



## Porsche takes world championship lead with a one-two result

31/10/2021 Facing difficult conditions, the Porsche GT Team has achieved its third win of the season in the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC. Matt Campbell from Australia and New Zealander Jaxon Evans claimed second place in the GTE-Am class in their Dempsey-Proton Racing Porsche 911 RSR.

### Race

At the six-hour race in Bahrain, Frenchman Kévin Estre and Neel Jani from Switzerland in the No. 92 Porsche 911 RSR narrowly beat their works driver colleagues Gianmaria Bruni from Italy and Austrian Richard Lietz. Thanks to the one-two result in the Kingdom of Bahrain on the Persian Gulf, Porsche has moved into the lead of the manufacturers' championship before the final round of the season. In the GTE-Am class, the customer teams Dempsey-Proton Racing and Project 1 claimed podium steps with their nine-eleven cars.

"It was a difficult weekend because there was a lot of pressure – we definitely had to perform today,"

explains Alexander Stehlig, Head of Operations FIA WEC. "We needed to earn maximum points in order to stay in the fight for the championship heading to the final round. It worked. I'd like to thank all the mechanics, engineers and drivers – that was a perfect performance. From the outside, perhaps this double victory looked easy – it was anything but that. The tyres had to endure long stints in intense heat. It always hangs on the knife's edge. We balanced this beautifully. Now we go up against our rivals on an equal footing for the big finale next weekend. I'm really looking forward to it!"

In an air temperature of 35 degrees Celsius and with a considerably hotter track surface, round five of the season turned into the expected heated battle in the truest sense. Taking up the race from positions one and two on the grid, Kévin Estre and Gianmaria Bruni kept their cool and successfully fended off their competitors' attacks. The next challenge was to manage their Michelin tyres over long distances on the extremely demanding asphalt, which the experienced drivers did perfectly – thanks as well to the first-class work of their pit crews. The experiences from the three practice sessions helped to maintain the pace over the hour-long stints. The No. 92 car in the GTE-Pro class crossed the finish line a mere 0.690 seconds ahead of the identical sister car. With this result, Estre and Jani managed to slash the gap in the drivers' world championship to just one point as they head to the final round in Bahrain next weekend. Bruni and Lietz rank third. In the manufacturers' classification, Porsche has recaptured the lead.

In the GTE-Am class, the race on the Bahrain International Circuit was not only marked by tyre management but also by lap times of the amateur drivers. In the tight competition among 13 vehicles, Christian Ried and Egidio Perfetti gave a particularly impressive performance. The Dempsey-Proton team owner from Germany delivered strong stints at the wheel of the No. 77 racer, with his teammates **Matt Campbell from Australia and New Zealander Jaxon Evans** among the fastest in the field on the way to claiming second place in their class. Perfetti shared the cockpit of Project 1's No. 56 car with the Italians Matteo Cairoli and Riccardo Pera. In the decisive stint midway through the race, the Norwegian maintained a steady podium course with his customer RSR and laid the foundation for third place. The No. 88 technically identical 911 fielded by Dempsey-Proton Racing achieved position 13. GR Racing's entry took the flag in sixth place.

The FIA WEC finale takes off next Saturday, 6 November, again on the Bahrain International Circuit. The sixth and final round of the season will be contested over eight hours.

## Drivers' comments after the race

**Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 RSR #92):** "That was a very critical victory for us in the No. 92 car and an extremely important one-two result for Porsche. This gives us every chance to fight for the title at the finale. As a team, we gave a perfect performance. I'd like to thank our teammates in the sister car for not making life too difficult for us. That really helped. Now I'm looking forward to the decisive race. We definitely want to achieve a similar top result again."

**Neel Jani (Porsche 911 RSR #92):** "A one-two success for the Porsche 911 RSR – it couldn't be better."

We drove with our sister car in formation for the entire race. Right at the end, they stopped their attack. Many thanks to our colleagues! First place today is hugely important for us to be in the best position in the drivers' world championship for the final round. We're now just one point behind the leaders. Next weekend we'll do everything to scoop the title pool at the season finale."

**Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 911 RSR #91):** "Mission accomplished. We wanted positions one and two – and we did it. It couldn't be better for Porsche. I'm very grateful to be part of this big Porsche family. We've taken another step towards the possible title win. Hopefully, we'll take a much bigger step next Saturday."

**Richard Lietz (Porsche 911 RSR #91):** "It was crucial to preserve the tyres over the distance. Bahrain is extremely demanding so you have to take care. If you overexploit the peak grip at the start on fresh tyres, you pay the price at the end of the stint. That's why our focus was always on not putting too much energy into the tyres. This worked well. We also decided not to fight against our team colleagues because that would have cost us a lot of time. From my point of view, this was a perfect race for Porsche."

## Race result

### GTE-Pro class

1. Estre/Jani (F/CH), Porsche GT Team, Porsche 911 RSR #92, 174 laps
2. Lietz/Bruni (A/I), Porsche GT Team, Porsche 911 RSR #91, 174 laps
3. Calado/Pier Guidi (GB/I), AF Corse, Ferrari 488 GTE #51, 174 laps
4. Serra/Molina (BR/E), AF Corse, Ferrari 488 GTE #52, 174 laps

### GTE-Am class

1. Keating/Pereira/Fraga (USA/L/BR), Aston Martin Vantage GTE #33, 172 laps
2. Ried/**Campbell/Evans**(D/**AUS/NZ**), Dempsey-Proton Racing, Porsche 911 RSR #77, 172 laps
3. Perfetti/Cairolì/Pera (N/I/I), Team Project 1, Porsche 911 RSR #56, 172 laps
- Wainwright/Barker/Gamble (GB/GB/GB), GR Racing, Porsche 911 RSR #86, 171 laps
6. Wainwright/Barker/Gamble (GB/GB/GB), GR Racing, Porsche 911 RSR #86, 171 laps
13. Andlauer/de Leener/Al Qubaisi (F/B/UAE), Dempsey-Proton Racing, Porsche 911 RSR #88, 166 laps

## Qualifying

Works driver Kévin Estre has planted the No. 92 Porsche 911 RSR on pole position in qualifying for the six-hour race in Bahrain. In the close hunt for top times, the Frenchman only just outpaced his Italian brand colleague Gianmaria Bruni in the identical nine-eleven with the starting number 91. For Kévin Estre and Neel Jani, who currently rank second in the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC, this is the fourth pole position from the fifth and penultimate race of the season. In the GTE-Am class, the

best 911 RSR takes up the race from third place.

“The result looks good. Considering the narrow gap, it’s clear that both drivers turned strong laps,” said Alexander Stehlig, Head of Operations FIA WEC. “We did a good job in the free practice sessions. In hot conditions, we managed to get the tyres within the operating window – over long distances and a flying lap. First and second are ideal starting positions. We have to try everything in the race to hold on to these positions until the flag. That would improve our ranking in the championship considerably.” Thanks to their pole position, Estre/Jani have slashed the gap in the drivers’ standings to eleven points. In the manufacturers’ classification, 15 points separate Porsche from the lead.

Conditions were tricky in the ten-minute qualifying on Friday evening on the Bahrain International Circuit. Due to the very abrasive asphalt and high temperatures of over 30-degrees Celsius in the desert, the Michelin tyres on all GTE-Pro cars only allowed optimal grip for a single flying lap. About 90 seconds after the session started, Estre was the first GTE-Pro driver to head out onto the 5.412-kilometre racetrack. His works driver teammate Bruni followed shortly after. Flying in formation, the two seasoned specialists promptly clocked top times in the Porsche 911 RSR, which the competition was unable to undercut. In a time of 1:56.144 minutes, Estre beat Bruni in the sister car by a mere 0.034 seconds.

## The qualifying in the GTE-Am class

In the GTE-Am class, the Project 1 squad scored a commendable grid spot with third place for the race in Sakhir. Setting a lap time of 1:59.404 minutes, the Norwegian Egidio Perfetti missed out on a front-row spot by less than a tenth of a second. The two Porsche 911 RSR fielded by Dempsey-Proton Racing tackle the six-hour race from positions seven and nine. GR Racing’s technically identical car takes up race five of the season from P12.

The six-hour race of the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC on the Bahrain International Circuit gets underway on Saturday 30 October at 11:00 am local time (10:00 am CEST). For a fee, the official FIA WEC app offers live streaming and live timing.

## Drivers’ comments after the qualifying

**Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 RSR #92):** “My lap might not have been perfect but it was enough for pole position – and I’m very happy about that. It was very tight between us and our sister car. This shows that Porsche is very good here, especially in qualifying. The manufacturers’ world championship is very important for us, so the No. 91 car also plays a major role. And it stands between us and the ‘reds’. I hope we also manage to maintain the upper hand in the race.”

**Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 911 RSR #91):** “The qualifying result is really good: Our lap times were almost the same. Our Porsche 911 RSR felt fantastic on the flying lap, which was a result of our perfect

preparation. I'm feeling very confident about the race. We have a strong car and we can definitely fight at the front."

**Egidio Perfetti (Porsche 911 RSR #56):** "Third isn't as good as first of course, but I'm happy we managed to beat most of the Ferraris and Aston Martins. We face two races in ten days. It's good that we are at the front. We were strong here in Bahrain last year and we won our class. I hope we'll make it back to the podium tomorrow, preferably on the top step."

## Qualifying result

### GTE-Pro class

1. Estre/Jani (F/CH), Porsche GT Team, Porsche 911 RSR #92, 1:56.144 minutes
2. Lietz/Bruni (A/I), Porsche GT Team, Porsche 911 RSR #91, 1:56.178 minutes
3. Serra/Molina (BR/E), AF Corse, Ferrari 488 GTE #52, 1:57.327 minutes
4. Calado/Pier Guidi (GB/I), AF Corse, Ferrari 488 GTE #51, 1:57.573 minutes

### GTE-Am class

1. Mastronardi/Piccini/Cressoni (I/I/I), Ferrari 488 GTE #60, 1:58.687 minutes
2. Dalla Lana/Farfus/Gomez (CDN/BR/BR), Aston Martin Vantage GTE #98, 1:59.331 minutes
3. Perfetti/Cairolì/Pera (N/I/I), Team Project 1, Porsche 911 RSR #56, 1:59.404 minutes
7. Andlauer/de Leener/Al Qubaisi (F/B/UAE), Dempsey-Proton Racing, Porsche 911 RSR #88, 1:59.923 minutes
9. Ried/**Campbell/Evans**(D/**AUS/NZ**), Dempsey-Proton Racing, Porsche 911 RSR #77, 2:00.294 minutes
12. Wainwright/Barker/Gamble (GB/GB/GB), GR Racing, Porsche 911 RSR #86, 2:00.939 minutes

Full results and points' standings: [fiawec.alkamelsystems.com](http://fiawec.alkamelsystems.com)

## Preview

At the last two rounds of the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) season, the Porsche GT Team has its sights firmly set on winning the world championship title. The 2021 season wraps up with back-to-back races in Bahrain over the next two weekends. This is the first doubleheader event in the history of the World Endurance Championship. Round five on 30 October runs over six hours, with the Bahrain International Circuit hosting an eight-hour race a week later. Porsche contests the notoriously cutthroat GTE-Pro class with two 911 RSR. In the GTE-Am class, three customer teams field five identical nine-eleven racers.

"We're tackling the last two races of the season in Bahrain with very clear goals: We want to win the manufacturers' championship and we're also aiming to take home the drivers' trophy with our number 92 crew," explains Pascal Zurlinden, Director Factory Motorsport. "Last year we clinched a double

victory on this desert racetrack. We're eager to repeat this feat. If we can do this at the final two races of the year, the championship will be ours. Our Porsche 911 RSR is well suited to the special characteristics of this racetrack – and that makes me hopeful.”

“We're very much looking forward to the two races in Bahrain. Our double victory there last year bodes well for a strong performance at the first-ever doubleheader event for the WEC,” says Alexander Stehlig, Head of Operations FIA WEC, outlining his expectations. “The six-hour race will be held in daylight. We have to be prepared for the heat. Plus, managing the tyres over a full stint will be decisive. The final eight-hour race will finish in the dark. The challenge here will be a little different because we're anticipating cooler asphalt temperatures and we need to respond accordingly. It's sure to be exciting and spectacular for fans, drivers and teams. When the doubleheader is over, we'd like to celebrate our world championship title win.”

## Post-season rookie test

Following the final two races, the WEC has organised a post-season rookie test at the Bahrain International Circuit on 7 November. The Bahrain International Circuit has hosted the Formula 1 Grand Prix regularly since 2004. The FIA WEC was first contested on the 5.412-kilometre circuit close to the capital Manama in its 2012 inaugural season. The only time the endurance race was not held in Sakhir was in the 2018/2019 season. High daytime temperatures, falling temperatures at dusk and fine sand at times covering the asphalt make the race a huge challenge for teams, engineers and drivers.

Tyre wear is a major consideration on the Grand Prix circuit with its 15 turns. A consistent pace over a full stint is regarded as the key to success. At the first of two races in Bahrain, points will be awarded following the conventional FIA formula (25-18-15-12-10-8-6-4-2-1). For the second race, the points are multiplied by a factor of 1.5 and rounded up (38-27-23-18-15-12-9-6-3-2). Moreover, achieving pole position yields an extra point towards the world championship.

## The Porsche GT Team drivers

Sharing driving duties in the No. 91 Porsche 911 RSR at the six-hour race in Bahrain are the regular WEC drivers Gianmaria Bruni from Italy and Richard Lietz from Austria. Works driver Frédéric Makowiecki supports the duo at the final eight-hour round. The Frenchman has already joined forces with the pair in Portimão and Le Mans. The No. 92 sister car is manned by Frenchman Kévin Estre and Neel Jani from Switzerland. They are joined in the cockpit for the last race of the season on 6 November by Michael Christensen from Denmark. The regular crew of the No. 92 car currently ranks second in the drivers' championship with their brand colleagues in the No. 91 vehicle in third place. In the manufacturer's classification, Porsche ranks second.

## The customer teams

The experienced German customer teams Project 1 and Dempsey-Proton Racing each field two Porsche 911 RSR at the two WEC races in Bahrain. The British squad GR Racing fields another vehicle. One of the crew in Dempsey-Proton Racing's No. 77 entry is the **works driver Matt Campbell from Australia**.

## An overview of teams and drivers (in italics: only round six)

### GTE-Pro class

Porsche GT Team #91 – R. Lietz (A) / G. Bruni (I) / *F. Makowiecki (F)*

Porsche GT Team #92 – K. Estre (F) / N. Jani (CH) / *M. Christensen (DK)*

### GTE-Am class

Team Project 1 #46 – D. Olsen (N) / TBA / TBA

Team Project 1 #56 – E. Perfetti (N) / M. Cairoli (I) / R. Pera (I)

Dempsey-Proton Racing #77 – C. Ried (D) / **M. Campbell (AUS)** / **J. Evans (NZ)**

GR Racing #86 – M. Wainwright (GB) / B. Barker (GB) / T. Gamble (GB)

Dempsey-Proton Racing #88 – K. Al Qubaisi (UAE) / A. de Leener (B) / J. Andlauer (F) / *A. Jefferies (GB)*

## Drivers' comments before the race

**Richard Lietz (Porsche 911 RSR #91):** "Two races will be held at the same venue, but the characteristics are very different. The different starting times and distances require specially adapted strategies. It'll definitely be interesting. In terms of the championship, we don't have much to lose with our number 91 car so we'll go all-out. Hopefully, we'll finally have racing luck on our side again."

**Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 911 RSR #91):** "The back-to-back races in Bahrain this year will make things very interesting. The first race is contested in daylight. The sun beats down mercilessly on the asphalt and we're expecting a real scorcher of a race. The second event goes into the night, so with our engineers, we have to predict as precisely as possible how the track will change as the temperatures drop. We're have big goals and we'll do everything in our power to make sure that Porsche wins the manufacturers' title. Fred will provide reinforcement for the final eight-hour race. I'm really looking forward to that."

**Frédéric Makowiecki (Porsche 911 RSR #91):** "I think it's fantastic that I'll climb into the No. 91 cockpit again for the eight-hour race. We want to bring home maximum points and help Porsche win the manufacturers' title. If we can also support our brand colleagues in the sister car to clinch the drivers' trophy, then that would be even better. The race is going to be tough. We always face

sweltering temperatures in Bahrain and the racetrack is demanding on the brakes and tyres. Still, I'm optimistic – also because I won there in 2015.”

**Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 RSR #92):** “It's a shame that we had to relinquish the lead in the drivers' championship at the previous race in Le Mans. At the same time, this also gives us huge motivation. We still have an iron in the fire: If we win both races, the title is ours. That's our big goal. We've always been strong in Bahrain with the Porsche 911 RSR. So that gives us a lot of confidence heading into these two races. Plus, I'm pleased that Michael will be sharing driving duties in our car again for the final race.”

**Neel Jani (Porsche 911 RSR #92):** “I really like the track and the setting in Bahrain. I've enjoyed some great successes there during my time racing the Porsche 919 Hybrid. I'm keen to build on that this year with the 911 RSR. We'll do everything possible to clinch the big trophy. It's a two-way battle between our car and the No. 51 Ferrari. Let's see how the competition goes in both races. It's entirely possible that the first race is used as strategic preparation for the second race, where you can earn a lot more points. We'll just have to wait and see.

**Michael Christensen (Porsche 911 RSR #92):** “It's great fun driving the Porsche 911 RSR. So that makes me all the more excited about my return to the WEC team. I hope that in the first of the two Bahrain races, the squad can lay the foundations for a gripping battle for the crown. The 911 RSR set the benchmark in the GTE Pro class last year. We scored a double victory there – and we want to achieve nothing less this year. This could hand Porsche and my colleagues Kévin and Neel the world championship title. That's precisely my big goal.”

## The schedule (all times CEST/CET)

### Thursday, 28 October

2:30 – 4:00 pm: Free practice 1

### Friday, 29 October

7:00 – 8:30 am: Free practice 2

11:30 am – 12:30 pm: Free practice 3

3:30 – 3:40 pm: Qualifying GTE

### Saturday, 30 October

10:00 am – 4:00 pm: Race 5

### Thursday, 4 November

2:30 – 4:00 pm: Free practice 1

### Friday, 5 November

6:00 – 7:30 am: Free practice 2

10:20 – 11:20 am: Free practice 3

2:20 – 2:30 pm: Qualifying GTE

## Saturday, 6 November

11:00 am – 7:00 pm: Race 6

### Video

[https://newstv.porsche.com/porschevideos/195695\\_en\\_3000000.mp4](https://newstv.porsche.com/porschevideos/195695_en_3000000.mp4)

[https://newstv.porsche.com/porschevideos/195627\\_en\\_3000000.mp4](https://newstv.porsche.com/porschevideos/195627_en_3000000.mp4)

### Image Sublines

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Title: Pascal Zurlinden, Director Factory Motorsport, 2021, Porsche AG

Subline: Pascal Zurlinden, Director Factory Motorsport

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Title: 911 RSR, 2021, Porsche AG

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