911 RSR: new driver pairings in Spa

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14/04/2015 The Porsche Manthey squad tackles the six-hour race on the Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps on 2 May with different driver combinations.

Porsche works drivers Frédéric Makowiecki (France) and Richard Lietz (Austria) join forces at the wheel of the 470 hp Porsche 911 RSR (#92) to contest round two of the World Endurance Championship (WEC) for sports cars. Porsche junior Sven Müller (Germany) and Kévin Estre (France) share driving duties in the second 911 RSR with the starting number 91. They celebrate their race debut on the demanding circuit in the Ardennes with the fastest ever nine-eleven.

The reshuffling of the driver lineup for Spa-Francorchamps was necessary because the Laguna Seca race of the Tudor United SportsCar Championship is run at the same time. Porsche works drivers Michael Christensen (Denmark) and Patrick Pilet (France) contest the round in USA for the Porsche North America team with the 911 RSR. Normally, the duo represents the Porsche Manthey squad in the WEC as teammates of Richard Lietz and Frédéric Makowiecki. In Laguna Seca they step in for their GT

factory driver colleagues Earl Bamber (New Zealand) and Nick Tandy (Great Britain), who share the cockpit of the third Porsche 919 Hybrid with Formula 1 pilot Nico Hülkenberg for the Porsche team in Spa and at the Le Mans 24-hour race.

“Two important races on two continents within one week is an exceptional situation to which we've had to find a flexible solution to the cockpit combinations. Fortunately, we have some well-trained race drivers in our brand trophy series on hand and we're convinced we can rely on them in such cases,” says Head of Porsche Motorsport, Dr Frank-Steffen Walliser.

Sven Müller und Kévin Estre will substitute the regular drivers at Spa

“Thanks to his solid performances, Sven Müller has earned the chance to pit himself in the 911 RSR against the world's best sports car pilots. His progress is not just another example of the success of our Porsche youth development concept. It also underlines the importance of the Porsche one-make cup series as a launching platform for young drivers. His example shows yet again: Porsche opens all doors to those who are really fast.”

“It's a dream come true for me,” says Sven Müller, last year's best rookie in the Porsche Carrera Cup Deutschland and winner of the Monza round of the Porsche Mobil 1 Supercup. “When I was given the chance to drive the 911 RSR for the first time in the pre-season tests in Le Castellet, I was already nervous. But that subsided pretty quickly. The Porsche Manthey team made me feel very welcome. My first laps at the wheel of the 911 RSR were a fantastic and important experience. Now I can't wait to race in Spa.”

Kévin Estre also gained his most important motorsport experiences in Porsche's brand trophy series. In 2011 he won the French Carrera Cup and was crowned rookie of the year in the Porsche Mobil 1 Supercup. In 2013 he added the Carrera Cup Deutschland title to his list of achievements. “The Porsche one-make cups paved my way to a professional racing career,” says the Frenchman who now lives in Germany. “For this reason I'm extremely pleased that the Porsche Manthey team have put their trust in me to drive a 911 RSR at the WEC round in Spa. My aim is to do a perfect job as a substitute for the regular drivers and to earn as many points as possible towards the championship for Porsche on this fantastic race track.”

American actor and race driver Patrick Dempsey joins forces

In addition to Sven Müller and Kévin Estre in the 911 RSR with the starting number 91, the works drivers Frédéric Makowiecki (France) and Richard Lietz (Austria) contest the GTE-Pro class in Spa for the Porsche Manthey squad. They share driving duties in the #92 Porsche 911 RSR. In the GTE-Am class, the American actor and race driver Patrick Dempsey joins forces with Porsche factory pilot Patrick Long (USA) and Marco Seefried (Austria) in the 911 RSR campaigned by the Dempsey Proton Racing customer team.

The Abu Dhabi Proton Racing customer team fields a 911 RSR with drivers Christian Ried (Germany), Khaled Al Qubaisi (Abu Dhabi) as well as the former Porsche junior Klaus Bachler (Austria). Only vehicles that are homologated to the previous year's GTE-Pro class are eligible to compete in this class.

The 911 RSR underwent modifications for the 2015 season

The Porsche 911 RSR is based on the seventh generation of the iconic 911 sports car. The insights gained during the vehicle's development and at race outings are directly incorporated into the design of future 911 generations. In its maiden 2013 season, the winning racer from Weissach, mounted with a 3995 cc flat-six engine in the rear and producing 345 kW (470 hp), clinched a phenomenal double victory at the Le Mans 24 Hours.

Last year it won three of America's most prestigious long distance classics: the Daytona 24 Hours, the 12 Hours of Sebring and Petit Le Mans. Victories at the WEC races in Silverstone and Shanghai also went to the 911 RSR. For the 2015 season, the 911 RSR underwent modifications over the winter months and is characterised by a consequent lightweight design and sophisticated aerodynamics. The revamped aerodynamics at the front and the adapted suspension kinematics ensure enhanced balance and improved control at its handling limits.

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