Porsche claims manufacturers' and drivers' titles with win in South Africa

23/11/2019 Porsche has won the manufacturers' title for the first time in the Intercontinental GT Challenge. At the final round of the world's most important championship for GT3 vehicles in Kyalami (South Africa), the Porsche 911 GT3 R fielded by Frikadelli Racing drove to victory.

The race

In a chaotic nine-hour race, works driver Nick Tandy (Great Britain) as well as the Porsche Young Professionals Dennis Olsen (Norway) and Mathieu Jaminet (France) dominated the action when it mattered. Porsche earned the decisive points thanks to third place for the GPX Racing squad with drivers Kévin Estre (France), Michael Christensen (Denmark) and Richard Lietz (Austria). The drivers' championship title also went to Porsche: Dennis Olsen secured the crown with his second victory of the season after winning the season-opening round at Bathurst (Australia).

At the first international long-distance race on the Kyalami Grand Prix Circuit since 1982, the 911 GT3 R, which is based on the high-performance Porsche 911 GT3 RS* road-legal sports car, dominated the race over long stretches. After the start in summery 29-degree temperatures and asphalt temperatures of almost 50 degrees Celsius, the three GT3 vehicles campaigned by Frikadelli Racing (#31), GPX Racing (#20) and Dinamic Motorsport (#12) immediately formed a spearhead at the front. After several laps, the world sports car champion Christensen moved into the lead with the Porsche 911 GT3 R of the winning team at 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps (Belgium). The number 20 vehicle then defended the top spot.

With around two hours left on the clock, an intense thunderstorm with heavy downpours changed the order at the front. Due to essential refuelling stops behind the safety car, which had been deployed due to the difficult conditions, the two best Porsche 911 GT3 R were initially relegated to third and fourth place. With 25 minutes to go, the steward of the meeting gave the green light. Porsche's works driver Nick Tandy then pulled out all stops to put in an impressive drive, demonstrating the sheer power of the GT3 vehicle from Stuttgart on the wet track. The Briton, who had planted the No. 31 vehicle on pole position on Friday, ploughed his way through the field over just one lap to take the lead and ultimately cross the finish line with a 6.746-second advantage.

The Spa winners Lietz, Estre and Christensen claimed third place for the customer team GPX Racing. Bathurst winner Matt Campbell (Australia) as well as the IMSA champions Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium) and Earl Bamber (New Zealand) achieved eighth place in the number 12 car run by Dinamic Motorsport.

The trio had lost a lot of time while pitting under yellow. The pursuit of the No. 911 vehicle fielded by KÜS Team 75 Bernhard with factory driver Romain Dumas from France and his German teammates Sven Müller and Dirk Werner concluded with ninth place. With four vehicles finishing in the top ten, Porsche was clearly the strongest manufacturer in the intensely competitive 28-strong field.

The GT3 vehicle with which Lechner Racing contested the silver category won its class (14th overall). Porsche development driver Lars Kern (Germany) shared driving duties at the wheel of the No. 9 car with the South African Saul Hack and Dylan Pereira from Luxembourg. The Porsche 911 GT3 R (997 model) fielded by the South African customer team Perfect Circle concluded the first nine-hour race in South Africa in 37 years third in the amateur category.

Porsche rounds off the 2019 Intercontinental GT Challenge season as number one in the manufacturers' championship. After winning the season-opening event in Bathurst with last year's model of Porsche 911 GT3 R, victories followed at the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps (Belgium) and at Kyalami as well as podium finishes at Laguna Seca (USA) and Suzuka (Japan).

Comments on the race

Sebastian Golz (Project Manager 911 GT3 R): "Three wins from five races, and podium finishes at all rounds – that's how you win championships. The key to our success was the excellent teamwork of our squads around the world. The final race at Kyalami with sun, heat, lightning, thunder and rain was like a rollercoaster ride. In the end we deserved to win. Now it's time to celebrate."

Nick Tandy (Porsche 911 GT3 R #31): "The Porsche 911 GT3 R was the strongest vehicle in the cutthroat competition of the GT3 manufacturers. We were the fastest in dry conditions, and in the rain the nine-eleven set the benchmark. I'm pleased that the race went green again so that we could demonstrate the strength of our rear-engine car. Halfway through the race we had to cope with a couple of minor setbacks, but thanks to perfect teamwork we were ultimately able to take the lead. I'm particularly thrilled about Dennis's title win. I know how much this means to him."

Dennis Olsen (Porsche 911 GT3 R #31): "This is definitely the best day of my career by now. When I was asked recently to name my greatest achievement, I said it was the victory at Bathurst. When I was then asked what could be better than that, I said a victory at Kyalami, winning the manufacturers' title with Porsche as well as the drivers' championship. That has now happened – unbelievable, it feels like a dream. When the race was finally restarted, I had a good feeling. If you have someone like Nick Tandy in the Porsche 911 GT3 R on a wet track in the final sprint, then anything is possible."

Mathieu Jaminet (Porsche 911 GT3 R #31): "Despite the turbulent conditions during the race we never gave up. We went for broke in every single lap, and drove the fastest race lap in the dry. It all paid off. Before the start of the race weekend, I told Dennis we were going to win at Kyalami and he would claim the title. We've turned that prediction into reality. Now we'll celebrate."

Richard Lietz (Porsche 911 GT3 R #20): “Another successful outing for Kévin, Michael and me in GPX Racing's car. We were strong over the entire weekend, and we led for most of the race. Unfortunately, it wasn't enough to bring home first place in the rain. But most importantly, Porsche has won the manufacturers' title – mission accomplished."

Matt Campbell (Porsche 911 GT3 R #12): “It was a disappointing weekend for us in the number 12 car. We tried everything, but never really matched the pace of the strongest Porsche 911 GT3 R. I don't know why this happened, but at the end of the day it's fantastic that the manufacturers' title went to Porsche and Dennis took the drivers' crown."

Dirk Werner (Porsche 911 GT3 R #911): “That was a difficult weekend. It all started with the delayed arrival of the container with our car and all the equipment. In the race, the engine temperature was always at the upper limit. We had to take care and we couldn't go all-out. For this reason we couldn't do better. Congratulations to Dennis and the entire Porsche squad. These championship titles are well deserved."

Lars Kern (Porsche 911 GT3 R #9): “The 90 minutes in torrential rain behind the safety car were the most difficult 90 minutes of my racing career. It was more like swimming than driving. Despite losing a little time during the pit stops at the beginning, we still ended up as the deserving class winners. We made the least amount of mistakes and so our first place was rightly earned."

Race result

01. Olsen/Jaminet/Tandy (N/F/GB), Porsche 911 GT3 R, 259 laps
02. Catsburg/Krognes/Jensen (NL/N/DK), BMW M6 GT3, 259 laps
03. Lietz/Christensen/Estre (A/DK/F), Porsche 911 GT3 R, 259 laps
08. Vanthoor/Bamber/Campbell (B/NZ/AUS), Porsche 911 GT3 R, 259 laps
09. Dumas/Müller/Werner (F/D/D), Porsche 911 GT3 R, 259 laps
13. Hack/Kern/Pereira (ZA/D/LUX), Porsche 911 GT3 R, 257 laps
28. Bezuidenhout/Scribante/Scribante (ZA/ZA/ZA), Porsche 911 GT3 R, 85 laps

Full results at: http://www.intercontinentalgtchallenge.com/

The qualifying

The Porsche 911 GT3 R fielded by Frikadelli Racing will take up the nine-hour race in Kyalami (South Africa) from pole position. At the wheel of the No. 31 vehicle, Nick Tandy turned the fastest lap in the decisive shootout on the wet 4.522-kilometre circuit in a time of 1:52.825 minutes. The identical vehicles campaigned by GPX Racing (No. 20) and Dinamic Motorsport (No. 12) will tackle the final round of the 2019 Intercontinental GT Challenge from positions four and five.

Porsche's works driver Nick Tandy (Great Britain) treated spectators to a spectacular hunt for the best grid spot. Facing wet conditions during the third qualifying session, the Briton slid into the barriers in turn seven. After the German squad made swift repairs, he managed to plant his vehicle in the top ten and thus in the pole shootout. In the final session, Tandy ultimately outshone all of his rivals. For the race, the 2015 Le Mans overall winner shares the car with Porsche Young Professionals Dennis Olsen (Norway) and Mathieu Jaminet (France).

Taking up the race from the fourth grid spot, GPX Racing's Porsche 911 GT3 R flying the legendary Gulf colours has good chances for a top result. Richard Lietz qualified the car fielded by the winning team of the 2019 Spa-Francorchamps 24-hour race on the second grid row. In the race, the Austrian shares driving duties with the world sports car champions Michael Christensen (Denmark) and Kévin Estre (France). On the wet circuit, Matt Campbell put Dinamic Motorsport's 911 GT3 R, which is based on the high-performance Porsche 911 GT3 RS* road-legal sports car, on position five. The Porsche Young Professional from Australia is joined in the number 12 cockpit by the IMSA champions Earl Bamber (New Zealand) and Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium).

The Porsche 911 GT3 R run by KÜS Team 75 Bernhard (No. 911) will tackle the final race of the 2019 Intercontinental GT Challenge from twelfth on the grid. Romain Dumas (France) had lost a lot of time during the first qualifying lap in heavy traffic with 28 vehicles from five classes. His German works driver colleagues Sven Müller and Dirk Werner made up five positions with the 500+hp GT3 car, however this was not enough to gain them entry into the Pole Shootout.

Porsche development driver Lars Kern (Germany) contests the silver classification with his teammates Dylan Pereira (Luxembourg) and Saul Hack (South Africa) from the second grid spot. The trio in Lechner Racing's No. 9 Porsche 911 GT3 R qualified on P18. The South African customer team Perfect Circle takes up the race from position 28.

Qualifying quotes

Sebastian Golz (Project Manager 911 GT3 R): "That was Nick Tandy as we've known and appreciated him for many years. In the third qualifying round, he pushes beyond the limits of grip and lands in the barriers. But then he not only qualifies the car for the pole shootout, but promptly plants it on pole. We have three Porsche 911 GT3 R in the top five. That gives us the very best chances for a top result in the race on Saturday."

Nick Tandy (Porsche 911 GT3 R #31): "That was not my success alone; it was a fantastic team effort. The mechanics repaired the car quickly after my little excursion off the track and gave the car a perfect setup. Previously, my teammates and I had managed to qualify our Porsche 911 GT3 R in the shootout. All this helped to put us on the front spot. To be honest, the pole position was the best way for me to make amends after my little crash."

Richard Lietz (Porsche 911 GT3 R #20): "Congratulations to Nick for his great lap. We tried out a few

things on the car during the qualifying and learned a lot that will help us on Saturday. The grip in the shootout was anything but good. With that in mind, I'm pleased that we have a second row position with fourth place. This puts us in a good position to take up the nine-hour race."

Matt Campbell (Porsche 911 GT3 R #12): "We weren't exactly in the right window with the tyre pressure, so we couldn't do better than fifth place. Despite the lack of grip, I had a lot of fun out there on the wet track. It was good to test the limits under these conditions. We're expecting more rain for the race, so it's valuable to have already gained some relevant experience. I expect good chances from P5."

Romain Dumas (Porsche 911 GT3 R #911): "The qualifying was anything but easy for me. I only got a free run in my first flying lap, after that it was impossible. I was stuck in the middle of a large group of vehicles, I had considerable understeer and therefore I couldn't do anything more. My teammates managed to do a little better, but it wasn't enough for a top ten result – what a shame."

Lars Kern (Porsche 911 GT3 R #9): "This is the first time our team tackles a long-distance race with the Porsche 911 GT3. In the qualifying, it was a matter of getting a clean run and learning as much as possible. We succeeded. We got faster and faster as the event progressed. I'm looking forward to an exciting race."

Qualifying result

01. Olsen/Jaminet/Tandy (N/F/GB), Porsche 911 GT3 R
02. Winkelhock/Haase/Mies (D/D/D), Audi R8 LMS GT3
03. Marciello/Buhk/Engel (I/D/D), Mercedes-AMG GT3
04. Lietz/Christensen/Estre (A/DK/F), Porsche 911 GT3 R
05. Vanthoor/Bamber/Campbell (B/NZ/AUS), Porsche 911 GT3 R
12. Dumas/Müller/Werner (F/D/D), Porsche 911 GT3 R
18. Hack/Kern/Pereira (ZA/D/LUX), Porsche 911 GT3 R
28. Bezuidenhout/Scribante/Scribante (ZA/ZA/ZA), Porsche 911 GT3 R (997)

Full results at: http://www.intercontinentalgtchallenge.com/

The preview

Porsche heads to the final round of the Intercontinental GT Challenge season in South Africa with a top contingent of four 911 GT3 R in the pro category, another vehicle in the amateur class and twelve drivers from the factory and junior driver squads. For the nine-hour race at the Kyalami circuit on 24 November, the customer teams GPX Racing, Dinamic Motorsport, Frikadelli Racing and Team 75 Bernhard will each field a GT3 vehicle from Weissach. In the overall standings, Porsche tackles the final round still holding chances to claim the manufacturers' title. The winning trio at Bathurst – works driver Dirk Werner (Germany) and the two Porsche Young Professionals Matt Campbell (Australia) and Dennis

Olsen (Norway) – are just ten points shy of the drivers' classification leader.

The nine-hour event in South Africa marks the final round of the 2019 Intercontinental GT Challenge. Between 1967 and 1993, the Kyalami Grand Prix Circuit hosted a total of 20 Formula 1 Grands Prix. Under the aegis of Porsche South Africa, extensive renovations and upgrades have been undertaken in recent years. Around 65 percent of the 4.2-kilometre-long Grand Prix circuit was retained, the finish straight was lengthened, passive safety was improved, four new corner passages were added and the paddock was rebuilt. For the teams contesting the Intercontinental GT Challenge (IGTC), the Kyalami Grand Prix Circuit is new terrain. The IGTC is currently the only international GT race series to compete on the African continent.

The Porsche teams and drivers

To maximise the chances of winning the drivers' championship, the Bathurst winners Werner, Campbell and Olsen will contest the season finale in three different cars. The trio heads to the final race ranking fifth, but are only ten points behind the leader. Campbell shares the cockpit of Dinamic Motorsport's Porsche 911 GT3 R with the current leaders of the IMSA series, Earl Bamber (New Zealand) and Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium). In the identical model run by the Team 75 Bernhard, Dirk Werner joins forces with his works driver teammates Sven Müller (Germany) and Romain Dumas (France).

Dennis Olsen helms the 911 GT3 R campaigned by Frikadelli Racing with factory pilot Nick Tandy (Great Britain) and Porsche Young Professional Mathieu Jaminet (France). The fourth GT3 racer from Weissach will tackle the top category decked out in the historic blue and orange colours of Gulf. This year's winners of the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps, the world sports car champions Michael Christensen (Denmark) and Kévin Estre (France) as well as Richard Lietz (Austria), share driving duties in the Porsche 911 GT3 R of GPX Racing. One other 911 GT3 R will contest the amateur class.

The Porsche 911 GT3 R

The Porsche 911 GT3 R, which is based on the high-performance 911 GT3 RS road-going sports car, was newly developed for the 2019 season. Improvements in the areas of aerodynamics, kinematics, efficiency and driveability were systematically implemented from the insights garnered from the many race outings of its predecessor. The six-cylinder engine in the rear of the GT3 customer racer produces over 368 kW (500 hp). The new Porsche 911 GT3 R underlined its competitiveness during its debut season with victories at the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps, in the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship and the Blancpain GT Series.

Comments before the race

Sebastian Golz (Project Manager 911 GT3 R): "With a total of five strong teams, five professionally

prepared Porsche 911 GT3 R and twelve hungry drivers from the factory squad, our contingent for the IGTC season final couldn't be better. We're deliberately dividing our three Bathurst winners between three different cars to maximise our chances of winning the drivers' championship title. We have only an outside chance of winning the manufacturers' crown, but we'll still do everything we can to make the most of the opportunity. Kyalami has a big, historic reputation in motor racing, but it is new territory for us all because this is the first international GT race on the new track. The South African culture, the incredible location and the world's elite in GT racing will turn this race into a season highlight. We want to fight for victory."

The schedule

The "Kyalami 8 Hour" takes off on Saturday, 23 November, at 1pm (midday CET). Porsche has theoretical chances to win the manufacturers' title at the final race of the season. The Bathurst winners Campbell, Werner and Olsen are within striking distance of taking home the drivers' championship.

The season finale can be watched live on www.intercontinentalgtchallenge.com.

This is the Intercontinental GT Challenge

The 2019 Intercontinental GT Challenge calendar is made up of five endurance races on five continents. While the teams were only permitted to field 2018-spec GT3 cars at the season-opening round in Bathurst (Australia), the latest spec is sanctioned for the Laguna Seca (USA), Spa-Francorchamps (Belgium), Suzuka (Japan) races and the season finale in Kyalami (South Africa). Porsche will not compete with a factory squad, but instead supports various customer teams in their campaign.

Link Collection

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