

Motorsports Apr 15, 2018

Strong performance of the 911 RSR goes unrewarded

After the Porsche 911 RSR celebrated its first win of the IMSA SportsCar Championship season at the 12 Hours of Sebring, the situation at Long Beach looked just as promising for a long time.



At the shortest race of the year on the narrow street circuit in California, Earl Bamber (New Zealand) dominated the field until 22 minutes before the end of the 100-minute sprint – only to have to park the race car from Weissach, which he shared with Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium), in the pits with a broken suspension. At the wheel of the second 911 RSR fielded by the Porsche GT Team, the Sebring winners Patrick Pilet (France) and Nick Tandy (Great Britain) secured sixth place in the GTLM class ahead of their teammates.

To the picture-postcard backdrop of sun, sea and palms, which makes Long Beach Monte Carlo of the USA, the 911 RSR took off from the front grid row for the first time this season. Laurens Vanthoor used this advantage to promptly snatch the lead in lap one. He fended off his pursuers repeated attacks to hold on to his spot. After 38 minutes he handed the #912 Porsche 911 RSR off to Earl Bamber during a safety car phase. The New Zealander rejoined the race as second behind a BMW that had pitted earlier, and immediately closed the gap to the leader. Putting in an inspired overtaking manoeuvre, he recaptured the lead and even managed to pull clear from the rest of the strong GTLM field before a damaged suspension forced him into retirement. In the #911 Porsche 911 RSR, Patrick Pilet and Nick Tandy never really regained their stride in the race due to various incidents after their first pit stop.

Comments on the race

Dr Frank-Steffen Walliser, Vice President Motorsport and GT Cars: "This race offered everything that spectators like on a street circuit. With our #912 contender, Laurens and Earl did everything right. Laurens made a cracking start and immediately took the lead. Earl also fought his way back to the front after the pit stop. Both of them drove an immaculate race, and also found brilliant solutions to difficult situations during some close calls with competitors. For a street race, they were in a very comfortable lead when the damage to the suspension, which could have been caused by contact, quite possibly cost them the win. That was simply bad luck. The race for the #911 car was influenced by a rear-ender. There wasn't a lot Nick and Patrick could do after that. All in all, we can say that the performance of the 911 RSR was good and that the team did a great job. We'll take these positive impressions with us to the next race

in Mid-Ohio.”

Nick Tandy (911 RSR #911): “When I wanted to leave the pits after our stop, another car got in the way. We could have rejoined the field in second place. If this had happened, the outcome would definitely have been different for us. The additional pit stop that cost us a lap then finished us off. Still, our 911 RSR was fast and the team, as usual, gave us great support.”

Earl Bamber (911 RSR #912): “Our 911 RSR ran very well on this track. The guys did one quick pit stop and we were holding a comfortable lead. But then something went wrong with the suspension and that was the end of our race. It’s a shame for the team, but such things happen. Now we’ll be back to attack in Mid-Ohio.”

Race result

GTLM class

1. Gavin/Milner (GB/USA), Chevrolet Corvette, 69 laps
2. Westbrook/Briscoe (GB/USA), Ford GT, 69
3. Hand/Muller (USA/D), Ford GT, 69
4. Magnussen/Garcia (DK/E), Chevrolet Corvette, 69
5. Krohn/Edwards (SF/USA), BMW M8, 69
6. Tandy/Pilet (GB/F), Porsche 911 RSR, 69
7. Vanthoor/Bamber (B/NZ), Porsche 911 RSR, 52
8. Sims/de Phillippi (GB/USA), BMW M8, 37

All results and points standings for the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship and the North American Endurance Cup can be found on results.imsa.com.

This race is a real thriller: To constantly push the limits with total commitments at #bubbagp in the streets of Long Beach is a huge challenge for the drivers and guarantees some action-packed racing. Drivers can’t afford to make the slightest mistake on the narrow circuit, otherwise they end up hitting the wall, says Porsche’s @piletpatrick #porsche #porschenews #porschenewsroom #porsche911 #911 #911RSR #sportscar #championship #motorsport #racing #racinglife #instacar #car #racecar #racetrack #sport #sports #adrenaline #porscheraces #porschelife #porschepix #longbeach #california #usa #IMSA

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Review of the Qualifying

Up until the very last lap of the gripping qualifying for round three of the IMSA SportCar Championship, Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium), who shares the #912 Porsche 911 RSR with Earl Bamber (New Zealand), defended the fastest time in the GTLM class. The race car from Weissach, which received an optimised setup and further improvements to the reliability for its second racing season, was a mere 0.144 seconds shy of posting its first 2018 pole position. In the second 911 RSR (#911), Patrick Pilet (France) clocked the third quickest time on the 3.167-kilometre racetrack in the port area, and consequently rounded off the best qualifying performance for the Porsche GT Team so far this season. Pilet’s teammate for the race is Nick Tandy (Great Britain).

Qualifying quotes

Dr Frank-Steffen Walliser, Vice President Motorsport and GT Cars: “It’s a little upsetting to miss out on pole position in the last lap of the qualifying. Still, we’ve secured a very good starting position for the race. Long Beach is a city race with very few chances to overtake. That makes it all the more important to start from as far up the grid as possible. For the race we now just have to do

everything right strategically. I'm very satisfied."

Patrick Pilet (911 RSR #911): "This is a great result for Porsche. The field is extremely tight. The balance of our 911 RSR was very good this morning during the first practice session, however in the qualifying I had slight understeer. But we'll get that sorted out before the start of the race. Taking up the race from the first two grid rows opens up all possibilities for us."

Laurens Vanthoor (911 RSR #912): "When you're the fastest over the entire session obviously you also want to be on pole. But unfortunately we lost it in the last lap. Still, we can be happy with this result. In the race I'll try to stay out of any trouble. The tiniest error on this track has immediate consequences."

Qualifying result

GTLM class

1. Hand/Müller (USA/D), Ford GT, 1:16.869 minutes
2. Vanthoor/Bamber (B/NZ), Porsche 911 RSR, + 0.144 seconds
3. Tandy/Pilet (GB/F), Porsche 911 RSR, + 0.394
4. Magnussen/Garcia (DK/E), Chevrolet Corvette, + 0.424
5. Gavin/Milner (GB/USA), Chevrolet Corvette, + 0.664
6. Westbrook/Briscoe (GB/USA), Ford GT, + 0.680
7. de Phillippi/Sims (USA/GB), BMW M8, + 1.284
8. Krohn/Edwards (SF/USA), BMW M8, + 1.355

IMSA SportsCar Championship

The IMSA SportsCar Championship, a sports car race series contested in the USA and Canada, 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 three different classes: GTLM (GT Le Mans), GTD (GT Daytona) and P (Prototype). The Porsche 911 RSR runs in the GTLM class, with the Porsche 911 GT3 R contesting the GTD class.

Info

Round four of the IMSA SportsCar Championship is contested on the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course in Lexington in the US state of Ohio on 6 May.

Link Collection

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Media Package

<https://newsroom.porsche.com/media-package/porsche-long-beach-qualifying-race-imsa-weather-tech-sportscar-championship-2018-911-rsr>

Downloads

Strong performance of the 911 RSR goes unrewarded, press release, 04/15/2018, Porsche AG
Porsche 911 RSR starts from the first grid row, press release, 04/14/2018, Porsche AG

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