

Victory and podium in Sebring

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22/03/2015 The Porsche 911 RSR has occupied third place in the GTLM class at the 12 hour race in Sebring. In the GT class, victory went to the Porsche 911 GT America.

At the wheel of the Porsche 911 RSR, Porsche works drivers Wolf Henzler (Germany) and Patrick Long (USA) together with Bryan Sellers (USA) occupied third place in the GTLM class at the 12 hour race in Sebring. For the Falken Tire customer squad, this marked the first race with the 911 RSR at the long distance classic in Florida. Victory in the GTD class went to the Porsche 911 GT America fielded by Seattle/Alex Job Racing with drivers Mario Farnbacher (Germany), Ian James (USA) and the former Porsche Junior Alex Riberas (Spain).

Despite their strong performance with the 911 RSR, the Porsche North America works team went home empty-handed. Right up until the last hour they held onto the lead, but were unable to repeat last year's victory at the oldest long distance race in the United States.

Excellent starting position

Two Porsche 911 RSR racers locked out the first grid row in qualifying – a better starting position for the defending champions of the Tudor United SportsCar Championship would not have been possible. Heading into the race from pole position, the #912 Porsche 911 RSR helmed by Frédéric Makowiecki (France), Jörg Bergmeister (Germany) and Earl Bamber (New Zealand) took the lead. Over the course of the race on the 5.954 kilometre Sebring International Raceway, the second Porsche North America-run 911 RSR also settled in at the front of the field. After a difficult qualifying session, the 911 campaigned by Falken Tire took longer to pick up pace – but after four hours, Wolf Henzler and his teammates were excited to hold the lead for the first time at the 63rd running of the endurance classic.

On the legendary airfield circuit in the heart of Florida, notorious for its bumpy surface, both 911 RSR turned by far the most laps in the lead. Regardless of the conditions, they maintained a consistent pace: during the day the thermometer climbed to 35 degrees Celsius, after dark the temperatures dropped noticeably. In the midday heat, the track surface temperature hit a record 50 degrees Celsius. Thanks to top performances from all drivers as well as perfect pit stops, everything ran according to plan. Every time the interim results were displayed hourly by the stewards of the meeting, the 911 RSR held the lead of the GTLM class – up until the last hour.

Then things began to unravel: The leading Porsche 911 RSR with the starting number 911 ran into gearshifting difficulties. Beforehand, the second-placed #912 sister car had been held up in the pits with the crew unable to get the left rear wheel off. In the end, Nick Tandy, Patrick Pilet and Richard Lietz were flagged off in fifth place, with their teammates Earl Bamber, Jörg Bergmeister and Frédéric Makowiecki in seventh.

Impressive performance

In the fiercely-competitive GTD class, the Porsche 911 GT America fielded by Seattle/Alex Job Racing put in an impressive performance. With former Porsche Junior Alex Riberas and his teammates Mario Farnbacher and Ian James sharing the cockpit, the American squad scored their first win of the season in the Tudor United SportsCar Championship. Although the trio had at times dropped down the field, they refused to give up and fought their way back to the front to bring home victory in the last lap.

The Series

The Tudor United SportsCar Championship is a new sports car race series contested in the USA and Canada which was run in 2014 for the first time. The series was formed from the merger of the American Le Mans Series and the Grand-Am Series. Sports prototypes and sports cars start in four different classes: GTLM (GT Le Mans), GTD (GT Daytona), P (Prototype) and PC (Prototype Challenge). The Porsche 911 RSR runs in the GTLM class, with the Porsche 911 GT America contesting the GTD

class. Round 3 of the Tudor United SportsCar Championship will take place on April 18 in Long Beach, California.

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