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Best 911 RSR narrowly misses out on podium

IMSA: The Porsche 911 RSR narrowly missed out on securing its third podium result in Austin.



With the 911 racing car, which is a totally new development of Porsche Motorsport in Weissach, Patrick Pilet (France) and Dirk Werner (Germany) secured fourth in the GTLM class after holding the lead at one point. In the second 911 RSR (#912) fielded by the Porsche GT Team, Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium) and Wolf Henzler (Germany) took the flag in eighth place. Shortly after the start, the pair became entangled in a collision which threw them back down the field. At the season-opening round in Daytona, the new 911 RSR had finished second, and recently followed up with a third place at Long Beach.

Finally saw the flag in fourth place

Patrick Pilet (France) got off the line well on the 5.513-kilometre Grand Prix circuit near the capital of Texas. When several cars became entangled during the sprint to the first turn, Pilet managed to avoid the melee and launch a pursuit race from fourth place. First he snatched third and several laps later he overtook another competitor. After almost an hour of racing he was in the lead. This pace, however, could not go on. His teammate Dirk Werner, who took the wheel of the 911 RSR, was first shunted by a GTD car, and was then handed a 60-second penalty which he served in the pit lane. As a result, all hopes for a possible podium finish were dashed. After two hours and forty minutes, Patrick Pilet finally saw the flag in fourth place.

An accident put an early end to the race for the second 911 RSR with the starting number 912 shortly after the start. Wolf Henzler, who replaced Kévin Estre (France) at Austin so that the Frenchman could contest the WEC round in Spa, rejoined the race in fifth after the first stop for repairs. However, associated damages required longer repairs in the team workshop. When Laurens Vanthoor finally returned to the racetrack with 911 RSR, he was too far behind to make up any positions.

Race quotes

Steffen Höllwarth, Programme Manager IMSA SportsCar Championship: "Everything actually ran according to plan with the 911. Our

strategy to strengthen the car in the practices worked perfectly. We managed to take over the lead. In the middle stint, however, we were shunted by a GTD car, which affected the rear aerodynamics. The penalty for not seeing the lights in the pit lane was the final straw. Although we continued to fight our way back up, it was not enough for a podium. Now we have time to analyse the first third of the season. This is what we'll do and after the summer break we'll be back in full force."

Patrick Pilet (911 RSR #911): "This race was pretty disappointing. We had the best chances to do well here, but it was our own fault that it didn't succeed. We make mistakes that shouldn't happen. I hope things go better for us at the next race in Watkins Glen."

Dirk Werner (911 RSR #911): "We had the chance for a podium result here. It's a shame that we didn't managed to use it. At the exit of the pit lane I was alongside a BMW and I didn't notice – for whatever reason – that the pit lights were red. The resulting penalty cost us the race, what' more I had already been sent into a spin by a GTD car prior to this. All in all, it wasn't a great race for us."

Wolf Henzler (911 RSR #912): "I didn't imagine my first race this season with the 911 RSR would be like this. In the very first corner after the start, a Ford and a Ferrari had a big encounter and that set off a chain reaction. When I sped up right behind a Corvette, it suddenly spun. I couldn't avoid it and we collided. Our 911 RSR was so badly damaged that the resulting repairs cost us all chances of a good result."

Laurens Vanthoor (911 RSR #912): "By the time I climbed into the car for my stint, the race was as good as over for us. That was not a great weekend for us. We'll now go testing and hopefully we'll return stronger after the summer break."

Mathieu Jaminet (911 GT3 R #28): "In my first stint I managed to build up a comfortable lead, and I enjoyed some great duels in the process. Things were looking good for us, but ultimately we finished in seventh. Still, we drove the fastest lap in the GTD class. I would like to thank Porsche and Alegra Motorsports for giving me the chance to contest this race."

Race result

GTLM class

1. Garcia/Magnussen (E/DK), Corvette, 71 laps
2. Auberlen/Sims (USA/GB), BMW M6, 71
3. Edwards/Tomczyk (USA/D), BMW M6, 71
4. Pilet/Werner (F/D), Porsche 911 RSR, 71
5. Hand/Müller (USA/D), Ford GT, 70
6. Westbrook/Briscoe (GB/USA), Ford GT, 63
7. Gavin/Milner (GB/USA), Corvette, 41
8. Estre/Vanthoor (F/B), Porsche 911 RSR, 10
9. Fisichella/Vilander (I/SF), Ferrari 488, 1

GTD class

1. Bleekemolen/Keating (NL/USA), Mercedes GT3, 69 laps
2. Balzan/Nielsen (I/DK), Ferrerari 488, 69
3. Vautier/Habul (F/USA), Mercedes GT3, 69
7. Jaminet/Morad (F/USA), Porsche 911 GT3 R, 69
8. Bergmeister/Lindsey (D/USA), Porsche 911 GT3 R, 69
14. Bennett/Braun (USA/USA), Porsche 911 GT3 R, 69
16. Chase/Gottsacker (USA/USA), Porsche 911 GT3 R, 68

Info

Round five of the IMSA SportsCar Championship will be contested on 2 July at Watkins Glen in the US state of New York, following a break after the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

The IMSA SportsCar Championship is a 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 new Porsche 911 RSR runs in the GTLM class, with the Porsche 911 GT3 R contesting the GTD class.

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