

WEC: Porsche extends world championship lead with double podium result

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10/11/2019 Scoring two podium finishes at round three of the World Endurance Championship (WEC), Porsche has expanded its lead in the world championship.

The race

In the new 911 RSR the reigning World Champions Kévin Estre and Michael Christensen drove from pole position to second position in the four-hour race. After the disqualification of the winning team due to insufficient ground clearance, they were subsequently awarded victory in the GTE-Pro class. Gianmaria Bruni and Richard Lietz crossed the finish line in third place in the second 911 RSR and were

finally rated second.

The race on the outskirts of the Shanghai metropolis was gripping to the last second. The team used the full course yellow, a good hour before the end of the race, for its last pit stop. Because of the early stop, the drivers had to be particularly mindful of the fuel consumption over the remaining 1:05 hours. In spite of this, Estre performed an impressive overtaking manoeuvre in the number 92 vehicle. With less than an hour to go to the finish, the Frenchman swept from third into second place. Bruni, who drove the final stint in the number 91 car, managed to make up one position with 40 minutes left on the clock and ultimately achieve third place.

At one point, however, the driver pair Estre/Christensen had to serve a ten-second penalty due to an unsafe release in the pit lane, where they pulled out into the fast lane in front of a rival car. Nevertheless, spirited drives and a strategic effort paid off for the Porsche GT Team over 115 laps on the 5.451-kilometre circuit and yielded both driver crews a spot on the podium. Estre and Christensen were able to extend their lead in the drivers' classification by five points. After round three of the season, Bruni and Lietz are currently six points off the lead in third. Porsche has managed to expand its lead in the manufacturers' classification of the FIA World Endurance Championship by 17 points with the new Porsche 911 RSR (2019 model year), which is based on the high-performance 911 GT3 RS* road-going sports car.

The Porsche customer team Project 1 also secured a podium result in the GTE-Am class. The driver trio Ben Keating, Jeroen Bleekemolen and WEC newcomer Larry ten Voorde brought the 2017-spec Porsche 911 RSR home after 113 laps in position two. The No. 56 sister car fielded by the German squad occupied position five. Dempsey-Proton Racing fielded three of the GTE racers from Weissach this weekend. The three cars finished the race on positions six, ten and twelve. Ninth place went to the Gulf Racing squad.

Race result

GTE-Pro class
2. Christensen/Estre (DK/F), Porsche 911 RSR, 115 laps
3. Lietz/Bruni (A/I), Porsche 911 RSR, 115 laps

GTE-Am class
2. Keating/ten Voorde/Bleekemolen (USA/NL/NL), Porsche 911 RSR, 113 laps
5. Perfetti/Heinemeier Hansson/Cairoli (N/DK/I), Porsche 911 RSR, 112 laps
6. Negro/Bamber/Preining (I/NZ/A), Porsche 911 RSR, 112 laps
9. Wainwright/Watson/Barker (GB/GB/GB), Porsche 911 RSR, 112 laps
10. Ried/Pera/Campbell (AUS/D/I), Porsche 911 RSR, 112 laps
12. Prette/Prette/Abril (I/I/F), Porsche 911 RSR, 112 laps
Full results: http://fiawec.alkamelsystems.com

The qualifying

The second pole position at the third round for the new Porsche 911 RSR: Kévin Estre and Michael Christensen beat the competition in the qualifying on Saturday on the 5.451-kilometre Shanghai International Circuit with a fabulous combined time of 1:59.579 minutes. At round three of the 2019/20 FIA World Endurance Championship in China, the identical sister car driven by Gianmaria Bruni (Italy) and Richard Lietz (Austria) heads into the four-hour race from position six on Sunday.

The Shanghai International Circuit showed its best side during qualifying, with blue skies and temperatures of around 22 degrees Celsius. The two new Porsche 911 RSR used different strategies for the session, as the racetrack on the outskirts of the metropolis with its 23-million inhabitants is famous for putting heavy stresses on the tyres due to its rough asphalt and long, sweeping corners. Estre (France) and Christensen (Denmark) completed the qualifying with two sets of tyres, while Bruni and Lietz used just one set and saved the fresh rubber for the race.

The Porsche GT Team can look back on a positive season so far: After setting the second pole position at the third race and with a victory at the season-opening round in Silverstone, Great Britain thanks to Bruni and Lietz, as well as a podium result in Fuji (Estre and Christensen), Porsche leads the manufacturers' championship of the FIA World Endurance Championship. These achievements also underline the great potential of the new Porsche 911 RSR (2019 model year), which is based on the high performance 911 GT3 RS* road-going sports car.

In the GTE-Am class, the German Porsche customer team Project 1 secured the first grid spot. Porsche Young Professional Matteo Cairoli (Italy) tackled the qualifying with Egidio Perfetti (Norway). In the race, the pair shares the cockpit of the No. 56 vehicle with David Heinemeier Hansson from Denmark. The No. 57 sister car of the German squad will take up the race from fifth on the grid. The three identical vehicles fielded by Dempsey-Proton Racing will take up the race from positions three, eight and eleven. Gulf Racing achieved the ninth quickest time in qualifying.

Qualifying quotes

Alexander Stehlig (Head of Operations FIA WEC): "We experienced a diverse qualifying. One car at the front, one at the back; we split the strategies for the two vehicles. Claiming the second pole position at the third race is, of course, great for us. We did our homework. Position one is the perfect place to start the race."

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "My lap was simply perfect! We had a great setup for the car. In these temperatures, we experienced slightly more understeer compared to this morning's free practice. Still, we were good enough for pole position. In my opinion, on this circuit you have to drive a little under the limit here so that you don't make a mistake. Previously I was often dissatisfied with my qualifying, but now I'm really pleased."

Michael Christensen (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "I found it tough because I made a couple of minor mistakes. But in the end I managed a good lap. Kevin then turned a perfect lap. We're very clearly on pole. Some of the teams behind us only used one set of tyres. I'm pleased about earning the extra point for the fastest qualifying lap."

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "My first laps were okay. Richard then went out on the same set of tyres. Our average today wasn't so great, but we have a good strategy for the race. We know that we have the backing of the best team in the WEC. So, anything is possible tomorrow."

Richard Lietz (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "The car felt really good. The balance is great for the race. We deliberately split the strategy. I expect the tyre wear to be extremely high in the race, hence we're hoping for an advantage after using only one set of tyres today."

Matteo Cairoli (Porsche 911 RSR #56 GTE-Am): "I'm happy that Egidio, David and I take up the race here in Shanghai from pole position in the GTE-Am class. I had two good laps. In the first lap I was hampered a bit by another vehicle, but then I got a free run and I'm happy that I managed to pull all of my fast sector times together."

Qualifying result

GTE-Pro class
1. Christensen/Estre (DK/F), Porsche 911 RSR, 1:59.579 minutes
6. Lietz/Bruni (A/I), Porsche 911 RSR, 2:00.224 minutes

GTE-Am class
1. Perfetti/Heinemeier Hansson/Cairoli (N/DK/I), Porsche 911 RSR, 2:00.824 minutes
3. Ried/Pera/Campbell (AUS/D/I), Porsche 911 RSR, 2:01.655 min
5. Keating/ten Voorde/Bleekemolen (USA/NL/NL), Porsche 911 RSR, 2:02.228 min
8. Negro/Bamber/Preining (I/NZ/A), Porsche 911 RSR, 2:02.714 min
9. Wainwright/Watson/Barker (GB/GB/GB), Porsche 911 RSR, 2:02.978 min
11. Prette/Prette/Abril (I/I/F), Porsche 911 RSR, 2:03.086 min

Full results: http://fiawec.alkamelsystems.com

The preview

Porsche aims to defend its lead in the manufacturers' classification of the FIA World Endurance Championship at round three of the season. The factory squad tackles the four-hour race in Shanghai (China) with two of the latest generation Porsche 911 RSR. After clinching a one-two at the season-opener in Silverstone (Great Britain) and a podium result at the second race at Fuji (Japan), the Porsche

GT Team is now eager to perform well again at the Formula 1 circuit on the outskirts of the Chinese commercial metropolis of Shanghai. In the GTE-Am class, three customer teams field a total of six 2017-spec Porsche 911 RSR.

Comments before the race

Fritz Enzinger (Vice President Motorsport): "After winning the titles in the North American IMSA series, our works squads can now concentrate totally on the mission with the latest generation Porsche 911 RSR. The first two races of the FIA WEC season with the new car has already yielded great results with a one-two at Silverstone followed by the pole position and a podium finish at Fuji. It can continue like this. I'm confident that our experienced team and our top drivers will also get the best out of Shanghai."

Pascal Zurlinden (Director Factory Motorsport): "We're leading the manufacturers' championship after two races and our Porsche pairings rank first and second in the drivers' classification. It's been a great season so far. However, we still have some tasks on our to-do list. We've already learned a great deal about the idiosyncrasies of our new Porsche 911 RSR. If we can continue to make systematic progress, then I'm sure we'll celebrate more successes. We want to finish on the podium at Shanghai – preferably at the very top. After our bad luck here in the past two years, I think we would deserve that."

Alexander Stehlig (Head of Operations FIA WEC): "After the double victory at Silverstone and second place in Fuji, our goal is clear: to extend our lead in the manufacturers' and drivers' classifications. Up to now we've been very pleased with our new Porsche 911 RSR's results. Nevertheless, there are still some areas where we can and must improve on. I'm certain that we'll succeed with this very soon, and I'm really looking forward to a successful outing in China."

The race

Since its opening in 2004, the 5.451-kilometre-long Shanghai International Circuit has hosted the Formula One every year. The FIA WEC has featured regularly at the racetrack on the outskirts of the metropolis, which is home to 23 million people. Changing weather conditions in China's autumn often throws huge challenges at teams and drivers. In addition, the modern facility offers a special feature: The first corner forms the shape of a snail shell, with the radius of the right-hander gradually tightening. This places considerable stresses on the left-hand-side tyres. The track layout was inspired by the Chinese character "Shang" meaning "ascend". In the 2018-2019 season, the two works-Porsche 911 RSR yielded podium results in Shanghai.

The Porsche GT Team drivers

Silverstone winners Richard Lietz (Austria) and Gianmaria Bruni (Italy) share the cockpit of the No. 91 Porsche 911 RSR. The pair currently ranks third in the drivers' classification. Their works driver

colleagues Michael Christensen (Denmark) and Kévin Estre (France) lead the category just two points ahead. The reigning world sports car champions share the No. 92 Porsche 911 RSR. After the first two races of this season, Porsche leads the manufacturers' classification with a five-point advantage.

The customer teams

In Shanghai, the German customer squad Dempsey-Proton Racing fields three 2017-spec Porsche 911 RSR. Sharing the wheel of the No. 77 vehicle are Porsche Young Professional Matt Campbell (Australia), team owner Christian Ried (Germany) and the Italian Riccardo Pera. Porsche Young Professional Thomas Preining from Austria competes with others in the No. 88 sister car. This marks a guest appearance for the No. 78 vehicle. The same crew that contested Le Mans in June 2019 will helm the vehicle: the father-son team Louis and Philippe Prette (Italy) as well as Frenchman Vincent Abril.

Porsche Young Professional Matteo Cairoli (Italy) joins forces with Le Mans class winner Egidio Perfetti (Norway) and the Dane David Heinemeier Hansson in the No. 56 Porsche 911 RSR fielded by the Project 1 customer squad. The No. 57 car is shared by the American Ben Keating and the two drivers from the Netherlands Larry ten Voorde and Jeroen Bleekemolen. Gulf Racing's number 86 vehicle is manned by the all-British crew of Michael Wainwright, Ben Barker and Andrew Watson.

The Porsche 911 RSR

The new Porsche 911 RSR (2019 model year) contests its maiden season in the world sports car championship. The vehicle from Weissach is based on the high-performance 911 GT3 RS road-going sports car. 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 Shanghai gets underway on Sunday, 10 November, at midday local time (5am CEST).

The race on TV and the Internet

Round three of the FIA WEC season will be shown in full length on www.sport1.de. The free-to-air station Sport 1 will televise live from China on 10 November from 4:55am to 8:00am. The pay-TV station Sport 1+ broadcasts the entire race live from 4:30am to 9:30am. Eurosport also televises the third round live from 4.55am. Motorsport.TV televises the entire race. For a fee, the FIA WEC app offers

live streaming and live timing.

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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