

Motorsports Nov 20, 2015

Bahrain: How the training went

Two 90-minute free practice sessions for set-up work were on the agenda ahead of the FIA World Endurance Championship's finale in Bahrain - a strong start for the Porsche 919 Hybrids.



The Porsche Team with its two Porsche 919 Hybrid Le Mans prototypes enjoyed two smooth sessions on the 5.412 kilometre long Bahrain International Circuit in Sakhir. One was held in daylight with the other in the dark. While the temperatures were between 25 and 28 degrees Celsius, the wind from the desert kept blowing fine sand onto the Formula One track.

Drivers Timo Bernhard (DE), Brendon Hartley (NZ) and Mark Webber (AUS) set the fastest lap in FP1 (1:42,800 minutes) and came third in FP2 (1:43.360 minutes). Their teammates Romain Dumas (FR), Neel Jani (CH) and Marc Lieb (DE) were fourth with the number 18 sister car in both sessions (1:43.454 min/1:43.529 min).

Drivers' world championship title at stake

For Bernhard/Hartley/Webber there is nothing less than the drivers' world championship title at stake. They are leading by 12 points ahead of the fastest Audi drivers (Marcel Fässler/André Lotterer/Benoît Tréluyer). Porsche secured the manufacturers' world championship title on 1st November at the penultimate round in Shanghai. The six-hour race in Bahrain starts on Saturday at 15:00 hrs local time with the sun setting at 16:45 hrs.



Bahrain International Circuit

Quotes after free practice

Alexander Hitzinger, Technical Director: "In both sessions we have been focussing on tyre comparisons between Michelin's 'soft hot' and 'soft hot plus' compounds. On one side the tyre wear here is particularly tough, while the grip level can change quite quickly. The fact that other racing series' are running here this weekend on different brands of tyres plays a role, as does the sand, which is being blown onto the track from the desert. You've also got a lot of pick-up here – rubber which sticks to your tyres. We went through our programme as planned. As expected, Audi is very strong here. This means we can look forward to a very interesting race."

Drivers Porsche 919 Hybrid number 17

Timo Bernhard (34, Germany): "Both sessions were good. We improved the set-up from the first to the second free practice session. But the Audis are really strong. The most important thing is to get the race set-up right, because we need to keep our Michelin tyres in good shape for as long as possible. This is not easy here in the desert with the high temperatures."

Brendon Hartley (25, New Zealand): "The track is quite slippery and offers very little grip. It's hard to get the rubber working well on the track's surface. For FP2 we have clearly managed to improve the car's balance."

Mark Webber (39, Australia): "It was a normal practice day. We went through our programme, I also did a long run and the car is behaving okay. The track is pretty hard on tyres and we do still have some work to do."

Drivers Porsche 919 Hybrid number 18

Romain Dumas (37, France): "In the first session we compared the Michelins and the results looked good. For the second session the car was even better, because it was also cooler. The temperature helps the car for sure, but this is the same for everybody. To handle the traffic in the dark wasn't that easy, but generally it is all okay."

Neel Jani (31, Switzerland): "Since the first free practice session we have been making progress. We are working in the right direction with the set-up and now are able to keep following this path. At this track it isn't easy to handle the traffic with the tyre pick up off the racing line."

Marc Lieb (35, Germany): "I've had a rather short shift today. I didn't do a lot of driving in FP1, and then in FP2 we had a full course yellow after only three laps. Because all three of us needed to safely complete the mandatory night laps, I had to jump out of the car early on. However, the car was definitely better in FP2 than before that. We have made the right steps in the right direction and for tomorrow we aim to improve."

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