

Motorsports May 5, 2017

Porsche 919 Hybrid takes pole position in Spa

Reigning world champion Neel Jani and Porsche newcomer André Lotterer achieved pole position for the second round of the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) in an action packed qualifying session in Spa-Francorchamps. The Porsche GT Team takes up the race from the third grid row.



A 919 Hybrid will start for the 16th time in total from P1 since its debut in 2014. Following three Toyotas on the grid, Timo Bernhard (DE) and Brendon Hartley (NZ) qualified 5th for the six-hour race on Saturday.

In the WEC, the average of the two fastest laps of two drivers counts for the qualifying result. Jani (CH)/Lotterer (DE) in car number 1 managed a time of 1:54.097 minutes. Bernhard/Hartley achieved an average time of 1:55.440 minutes for car number 2. Their respective partners – Nick Tandy (GB) and Earl Bamber (NZ) – abstained from qualifying this time. The compact 25 minute qualifying session was interrupted very early by a red flag. Due to overtaking traffic, the 919 number 2 lost its rhythm which caused problems to boost the full energy power.

The third free practice session in the morning saw the two Porsche 919 Hybrids in P4 (car number 1, 1:56.404 minutes) and P5 (car number 2, 1:58.096 minutes). This session and qualifying, took place in cool but dry conditions. For the six-hour race on Saturday, raising temperatures and sunshine are predicted.

How the qualifying went in the GT classes

The Porsche GT Team used the 25-minute qualifying on Friday to prepare for the six-hour race. Both newly developed Porsche 911 RSR conducted a relatively short qualifying session in order to preserve the tyres for the race. In the GTE-Pro class, the #91 vehicle shared by Frédéric Makowiecki (France) and Richard Lietz (Austria) posted the fifth quickest time in qualifying. Kévin Estre (France) and Michael Christensen (Denmark) planted the sister car with the starting number 92 on the sixth grid spot.

The customer squads Dempsey Proton Racing and Gulf Racing contest the GTE AM class with the Porsche 911 RSR (model year 2015). With the Porsche Young Professional Matteo Cairoli (Italy), Christian Ried (Germany) and Marvin Dienst (Germany), Dempsey Proton Racing set the second quickest qualifying time. Michael Wainwright and Ben Barker from Great Britain and Australian Nick Foster tackle the race for Gulf Racing from fifth place.

Fritz Enzinger, Vice President LMP1: "Unexpected and unbelievable - pole position in Spa! We knew our Porsche 919 Hybrids were good on the long runs but this qualifying result is a surprise and it proves what a great job the guys in Weissach did over the winter. From P1 we can now really hope for a thrilling race."

Andreas Seidl, Team Principal: "Congratulations to our crew number 1 for a well-deserved pole position. Neel and André did excellent laps. It feels nice to be back on pole again since the Shanghai race last November. Timo and Brendon had the same speed, but we couldn't manage to bring it all together. However, with P1 and P5 on the grid we are well positioned for the race and also well prepared after focussing on long-runs in the practice sessions. We will definitely see a tight and exciting race tomorrow. Both manufacturers in LMP1 operate on an impressive lap time level."

Dr Frank-Steffen Walliser, Head of Porsche Motorsport: "We're not surprised about our qualifying positions, because we're implementing a different strategy compared to Silverstone. During qualifying, we deliberately focussed on preparing for the race and after the first hour of racing we'll know how we measure up to the competition with the new 911 RSR."

More quotes in the press releases in "downloads".

Qualifying result

GTE-Pro class

1. Rigon/Bird (I/GB), Ferrari 488 GTE, 2:15.018 minutes
2. Mücke/Pla/Johnson (D/F/USA), Ford GT, + 0.401 seconds
3. Priaulx/Tincknell/Derani (GB/GB/BRA), Ford GT, + 0.548
4. Calado/Pier Guidi (I/I), Ferrari 488 GTE, + 0.748
5. Lietz/Makowiecki (A/F), Porsche 911 RSR, + 1.845
6. Christensen/Estre (DK/F), Porsche 911 RSR, + 1.993
7. Thiim/Soerensen/Stanaway (DK/DK/NZ), Aston Martin, + 2.139
8. Turner/Adam/Serra (GB/GB/BRA), Aston Martin, + 2.623

GTE-Am class

1. Dalla Lana/Lamy/Lauda (CAN/P/A), Aston Martin, 2:18.659 minutes
2. Ried/Cairoli/Dienst (D/I/D), Porsche 911 RSR, + 0.406 seconds
3. Flohr/Castellacci/Molina (CZE/I/E), Ferrari 488 GTE, + 0.999
4. Mok/Sawa/Griffin (MYS/J/IRL), Ferrari 488 GTE, + 2.256
5. Wainwright/Barker/Foster (GB/GB/GB), Porsche 911 RSR, + 3.642

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

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

Facts and figures

The 30-car WEC field is divided into four classes for prototypes and GT sports cars.

The WEC efficiency regulations limit the amount of energy that can be used per lap. On the 7.004 kilometres long lap of Spa-Francorchamps, the Porsche 919 Hybrid can use 6.37 megajoule of electrical power from energy recovery systems and 1.784 kg/2.464 litres of petrol.

At normal race speed, the Porsche 919 Hybrid is due for refuelling after a maximum of 24 laps.

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

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

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. Four sets of dry weather tyres are available per car for qualifying and the race, this is two sets less than in 2016.

For a permanent race track, a lap on the Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps is remarkably long and peppered with 19 corners, many of them being spectacular ones. After the start, the field has to go through the right-hand hairpin of "La Source" before racing downhill to "Eau

Rouge" to be compressed through its left-right combination. The uphill "Kemmel" straight leads to the winding back section of the circuit. After snaking through "Malmedy", "Rivage", "Pouhon" and "Fagnes", at the exit of the right-hander "Stavelot" it's full throttle again until the very tight "Bus Stop" chicane before the start-finish line.

The circuit is situated in the triangle of the towns Stavelot, Spa and Malmedy. Because the German border is only 20 kilometres away, many race fans from this neighbouring country tend to attend.

The race

Measuring 7.004 kilometres, the Grand Prix circuit in the hilly countryside of the Ardennes is the second longest racetrack on the WEC calendar after Le Mans. The difficult rollercoaster course throws everything at drivers and is guaranteed to provide fans with plenty of gripping action. The circuit's corners have illustrious names such as La Source, Blanchimont and Stavelot, and then there is, of course, Eau Rouge. This daunting corner has made the Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps as well-known as the delicious waffles that are sold around the track.

Schedule

The six-hour race takes off on Saturday, 6 May, at 14.30 hours.

TV and live streaming

The official WEC App can be downloaded free of charge with an extended (not free of charge) version available which includes full live streaming and full timing. The live stream is voiced by the FIA WEC TV team including live interviews from the pits.

The WEC races can be followed on various international TV channels in Europe, Asia, Australia and New Zealand, North and South America as well as in the Middle East and Africa.

Sports Car World Endurance Championship WEC

Sports prototypes and GT vehicles contest the Sports Car World Endurance Championship (WEC) in four classes: LMP1 (eg. Porsche 919 Hybrid), LMP2, LMGTE-Pro (eg. 911 RSR) and LMGTE-Am (eg. 911 RSR model year 2015). They all compete together in one race but are classified separately.

Results

All scores: <http://www.fiawec.com/courses/classification.html>

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

Link Collection

Link to this article

<https://goo.gl/EcTE9z>

Media Package

<https://newsroom.porsche.com/media-package/porsche-motorsport-fia-wec-2017-lmp1-gt-spa-francorchamps-belgium-qualifying>

Downloads

Porsche 919 Hybrid takes pole position in Spa, press release, 05/05/2017, Porsche AG

Porsche GT Team on third grid row for Saturday's race, press release, 05/05/2017, Porsche AG

Videos

<https://player.vimeo.com/video/216197287>

External Links

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