was very hot and the systems worked as they should do. It was very important for us to gather this data." Alexander Hitzinger, Technical Director LMP1

"It is my first time here and it is a rather difficult circuit. It was a good feeling when I had done my first laps right at the beginning of the first session. There are very interesting corners here." **Romain Dumas, works driver**

"To me the track has a good rhythm and I also realised how good the graphics of our simulator are, quite impressively close to reality. The night session was a bit crazy, and it was all about getting the mandatory laps done without risking too much." **Neel Jani, works driver**

"The circuit is an interesting one. In the beginning of the first session I got stuck in traffic and had problems to find a clear lap. Especially in the "Esses", it is very difficult to overtake. However, the Porsche 919 Hybrid feels good here. There is room for improvement, but this is what practice is for." **Marc Lieb, works driver**

"COTA is a nice circuit and really fun to drive. In the first session we were able to check quite a lot of things and found ways to improve. From my point of view, we had a good start to the weekend, while, of course, there is still some work to do." **Timo Bernhard, works driver**

"We had a good start to the weekend with no problems on the car in the first session, which is very important to get all the work done in free practice. I think lap time wise it will be very tight here in Austin between the LMP1 cars, and I trust we are competitive." **Brendon Hartley, works driver**

"It really wasn't a bad start, despite the fact we don't know yet what it means for our performance in a six-hour race. I enjoyed the circuit in Formula One and I enjoyed it with the Porsche 919 Hybrid. The high ambient temperatures gave the cars and drivers an extra challenge. The night session was obviously tricky, but we kept the cars in one piece." **Mark Webber, works driver**

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