

Second win of season for 911 RSR and championship lead

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06/05/2018 Clinching the second win of the season at Mid-Ohio, Porsche grabbed the lead of the IMSA SportsCar Championship. In a nail-biting finale, Laurens Vanthoor and Earl Bamber snatched victory with the Porsche 911 RSR on Sunday at the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course and celebrated their first win in the USA as teammates at the most gripping race of the season by now.

After completing 118 laps on the tradition-steeped 3.634-kilometre racetrack in the Midwest, Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium) and Earl Bamber (New Zealand) held a 1.673-second advantage in the GTLM class. For the Porsche GT Team, this marked the second victory from four rounds so far this season of North America's premier sports car race series. In March, Patrick Pilet (France) and Nick Tandy (Great Britain) won the twelve-hour classic in Sebring with the 911 RSR. At Mid-Ohio, the pair saw the flag in sixth after spending a long period in the lead.

This was the first race of the IMSA SportsCar Championship in Mid-Ohio. That the #912 Porsche 911 RSR managed to win this debut event is thanks to the concentrated and goal-oriented work of the drivers and team from the very first practice session. The Porsche GT Team had to do without viable data for vehicle setup and tyre choice, because at tests in mid-April on the racetrack close to Lexington the weather turned crazy: snow on day one, on day two the snow melted, however the temperatures fluctuated around freezing point. On race day, the sun was shining with summery 23-degree-Celsius temperatures and the many fans enjoyed watching the action from the grassy areas around the track.

Vanthoor and Bamber clocked the fastest time in all three practice sessions

Despite this, the team pulled everything together in record time. Laurens Vanthoor and Earl Bamber clocked the fastest time in all three practice sessions. In qualifying, Nick Tandy planted the #911 Porsche 911 RSR on the first grid row of the GTLM class and got the best jump off the line: He seized the lead in the first lap, with Earl Bamber, who'd gained two positions at the start, in his slipstream. Flying in close formation, the leading duo lapped the challenging circuit, keeping their strong rivals at bay. After the first pit stop, Laurens Vanthoor took the lead. On his second set of tyres, Patrick Pilet could no longer maintain the pace set by the leading group, leaving Laurens Vanthoor at the front.

The final phase of the race was the most exciting of the season and was definitely not for the faint-hearted: with 20 minutes to the flag, Laurens Vanthoor was running 3.879 seconds ahead of the BMW, who had pitted a long time after his competitors and was therefore chasing down the frontrunner on fresh tyres. With 15 minutes left on the clock, Laurens Vanthoor's lead had shrunk to 3.587 seconds. Ten minutes to the finish and it was just 2.329 seconds, and five minutes later his advantage had diminished even further – to just 1.393 seconds. Under the enormous pressure, the Belgian kept his cool and brought the 911 RSR safely over the finish line in first.

#IMSA - Victory for @Porsche at #IMSAatMO: #911RSR No 912 @VanthoorLaurens @earlbamber P1. Great teamwork! pic.twitter.com/xobVmkoG4v

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