

Motorsports Oct 14, 2016

Webber sets fastest lap of the day

On the first day of practice for the seventh out of nine rounds of the FIA WEC the Porsche works driver has lapped the 4.549 kilometre long Fuji International Speedway during a qualifying simulation in 1:24.074 minutes.



In constantly dry conditions and with ambient temperatures around 20 degrees Celsius, Mark Webber and his teammates Brendon Hartley (NZ) and Timo Bernhard (DE) covered 95 laps in total today. In the first session the reigning world champions were sixth (1:26.097 minutes).

The trio of Romain Dumas (FR), Neel Jani (CH) and Marc Lieb (DE) lost nearly an hour of track time for repairs during the first of two 90-minute practice sessions, and clocked up 64 laps. On the installation lap in the morning an oil leak occurred and the gearbox for the front axle's electro motor needed to be changed. The championship leaders came fourth in both sessions (1:25.962/1:25.078 minutes).

Team Principal Andreas Seidl said: "Thanks to the mechanics for the extremely quick gearbox change in the morning. We were still able to almost complete our planned programme in the two free practice sessions. Aside from the baseline set-up, the focus was on long runs for tyre evaluation and testing aerodynamic configurations. We have managed to constantly improve both 919 Hybrids. As expected, all six LMP1 cars are very close together, so we look forward to another exciting race weekend. Now we'll analyse our data and hope to make the next step tomorrow."

After five race wins for the 919 Hybrid – including the Le Mans 24 Hours – Porsche leads the manufacturers' world championship with 238 points ahead of Audi (185) and Toyota (137). In the drivers' world championship, the trio of Romain Dumas (FR), Neel Jani (CH) and Marc Lieb (DE) top the standings with 130 points. They have an advantage of 37.5 points over the best Audi trio and half a point more to the best placed Toyota drivers. Mathematically, but only if there were special circumstances, a title decision in Japan would be possible. A race win is rewarded with 25 points, and this is the jackpot the crew of the sister Porsche took three times in a row: this way Timo Bernhard (DE), Brendon Hartley (NZ) and Mark Webber (AU) propelled themselves to fourth place (78.5 points) in the championship.

The Speedway at the foot of the picturesque stratovolcano is very demanding when it comes to set-up work. On the 1.5-kilometre long straight minimum drag is required. But through the 16 corners, that are partly very tight, of the 4.549 kilometre short track downforce is needed. Aerodynamic amendments are limited in the WEC. Fine tuning for the track can be difficult and the competition in the top

category of the class one Le Mans prototypes is extremely tight. The smallest advantage or disadvantage may decide the overall victory. Enzinger: "The competition in LMP1 is breath taking"

The Weissach developed Porsche 919 Hybrid produces a system power of over 662 kW (900 HP). Its combustion engine is a ground breaking downsizing motor: the very compact two-litre V4 turbocharged petrol engine drives the rear axle with almost 368 kW (500 PS). Two different energy recovery systems – brake energy from the front and exhaust energy – feed a lithium ion battery that, on command, passes on the energy to an E machine to power the front axle with an extra boost of over 294 kW (400 PS).

"The competition in LMP1 is breath taking," said Fritz Enzinger, Vice President LMP1. "At our most recent race in Austin, again all three manufacturers involved made it onto the podium. The general framework, such as changing track temperatures, lead to decisive performance differences. We also face an ever present risk in traffic, when the fast prototypes lap the GT cars. Looking at the points standings, we are on target to defend both our world championship titles. But in a total of 18 hours of racing that remain just everything can happen."

Seidl: "Our team has proved that we are able to handle difficult situations"

Team Principal Andreas Seidl added: "Generally speaking, we can expect cooler temperatures in Fuji than we had recently in Austin and this should help. Also the 919 with its relatively high downforce should be strong in the corners that are the challenging parts of the circuit. In 2015 we had some heavy rain in Japan. At this time of the year this can easily happen again, but our team has proved that we are able to handle difficult situations as well."

Facts and Figures

In 2015 Bernhard/Webber (1:22.763 minutes) and Dumas/Lieb (1:23.071 minutes) locked out the front row of the grid. (In the WEC the average of the respective best laps of two drivers counts for the grid position.)

Bernhard/Hartley/Webber won last year's race ahead of Dumas/Jani/Lieb.

The WEC efficiency regulations limit the amount of energy that can be used per lap. In Fuji the Porsche 919 Hybrid can use 4.15 megajoule of electrical power from energy recovery systems and 1.169 kg or 1.559 litres of petrol.

At normal race speed (no safety car) the Porsche 919 Hybrid is due for refuelling after every 38 laps at the latest.

Refuelling and changing tyres may only be done sequentially, not at the same time. Only four mechanics may work simultaneously when changing tyres and may use only one wheel gun. That takes a lot longer than in F1, for example.

The drivers are normally only changed when new tyres are needed.

A set of Michelin slick tyres should ideally last two fuel tank fills.

These different types of tyres can be used: three different compounds of slick tyres for dry conditions, a hybrid tyre (no profile either but softer cover) for mixed conditions and wet weather tyres. 6.5 sets of dry weather tyres are available per car for qualifying and the race.

A lap on the Fuji International Speedway is 4.549 kilometres and has 16 corners – 10 right-handers and six left-handers.

In 2005 the circuit was rebuilt for safety reasons and became, once again, the venue for the Japanese Formula One Grand Prix in 2007 and 2008.

From 1982 to 1988 the Sports Car World Championship had a round in Fuji. In 1983 Stefan Bellof set the fastest ever recorded lap at the wheel of a Porsche 956 in 1:10.02 minutes. This was, however, on the old track layout when a lap was only 4.360 kilometres.

In 2015 the WEC race was started behind the safety car because of heavy rain. In 2014 the track was dry on race day. But the weather in the Japanese Alps can be very changeable at this time of the year. In 2013 heavy rain made it impossible to run the WEC race. Not forgotten is the downpour back in 1976 which caused Niki Lauda to pull out of the race and gave the Formula One World Championship title to James Hunt.

Mount Fuji is an active volcano that last erupted in 1707. It is the highest mountain in Japan at 3,776 metres and is regarded as a holy mountain.

The circuit is located about 100 kilometres southwest of the capital of Tokyo on the Japanese main island of Honshu.

Quotes after Free Practice

Drivers Porsche 919 Hybrid number 1

Timo Bernhard (35, Germany): "For us everything went smoothly today. I didn't do much mileage, but nevertheless I always enjoy

driving here on the Speedway because as it is a nice and technical circuit.”

Brendon Hartley (26, New Zealand): “Mark did a great job in his qualifying simulation to top the time sheets. I did a full stint and more actually, so we put a lot of laps on one set of tyres. Our performance looked competitive and I think it was a positive day for us.”

Mark Webber (40, Australia): “Today there were beautiful dry conditions for all of us. The competition looks really tight with Toyota and Audi. In the afternoon I did a qualifying simulation and it went okay for me. It was a pretty competitive lap time, but on the long runs it also looks really tight. We expect more homework for tomorrow and a brilliant fight for qualifying.”

Drivers Porsche 919 Hybrid number 2

Romain Dumas (38, France): “I had my first run in the afternoon and the car was good right from the beginning. My first lap was already a one minute 26 seconds. Afterwards we kept the used tyres for a long run. It doesn't look too bad for day one.”

Neel Jani (32, Switzerland): “Of course we are lacking the track time we missed in the morning. We could not entirely complete our programme as planned, but we will try to catch up. I think tomorrow we will be sorted.”

Marc Lieb (36, Ludwigsburg): “It wasn't too easy today, because of the lost time in the first session. In the second session we tried something and it is leading in the right direction. Our car is strong in the last sector, and the cornering speeds are alright. On the very long straight we are not quite as fast as we would like to be, and we want to improve the car's balance. A variety of radiuses require some sensible work.”

Info

The six-hour race on the Fuji International Speedway is the seventh out of nine rounds of the 2016 FIA WEC and starts on October 16 at 11:00 hrs local time (04:00 hrs in Central Europe). LMP1 qualifying will be held on Saturday from 14:30-14:50 hrs local time.

The official WEC App can be downloaded free of charge in its basic version and can be extended (not free of charge) by a live stream. Several live features, such as on-board cameras, timing and GPS tracking, are implemented in the Porsche Motorsport App (free of charge) and at porsche.com/fiawec.

All points' standings: <http://www.fiawec.com/courses/classification.html>

All results: <http://fiawec.alkamelsystems.com>

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Media Package

<https://newsroom.porsche.com/media-package/63e38b47-e432-4221-b854-5293ba8c968d>

Downloads

Race for World Championship begins to hot up at the foot of Mount Fuji, press release, 10/10/2016, Porsche AG

Mark Webber sets fastest lap of the day with the Porsche 919 Hybrid, Press release, 10/14/2016, Porsche AG

Videos

<https://player.vimeo.com/video/160098933>

External Links

<http://www.porsche.com/usa/eventsandracing/motorsport/>

http://www.eurosport.de/wec/die-wec-rennen-live-bei-eurosport_sto5706038/story.shtml