

Porsche scores points and gains important insights at season opener

27/02/2021 Porsche kicked off its second Formula E season with two night races in the desert of Saudi Arabia. The world's first fully-electric racing series celebrated its premiere as an official world championship on the demanding street circuit in Diriyah – and the TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E Team harvested points from both races.

Round 2

Pascal Wehrlein (GER) achieved a strong fifth place on Friday at his debut race with the Porsche 99X Electric. In race two on Saturday, he finished 10th. His teammate André Lotterer (GER) concluded today's race on the Arabian Peninsula in 11th place.

Claiming second in the Super Pole Qualifying, Pascal Wehrlein laid the foundation for his top-five finish in race one. The positive result meant that he took up race two on Saturday among the first qualifying group and therefore had less than favourable grip on the track. At the wheel of his Porsche 99X Electric,

he headed into the race from P16. The fact that the narrow and twisty track near the capital Riyadh offers very few chances to overtake and the competition among the strong Formula E line-up is very well balanced made it impossible for him to finish further up the field. Due to subsequent time penalties given to competitors who finished in front of him, he ultimately inherited tenth place, which is worth one point.

A puncture in race one hampered his teammate André Lotterer, and bad luck plagued him again in race two: An accident on a fast stretch of the track during free practice resulted in his Porsche 99X Electric having to undergo an overhaul. It proved impossible to get the car back on its wheels in time for the qualifying, hence he had to start the race over 45 minutes (plus one lap) from the pit lane. Lotterer managed to gain five positions – and also benefited retrospectively from the time penalties imposed by the race director. With debris lying on the track from accidents, the race was red-flagged shortly before the end.

Coming up:The next race for the TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E Team is round 3 of the ABB FIA Formula E World Championship: the Rome E-Prix on 10 April.

Comments on the Diriyah E-Prix, Round 2

Amiel Lindesay, Head of Operations Formula E: “We took a bit of a risk when we let André start from the pit lane so that we could save some energy. Unfortunately, it didn't quite work. Two full course yellows and the premature termination of the race didn't help either. Still, there are many positives that we can take from this season-opening round, and some important insights that can help us progress. After a fantastic qualifying performance, Pascal started Friday's race from the first grid row, and André Lotterer from the fourth grid row – that was a great team effort. Today didn't go smoothly. The team did an outstanding job, and they rebuilt André's car in time for the race. Such a race is like a puzzle, and for us today some of the pieces didn't quite fit. Still, that doesn't faze us. We know what we can do and we remain confident.“

Pascal Wehrlein, Porsche works driver (#99): “All in all, that was a good start to the season for us. Above all, Friday's great qualifying, a top-five placing in the race and the top-ten result today make me optimistic. Today was more difficult. When you drive among a bunch of cars that were strong in the first race, it's not easy to get ahead. I tried everything and was a little too optimistic at one point – I was handed a drive-through penalty for the manoeuvre, and a better result wasn't possible. Now we have to see how we can improve for the next race in Rome. I'm confident that we'll return stronger.”

André Lotterer, Porsche works driver (#36): “It's a pity that we couldn't demonstrate how much progress we've made compared to the previous season. Unfortunately, this was a weekend to forget for me. Yesterday a screw in the tyre, today an accident during free practice, so that I missed out on qualifying. A huge thank you to my crew for repairing my car in time for the race. Things can only get better in Rome.”

Round 1

The TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E Team made a good start into the new season of the ABB FIA Formula E World Championship. On the demanding street circuit in Diriyah, Saudi Arabia, Pascal Wehrlein (GER) finished his first race with the Porsche 99X Electric in fifth place, thus earning Porsche important points towards the championship. His teammate André Lotterer (GER) secured 16th place at the first night race in the history of the innovative electric racing series.

After a strong performance and setting the second-fastest time in the Super Pole qualifying, Pascal Wehrlein took up the race on the 2.495-kilometre track close to the capital Riyadh from the front row of the grid. Driving the No. 99 Porsche 99X Electric, he got off the line well and proceeded to chase down the frontrunner. However, on the narrow, twisty street circuit, he was unable to keep the pressure on the leader over the race distance. At the halfway mark of the race over 45 minutes and one lap, he fell back to fifth place after his pursuers called on additional power via the Attack Mode. Two safety car phases towards the end of the session hampered his charge back to the front.

For his teammate André Lotterer, the race ran less smoothly. The seasoned specialist took up the race from the seventh grid spot. A puncture, however, forced his No. 36 Porsche 99X Electric into the pits and cost him positions.

Race two of the doubleheader season opener in Diriyah is contested on Saturday, 27 February. The race gets underway at 8.03pm local time (6.03pm CET).

Comments on the Diriyah E-Prix, Round 1

Amiel Lindesay, Head of Operations Formula E: “First and foremost, we’re all thrilled that we’re finally able to race again. It has started well for us. Pascal managed to match the pace of the frontrunners and save energy in the process. However, the settings for our attack mode weren’t correct, which hampered us a bit. We still have to analyze what exactly happened. Pascal could finish the race okay, while André had to pit for a tyre change. We’re now looking ahead and push again tomorrow.”

Pascal Wehrlein, Porsche works driver (#99): “All in all, that was a good first race of the season. But obviously, if you start from the front row you have expectations of winning the race. That’s why I’m not entirely happy because a better result would definitely have been possible. My start was good and initially I had decent speed, but that changed after the first Attack Mode. We don’t yet know why this happened. We’ll take a good look at the data and consider what we can do better on Saturday.”

André Lotterer, Porsche works driver (#36): “That’s not how I imagined my first race of the new season. My Porsche 99X Electric felt good in practice and qualifying, but we have to improve the performance. On top of that, I probably drove over a piece of debris lying on the track and so I had to pit with a puncture. Even though I didn’t earn any points today, I’m still confident about Saturday’s race.”

Preview: Q&A for the Diriyah E-Prix

The TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E Team travels to the season-opening doubleheader event with fond memories. In November 2019, the squad celebrated a successful Formula E debut on the street circuit not far from Riyadh, with André Lotterer scoring second place with the Porsche 99X Electric. His new teammate, Pascal Wehrlein, contests his maiden race as a Porsche works driver in Diriyah. The Formula E season was originally scheduled to start in Santiago de Chile in January, however it was postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic and relocated to Saudi Arabia.

Porsche tackles its second season with a very clear commitment to Formula E. The sports car manufacturer uses the fully electric single-seater sport for systematic development work and to expand its expertise in the field of battery-electric drives. After the successful debut season of the Porsche 99X Electric, the engineers at Weissach have made extensive improvements to the powertrain. The team has also been restructured: Martin Füchtner takes over the role of Technical Project Leader Formula E. Malte Huneke, who held this position since the launch of the Porsche Formula E programme, is now responsible for the overall vehicle development of all Porsche Motorsport racing vehicles.

With twelve teams and 24 drivers, the ABB FIA Formula E World Championship boasts another strong line-up in season 7. Ten automobile manufacturers are represented – more than in any other international motor racing series.

Amiel Lindesay (Head of Operations Formula E)

Waiting for the season to get underway was a real test of patience. Are you and your team excited to start in Diriyah?

“We can hardly wait to finally get racing again after the long break. The start of a new season is always exciting, especially for us. This time, we’re much better prepared and we’re also starting with higher expectations compared to last season. Because of the pandemic, the season was very short. For us as a rookie team, that proved to be a major handicap because we didn't get the critical track experience due to the cancelled races. Now we’re all hoping for a full and, for us, successful 2021 season.”

How difficult has it been to maintain motivation within the team over the last months – and how important is a successful start to the season?

“That was quite a challenge. We’re a racing team and we want to race. The lockdown had a profound impact – despite all the virtual opportunities that we could utilise for the further development of the Porsche 99X Electric. Then came the cancellation of the season-opening round in Chile. However, we’re used to reacting quickly to new developments. Flexibility is part of our everyday life. We’ve always had the team spirit and solidarity, so we’re heading into the 2021 year feeling highly motivated. Obviously, a successful start to the season would help. However, it’s much more important to start with a perfectly

prepared car and to always give 100 percent. We've been working on this over the past few months. Everything else will then fall into place."

What is different now compared to when you started Formula E a year ago, and what are your goals for the second season?

"Our rookie season was a rollercoaster. We simply lacked the consistency you need to be among the frontrunners at the end. But that's pretty normal in the first year. Now we have to take the next step. Taking the experiences from our debut season, we can now focus on our track performance and on making our car faster. If we can achieve this, we'll also achieve our goals: We want to win races and be world champions."

André Lotterer (Porsche works driver, #36)

You started your first Formula E season with Porsche with second place in Diriyah. What's the big challenge for you this time?

"Formula E is a really difficult championship. To be successful, everything has to come together. You have to qualify as far up the field as possible, get through the race without any problems and have a good strategy when it comes to energy management. And you also need a well-balanced car. The big challenge for us will be to be well prepared for every eventuality so that we can respond quickly if something doesn't go according to plan. That's the key to success. We grew together as a team with these challenges and we've taken major development steps compared to last season. But now we have to implement them, especially in critical situations."

Has this also changed the goals for the season?

"Of all the teams, we're facing the steepest learning curve. Expect a good performance. We learned a lot during our debut season. During our test drives, as well, we saw that our engineers did a great job in developing the Porsche 99X Electric. So, yes, this has changed our objectives. In our first season, our goal was to finish on the podium, and we achieved that. Now we want to win. Obviously, this increases the pressure, but I'm sure we can handle it."

You suddenly had a lot of free time after the cancellation of the season-opener in Santiago de Chile. How did you use it?

"That was an unexpected change of plan, but I quickly adapted to the new situation. I improved my sports programme and added other disciplines: for instance, I took up kick boxing. And I also spent time in the simulator."

Pascal Wehrlein (Porsche works driver, #99)

For you, the break from racing was particularly long. Are you looking forward to the start of the season?

“I can’t wait. The break was extremely long for me. My last race was almost a year ago in Marrakesh. Of course, we tested in between and made good progress, but that doesn’t replace racing. Everyone in the team is eager to use what we learned from the tests in the race. I’m hoping for a successful start to the season in Diriyah and for the rest of the season to go as planned.”

You contest your first race for Porsche in Diriyah. Is that something special for you, and what’s possible this season?

“It’s definitely something special. After all, Porsche is one of the most successful automobile manufacturers in motorsport. For me, it’s a great honour and a great motivation to be part of the Porsche Motorsport family. I’m pretty familiar with Formula E and I know what’s important in this racing series. We tested extensively to prepare for the new season and we’re well equipped for the challenges that lie ahead. We have everything it takes to win races – and that’s precisely our goal.”

Are night races particularly challenging?

“I really enjoy driving at night. The atmosphere is very special. Everything seems a lot faster. The track will be brightly lit. Still, as a driver, you have to really concentrate because you have a smaller field of vision and it’s harder to spot the reference points. At least we won’t be blinded by the sun.”

The racetrack

The Diriyah E-Prix is contested on a 2.494-kilometre street circuit featuring 21 corners, which runs past old fortifications and traditional houses made of clay. “It's a real driver’s track, very demanding,” says André Lotterer, who is particularly pleased that there are not as many 90-degree bends and hairpins as there are on most other Formula E circuits. “In the first 14 corners you go only left, right, uphill, downhill, fast, slow. As a driver, you don’t have the time to check your energy use. Only after turn 14 can you look at the steering wheel.” And the main issues? “The difficulty is to set up your car so that it runs well in different situations. It’s also tricky to find a good rhythm. And the wind blows sand from the desert onto the track, which can make it very slippery.”

The Media Service

The first photos from Diriyah will be available on the Porsche press database on 25 February. Race reports will follow on 26 February (race 1) and 27 February (race 2). Further information about the TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E Team will be posted live on the Twitter channel @PorscheFormulaE. All

relevant information about the team, the drivers and the racing series can be found in the Porsche Formula E Media Guide.

The Media Guide

As a supplement and expansion of its classic media guide, the TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E Team now presents interesting content on Porsche's involvement in Formula E that offers excellent added value to the media. Initially, the focus is on the Porsche 99X Electric, with which Porsche tackles its second Formula E season in Diriyah. In a 3D animation, users can click on various details of the fully-electric racing car, such as the powertrain, brakes or steering wheel. Martin Füchtner, Technical Project Leader Formula E, shares information in explanatory videos. The media guide can be accessed via https://media.porsche.com/formula-e. The content will be regularly updated over the course of the season and expanded with additional interactive material.

The partners

With 16 partners, the TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E Team again heads into its second season with an extraordinary partner portfolio. Eight are represented on the Porsche 99X Electric as on-car partners. T AG Heueris at the forefront as the title and timing partner. Porsche and the Swiss manufacturer of luxury watches can look back on many successful collaborations in motor racing. The simulation software specialist ANSYSis the technology partner. Vodafone joins the team as the official communications partner. In addition to its role as title sponsor of the ABB FIA Formula E World Championship, the Swiss energy and automation technology group ABB appears on the Porsche racing vehicles. With its Mobil brand,ExxonMobil was closely involved in the development of the Porsche 99X Electric as a technology partner.

The fashion company Hugo Boss is the global clothing partner of Porsche Motorsport and the team's outfitter. As a technical partner for fireproof racing overalls as well as shoes and luggage, the squad is equipped by the sports lifestyle company Puma. The tyre manufacturer Michelin, a long-standing partner of Porsche Motorsport, is also involved in Formula E. Other partners of the TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E Team are TRILUX (lights), C. & A. VELTINS (brewery), Humbel Gear Technology (gear technology), Kärcher (cleaning technology), Hazet (tool supplier), Red Bull (energy drinks), Stilo (helmets) and SACRED Coffee (coffee and tea).

The Porsche 99X Electric

Campaigning the Porsche 99X Electric, Porsche returned to open-wheel single-seater racing after more then 30 years and celebrated a successful debut scoring second place at the season-opener in Saudi Arabia's Diriyah. The fully-electric racing car sporting the Weissach-developed Porsche E Performance Powertrain also serves as a development platform for the sports car manufacturer's fully-electric

production models. Hence, the 800-Volt technology which Porsche utilises in Formula E is also found in the Taycan as the first fully-electric production sports car from Porsche. Energy management and efficiency are important factors of success in Formula E and in the development of production cars. The 99X Electric has a maximum output of 250 kW (340 hp) in qualification mode and 200 kW (270 hp) in normal race mode. Attack Mode boosts the output to 235 kW (320 hp), with Fanboost increasing the performance to 250 kW (340 hp). Maximum recuperation is 250 kW; the usable battery capacity is 52 Kilowatt hours.

Formula E

Formula E is the world's first fully-electric road racing series bringing thrilling motorsport to people living in major cities. As an accelerator for innovative and sustainable technologies of mobility, it promotes the worldwide acceptance of electric vehicles with the aim to counteract climate change. The format is compact: practice, qualifying and race all take place on one day. Each race is contested over 45 minutes plus one lap. Formula E, which features a team and driver world championship for the first time this year, has attracted more automobile manufacturers than any other racing series. This makes for interesting and hotly contested races. The TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E Team tackles its second season running the Porsche 99X Electric in 2021.

2021 races*

Ten races make up the provisional calendar of the ABB FIA Formula E World Championship for the first half of 2021.

Race 1 – 26th February: Diriyah (Saudi Arabia)
Race 2 – 27th February: Diriyah (Saudi Arabia)
Race 3 – 10th April: Rome (Italy)
Race 4 – 11th April: Rome (Italy)
Race 5 – 24th April: Valencia (Spain)
Race 6 – 25th April: Valencia (Spain)
Race 7 – 8th May: Monaco (Monaco)
Race 8 – 22nd May: Marrakesh (Morocco)
Race 9 – 5th June: Santiago de Chile (Chile)
Race 10 – 6th June: Santiago de Chile (Chile)

The ABB FIA Formula E World Championship will announce the remaining 2021 race dates in spring.

* Subject to changes

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



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Video

https://newstv.porsche.com/porschevideos/174174_en_3000000.mp4

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