Perfect debut: One-two for the new Porsche 911 RSR at Silverstone

01/09/2019 The new 911 RSR (2019 model year) has secured a double victory at its race debut. At the season-opening round of the FIA World Endurance Championship at Silverstone (Great Britain), Gianmaria Bruni and Richard Lietz crossed the finish line first in the No. 91 car. The reigning world champions Michael Christensen and Kévin Estre claimed second place in the No. 92 sister car.

The race

A perfect tactic from the world champion team, strong driving performances, swift pit stops, and a reliable and fast car in both dry and the wet conditions were the key factors for this double win.

After a mediocre qualifying performance, the two Porsche 911 RSR run by the factory squad took up the four-hour race from positions four and six on the grid. In sunny conditions in the early phase, the two new GTE racers from Weissach initially made up very little ground. A heavy shower after around 90 minutes of racing changed the situation significantly. In contrast to the rivals, the Porsche GT Team opted for rain tyres – an ideal choice. The drivers made perfect use of the improved tyre grip on the wet track and managed to pull well clear of the field in the new 911 RSR, which is based on the high-performance 911 GT3 RS*. This impressive margin, however, disappeared when the safety car was deployed after two hours of racing. In the remaining 120 minutes, the drivers staved off attacks from the competition on a drying track and crossed the finish line in first and second place, separated by 3.802 seconds.

In the GTE-Am class, the best-placed Porsche 911 RSR (last year's model) achieved fourth place. Right up until the final pit stop, the all-British driver line-up of Michael Wainwright, Ben Barker and Andrew Watson were on course for a podium result in the No. 86 vehicle fielded by Gulf Racing. Fifth place went to the No. 77 car run by Dempsey-Proton Racing with Porsche Young Professional Matt Campbell (Australia), Christian Ried (Germany) and Riccardo Pera (Italy). The sister car with the starting number 88, in which Porsche Young Professional Thomas Preining (Austria) had his first outing, finished on eleventh. The two Porsche 911 RSR campaigned by Project 1 yielded positions six (No. 56) and ten (No. 57).

After the double victory at the opening round of the 2019/2020 season, Porsche leads all categories of the GTE-Pro class. Next up on the calendar is the race in Fuji (Japan) on 6 October.

Comments on the race

Fritz Enzinger (Vice President Motorsport): "At its race premiere, the new Porsche 911 RSR clearly

exceeded our expectations. Congratulations to the drivers and the team for a perfect performance at Silverstone. This great success was only possible because the entire Porsche Motorsport team did such excellent work. Many thanks to everyone who contributed to this project and made the new car into a winner."

Pascal Zurlinden (Director Factory Motorsport): "What a fantastic weekend. Our customer team Proton Racing won the ELMS on Saturday, and a day later we achieve a one-two with the new Porsche 911 RSR in the world championship – it doesn't get better than that. A huge thank you to our team at the racetrack and to everyone at the Weissach Motorsport Centre. The hard work of the last few months has paid off."

Jeromy Moore (Technical Project Manager Porsche 911 RSR): "A double victory at the first race – the debut of a racing car can't get better than that. I think our new Porsche 911 RSR has clearly underlined its qualities right off the bat. I thoroughly enjoyed the race, especially the final result. I'm sure that all the development engineers in my team who followed the race from Germany felt the same way."

Alexander Stehlig (Head of Operations FIA WEC): "It's incredible. We travelled to Silverstone with the goal of achieving a solid result at the maiden race of the new Porsche 911 RSR. And we picked up exactly where we left off last season. Perfect teamwork, strong performances in the cockpit and a fast racing car – these factors enabled us to bring home this double victory. A dream has come true for us."

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "Our team opted for the ideal tactic. I was in first place after our pit stop and had a clear run. This enabled me to build a decisive lead, which we maintained to the flag. A debut of a new racing car can't be better. I'm proud to be part of this incredible team."

Richard Lietz (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "We spent a year developing the new car and couldn't wait for the first race outing. To promptly win the race is perfect. We made this achievement possible through perfect tactics. There is still a lot to learn with our new Porsche 911 RSR. At the next round we want to perform even stronger in the qualifying."

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "It was a great race with many duels and plenty of action on the track. That was great fun. It's a pity for us that we narrowly missed out on winning, but for Porsche it was a perfect start to the new season."

Michael Christensen (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "Our car was fast over the entire race. Unfortunately it wasn't quite enough to win. Perhaps we lost crucial time at the last pit stop. We'll now have to take a close look at that."

Race result

GTE-Pro class

1. Lietz/Bruni (A/I), Porsche 911 RSR, 115 laps

2. Christensen/Estre (DK/F), Porsche 911 RSR, + 3.802 seconds
3. Lynn/Martin (GB/B), Aston Martin Vantage, + 6.286 seconds
4. Calado/Pier Guidi (GB/I), Ferrari 488 GTE, + 16.054 seconds
5. Thiim/Sörensen (DK/DK), Aston Martin Vantage, 114 laps

GTE-Am class
1. Perrodo/Collard/Nielsen (F/F/DK), Ferrari 488 GTE, 114 laps
2. Dalla Lana/Turner/Gunn (CDN/GB/GB), Aston Martin Vantage, 113 laps
3. Ishikawa/Beretta/Cozzolino (J/I/J), Ferrari 488 GTE, 113 laps
4. Wainwright/Barker/Watson (GB/GB/GB), Porsche 911 RSR, 113 laps
5. Campbell/Ried/Pera (AUS/D/I), Porsche 911 RSR, 113 laps
6. Perfetti/Kolkmann/Cairoli (N/D/I), Porsche 911 RSR, 113 laps
10. Keating/Frage/Bleekemolen (USA/BR/NL), Porsche 911 RSR, 112 laps
11. Preining/Giraudi/Sanchez (A/I/MEX), Porsche 911 RSR, 111 laps

The qualifying

The new Porsche 911 RSR will start its racing debut from the second grid row. In qualifying for the season-opening round of the FIA World Endurance Championship at Silverstone, the Italian Gianmaria Bruni and his Austrian works driver teammate Richard Lietz planted the No. 91 car on fourth place. The reigning world champions Kévin Estre from France and Michael Christensen from Denmark claimed the sixth grid spot in the sister car with the starting number 92.

Between the third free practice in the morning and the qualifying session at midday, the track conditions at the British Formula 1 circuit had changed significantly. The two new Porsche 911 RSR, which had performed impressively in the first session of the day, were not ideally setup for the different conditions. Bruni spun early in his second flying lap. A subsequent tyre defect damaged the front of the No. 91 vehicle. The mechanics repaired the vehicle in record time so that teammate Lietz could clock a good lap time to secure fourth place. Christensen and Estre veered from the ideal line several times during their hot laps due to a less than optimal vehicle balance. Under these circumstances, more than sixth place on the grid was not possible.

In the GTE-Am class, Porsche Young Professional Matteo Cairoli (Italy) and Egidio Perfetti (Norway) turned the second quickest time in the Porsche 911 RSR from last year. The pair share the cockpit of the No. 56 car fielded by the Project 1 squad for the four-hour race on Sunday (start at 1pm CEST) with Germany's David Kolkmann.

Qualifying quotes

Pascal Zurlinden (Director Factory Motorsport): "The qualifying didn't go quite as we'd anticipated. The cars weren't as well balanced as they had been in the previous practices, which resulted in our drivers

making several mistakes. A lot is possible from positions four and six. We're heading into the race feeling optimistic, because our new car has clearly underlined its qualities during practice with excellent consistency and fast lap times. Apart from the qualifying, our debut weekend has gone very well so far. I hope this continues in the race."

Alexander Stehlig (Head of Operations FIA WEC): "Our drivers were extremely pleased with the vehicle handling in the practice sessions. Unfortunately, it wasn't quite right in the qualifying. The balance and the tyre pressure were not within the perfect window. That's why we're not on the starting positions we'd aimed for. We'll now analyse the data closely and draw our conclusions for Sunday. We'll go all-out in the race and underline the strengths of our new car."

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "After my first fast lap I wanted to really go for it on the second lap. Then, as if out of nowhere, I spun in the second corner – in a spot where we hardly steer and never had problems. The spin caused a tyre problem, which then damaged part of the front. Our crew did a first-class job in repairing it quickly. Richard managed to turn a good lap and kept us on fourth place."

Richard Lietz (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "We experienced a lot in the short qualifying: spin, tyre defect, damage to the front. That was really intense. I was able to turn my laps normally after the repairs. Ultimately, fourth place was possible – a position that is absolutely fine for the first outing of the new Porsche 911 RSR."

Qualifying result

GTE-Pro class

1. Calado/Pier Guidi (GB/I), Ferrari 488 GTE, 1:54.171 minutes
2. Rigon/Molina (I/E), Ferrari 488 GTE, + 0.131 seconds
3. Lynn/Martin (GB/B), Aston Martin Vantage, + 0.821 seconds
4. Lietz/Bruni (A/I), Porsche 911 RSR, + 0.896 seconds
6. Christensen/Estre (DK/F), Porsche 911 RSR, + 1.322 seconds

GTE-Am class

1. Yoluc/Eastwood/Adam (TR/IRL/GB), Aston Martin Vantage, 1:56.034 minutes
2. Perfetti/Kolkmann/Cairoli (N/D/I), Porsche 911 RSR, + 0.337 seconds
3. Dalla Lana/Turner/Gunn (CDN/GB/GB), Aston Martin Vantage, + 0.435 seconds
6. Campbell/Ried/Pera (AUS/D/I), Porsche 911 RSR, + 1.317 seconds
7. Preining/Giraudi/Sanchez (A/I/MEX), Porsche 911 RSR, + 1.473 seconds
9. Wainwright/Barker/Watson (GB/GB/GB), Porsche 911 RSR, + 2.165 seconds

The new Porsche 911 RSR celebrates its race debut at the season-opening round of the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC). The first race of the 2019/2020 season will be held on the weekend of 30 August to 1 September at the Formula 1 racetrack at Silverstone (Great Britain). The Porsche GT

Team, which tackles the FIA WEC as the reigning manufacturers' world champion, fields two sports cars from Weissach in the race over four hours. In the GTE-Am category, the customer teams Project 1, Gulf Racing and Dempsey Proton Racing campaign a total of five of last year's Porsche 911 RSR models.

The race

For the first time, the FIA WEC season kicks off in summer. The first round at Silverstone offers another speciality: The Sports Car World Endurance Championship deviates from its standard format of the past with six-hour races. The duration of the race in Great Britain will now be four hours. The storied circuit in the British Midlands, with its legendary passages such as Copse, Stowe and Becketts, poses big challenges for drivers, engineers and teams. Moreover, rain can always be expected in the British Isles, even in late summer. In the past two seasons, the Porsche GT Team has achieved a podium result at Silverstone in the fiercely contested GTE-Pro class.

The Porsche GT Team drivers

Austria's Richard Lietz and Gianmaria Bruni from Italy tackle the race in the No. 91 Porsche 911 RSR. The second Porsche 911 RSR (No. 92) is shared by the drivers' world champions Kévin Estre (France) and Michael Christensen (Denmark). After winning all world titles in the 2018/2019 Super Season, the driver combinations in the two factory cars remains unchanged for the upcoming season.

The customer teams

The previous year's model with the starting number 56 fielded by the customer team Project 1 is shared by Porsche Young Professional Matteo Cairoli (Italy), the reigning GTE-Am champion and Le Mans class winner Egidio Perfetti from Norway as well as David Heinemeier Hansson (Denmark). Sharing driving duties in the No. 57 sister car is the American Ben Keating, Felipe Fraga (Brazil) and the former Porsche Mobil 1 Supercup champion Jeroen Bleekemolen from the Netherlands.

The all-British driver line-up of Ben Barker, Andrew Watson and Michael Wainwright will drive the ca. 510 hp No. 86 racer run by the customer team Gulf Racing. Manning the two vehicles fielded by the German squad Dempsey-Proton Racing (#77 and #88) are the two Porsche Young Professionals Matt Campbell (Australia) and Thomas Preining (Austria) as well as team owner Christian Ried (Germany) and the Italian Riccardo Pera. With five Porsche 911 RSR, the sports car manufacturer from Stuttgart is represented by the largest contingent in the GTE-Am category.

The Porsche 911 RSR

The new Porsche 911 RSR (2019 model year) contests its maiden race at the season-opening round of the FIA WEC in Silverstone. The vehicle from Weissach, which produces around 515 hp depending on the air restrictor, was launched on the occasion of the Goodwood Festival of Speed (Great Britain) in July 2019. Compared to its extremely successful predecessor model, the car for the GTE-Pro class of the FIA WEC received improvements to areas such as driveability, efficiency, ergonomics and serviceability. About 95 percent of the car is new. The 911 RSR is powered by a 4.2-litre, six-cylinder boxer engine.

The schedule

The four-hour FIA WEC race at Silverstone gets underway on Sunday, 1 September at midday local time (1pm CEST).

The race on TV and the Internet

A live broadcast of the season-opening round of the FIA WEC will be shown on www.sport1.de. The free-to-air station Sport 1 will broadcast comprehensive highlights of the Silverstone race in the Porsche GT Magazine on 1 September from 10.45pm. Eurosport televises the final phase live from 3.50pm. The pay-TV channel Motorsport.TV televises the first race of the season in full length. For a fee, the FIA WEC app offers live streaming and live timing.

Comments before the race

Fritz Enzinger (Vice President Motorsport): "During extensive tests as well as the prologue of the FIA WEC in Barcelona, the new Porsche 911 RSR ran without problems. We're turning up as the world champions with a clear goal: to defend the title. The car is brand new and progress has been achieved in many areas compared to the successful predecessor. With the team and the driver crews in the two sports cars, we're sticking with our trusty specialists. And although the tension is high amongst everyone involved in the first race of a new car – all the signs look excellent to yield more successes."

Pascal Zurlinden (Director GT Factory Motorsport): "There are a few innovations for the new FIA WEC season. The series starts in summer with the Silverstone event, the race distances have changed and our rivals in the GTE-Pro category have a season of experience with their vehicles under their belt. We're at the very beginning with our new car, but we've managed to prepare perfectly for the new challenges. The team, drivers and the new Porsche 911 RSR are ready for the start. We're eager to build on the world-class performances of last season with more successes."

Alexander Stehlig (Programme Manager FIA WEC): "The last 18 months have been very intense. Parallel to our world championship season, we conducted comprehensive tests with the new Porsche 911 RSR. For this reason, we're all looking forward to finally tackling the first race with our new car. Despite all the changes, there are two important constants: our two driver pairings and the team behind the mission. So we're very confident we're following in the great footsteps of our old RSR and in doing well at the Silverstone race."

Richard Lietz (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "Starting the new season in summer takes a bit of getting used to. This is a consequence of the FIA WEC's so-called 'winter calendar'. I'm pleased that, after a period of intensive testing, the time has finally come to go racing with our new Porsche 911 RSR. The competitive environment has changed for the upcoming season, but the class remains extremely competitive with excellent cars and fast, seasoned drivers. Our vehicle is new and we still have a lot to learn, but I'm hoping for a top result at the first race of the season."

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "At the unveiling of the new Porsche 911 RSR I got goose bumps when I had the chance to drive up the hill at Goodwood in front of avid fans. Now we'll take our new baby for its first race. I'm curious and excited to tackle my second FIA WEC season for Porsche. I have ambitious goals for me and my teammate Richard Lietz. We aim to be at the very front this season."

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "To be able to take on the new season as world champion is a very special feeling, of course. The anticipation is huge. We're facing a major challenge because we're competing with a brand new vehicle. Everything ran perfectly with the tests, and the results at the prologue looked good, too. Still, we have to wait and see where we actually stand compared to the competition. Silverstone always attracts a lot of spectators. This and the fact that it's a terrific track make the race a lot of fun."

Michael Christensen (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "Of course, as last year's champions our goals are high. We want to win and claim more titles. The new Porsche 911 RSR impressed us during the tests. Now we're all very curious to see how the vehicle performs in direct comparison to the competition. The fact that our team is strong is totally beyond question after winning the world championship. We have all the ingredients for further successes."

Matteo Cairoli (Porsche 911 RSR #56): "I'm taking on the 2019/2020 season for a new team, but I'm already familiar with the squad. In 2015 I contested the Porsche one-make cups with Project 1. Winning the title in its WEC debut season underlines how strong the team is in endurance racing. I'm heading to Silverstone feeling motivated and full of energy. I'm looking forward to working with Egidio and David. We are keen to continue the successes of last season."

Matt Campbell (Porsche 911 RSR #77): "I'm delighted to head into my second FIA WEC season again with Dempsey-Proton Racing. We're a well-oiled team. We demonstrated this clearly with top results last season. Unfortunately it wasn't quite enough to bring home the title, but we aim to change that this season. We have every opportunity to win the championship in the GTE-Am class and we want to lay

the foundation for this with a victory at Silverstone."

Thomas Preining (Porsche 911 RSR #88): "That fact that the new season begins a good two months after the big season finale at Le Mans feels a little strange. There was no real break. For me as a driver that's good, because I'd be happy to drive the Porsche 911 RSR every day. I'm curious about my new team. I like the Silverstone Circuit. It has fast passages and there are always fantastic duels. If you want to be successful there, you have to manage your tyres perfectly. That's what we'll focus on."

The Sports Car World Endurance Championship WEC

In the Sports Car World Endurance Championship (WEC), which was first contested in 2012, sports prototypes and GT vehicles compete in four classes: LMP1, LMP2, GTE-Pro and GTE-Am. They all compete together in one race but are classified separately. The Porsche factory squad contests the GTE-Pro class as the reigning world manufacturers' champions, while the customer teams Dempsey Proton Racing, Project 1 and Gulf Racing fight for honours in the GTE-Am class.

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