



Motorsports Jun 17, 2016

18th pole position for Porsche in Le Mans

The Porsche Team with the innovative 919 Hybrid has secured the 18th pole position in total for the brand at the Le Mans 24-Hours. The best Porsche 911 RSR takes up the prestigious race from the fourth GT grid row.



Second and third qualifying, LMP1

Due to mostly wet track conditions in both qualifying sessions on Thursday, held from 7 pm to 9 pm and from 10 pm until midnight, there were no improvements in lap times for the top cars compared to the first qualifying session from Wednesday night. The unbeaten best time for the field of 60 cars was achieved by Neel Jani on Wednesday. The Swiss had lapped the 13.629 kilometre long circuit in 3:19.733 minutes. In difficult track conditions he stayed above his qualifying record of 3:16.887 minutes that he achieved in 2015 and that now remains for the current track layout of the Circuit des 24 Heures. Timo Bernhard (DE) managed the second fastest lap on Wednesday. The reigning World Champion had managed a lap in 3:20.203 minutes. This means a front row lock out for the same Porsche works drivers as in Le Mans 2015. In the history of the race, that is being run in 2016 for the 84th time, it is the 15th time that Porsche has achieved a one-two result in qualifying.

Jani shares the 662 kW (900 PS) number 2 hybrid prototype with Romain Dumas (FR) and Marc Lieb (DE). Bernhard takes on what is known as the world's hardest car race with partners Brendon Hartley (NZ) and Mark Webber (AU) in the number 1 sister car.

Second and third qualifying, GT-classes

The anticipated hunt for pole position for the 24 Hours of Le Mans was a washout: Heavy rain during the second and third qualifying sessions prevented faster lap times, compared to the previous day with a dry first qualifying session on the 13.629-kilometre Circuit des 24 Heures. Like most of the 60 cars, the two GT-class Porsche Motorsport works-entry 911 RSR racers were unable to improve on their grid positions for the 84th running of the long distance classic in France. In the 911 RSR with the starting number 92, overall Le Mans winner Earl Bamber (New Zealand) and his teammates Frédéric Makowiecki (France) and Jörg Bergmeister (Germany) take up the prestigious race on Saturday at 15.00 hrs from the fourth GT grid row. Lining up on the row behind them is the #91 sister car, driven by

outright Le Mans winner Nick Tandy (Great Britain) and Frenchmen Patrick Pilet and Kévin Estre.

One of the few drivers who went out on this rainy night at exactly the right time was Patrick Long (USA). The Porsche factory pilot, who contests the GTE-Am class in the 911 RSR of the Abu Dhabi Proton Racing customer team with Khaled Al Qubaisi (Abu Dhabi) and David Heinemeier Hansson (Denmark), turned a perfect qualifying lap despite the difficult conditions. This catapulted his team from seventh to third.

Quotes after second and third qualifying

Fritz Enzinger, Vice President LMP1: "It is great to start in Le Mans with both cars from the front row. This achievement is the result of painstaking work by the team to prepare the two 919 Hybrids, and this gives us the best possible basis to reach our goal and defend last year's Le Mans win."

Andreas Seidl, Team Principal: "The result proves that we as a team went in the right direction when developing the 919 Hybrid for 2016. Both car crews did a sensational job. Despite difficult conditions, we have managed to bring both cars so far through the race week without any technical issues, and on track we had no incidents either. We know we've got a fast car – but we are well aware that pole position, especially in Le Mans, doesn't mean a lot in paving the way to a Sunday success. Now we will go and do final preparations for the race. We've got huge respect for the task ahead. The competition will be strong, but we feel ready and confident."

Dr Frank-Steffen Walliser, Head of Porsche Motorsport: "The weather conditions today didn't allow us faster lap times. We were able to fine-tune the setup on our 911 RSR for rainy conditions, but our drivers didn't get much track time. The result is sobering, of course. The gap to the leaders is very large. Let's see whether the rule makers come to a final decision, after the promised analysis, concerning the BoP of the GT cars for tomorrow's race. Apart from this, we're totally focused and we'll tackle this fascinating classic with great enthusiasm. The race runs over 24 hours, it shouldn't make a difference what our grid positions are."

First qualifying, LMP1

The best lap time for the field of 60 cars was achieved by Neel Jani on Wednesday night. Early into the session, the Swiss lapped the 13.629 kilometre long circuit in 3:19.733 minutes. He shares the (662 kW) 900 HP number 2 prototype with Romain Dumas (FR) and Marc Lieb (GER). Timo Bernhard (GER) achieved the second fastest time today in 3:20.203 minutes, he partners Brendon Hartley (NZ) and Mark Webber (AUS) in the number 1 sister car.

In Le Mans three qualifying sessions are held with each of them lasting for two hours. The best lap time achieved in these six hours is the one that decides each car's grid position. Because the weather conditions are currently tending to be changeable, it is not clear what Wednesday's time sheets from the dry session may be worth in terms of grid positions. The session was red flagged for about 13 minutes, but not extended. It also saw frequent incidents and yellow flags, which made it difficult to find a clear lap.

First qualifying, GT-classes

The best-placed Porsche 911 RSR with the starting number 92 posted the eighth quickest time in the GTE-Pro class. Sharing the cockpit of the winning racer from Weissach, which is based on the seventh generation of the iconic 911 sports car, are overall Le Mans winner Earl Bamber (New Zealand), Jörg Bergmeister (Germany) and Frédéric Makowiecki (France). The sister works-run 911 RSR (#91), with outright winner Nick Tandy (Great Britain) as well as Frenchmen Patrick Pilet and Kévin Estre at the wheel, clocked the tenth fastest time at the first show of strength on the 13.629-kilometre Circuit des 24 Heures.

Media Service

Live communication from the pit on Twitter: @Porsche_Team.

To receive press releases and photographic material automatically, to access the archives and to download video material, please register at: <https://presse.porsche.de>

At <https://presse.porsche.de/motorsport> the new Porsche Motorsport Media Guide is available.

Videos can be found on the Porsche channels on [Vimeo](#) and [YouTube](#).

www.newsroom.porsche.com bundles the latest press releases and background information and is accessible without registration.

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).

On the Web current information is available from www.fiawec.com an www.24h-lemans.com. Further interesting information about Porsche Motorsport waits at Porsche.com/FutureSportscar.

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Downloads

Infographic, Porsche in Le Mans, 2015, Porsche AG

Both Porsche 919 Hybrid in front after first qualifying, Press release, 06/15/2016, Porsche AG

Best Porsche 911 RSR posts eighth fastest time; Press release, 06/15/2016, Porsche AG

Fourth grid row for the best Porsche 911 RSR, Press release, 06/16/2016, Porsche AG

18th pole position for Porsche in Le Mans, Press release, 06/16/2016, Porsche AG

Videos

<https://player.vimeo.com/video/171030197>

<https://player.vimeo.com/video/170851127>

External Links

<http://www.24h-lemans.com/live/en/>

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