

Motorsports Oct 2, 2016

Petit Le Mans: Fifth place for the 911 RSR

At Petit Le Mans on the storied Road Atlanta racetrack, a difficult season for Porsche in the IMSA SportsCar Championship has come to an end. The race at a glance.



After a sensational overall victory for the Porsche North America works team at the prestigious ten-hour race in 2015, which earned Porsche the championship titles for manufacturers, drivers and teams, the Porsche 911 RSR missed out on a podium result at its last works-entry race.

In the GTLM class, which with five manufacturers is the most strongly represented, the fastest 911 RSR helmed by Earl Bamber (New Zealand), Frédéric Makowiecki (France) and Michael Christensen (Denmark) finished fifth. In the sister 911 RSR, the defending IMSA GT champion Patrick Pilet (France), Nick Tandy (Great Britain) and Richard Lietz (Austria) were running in a promising third with four hours to go. After completing 223 laps on the demanding 4.087-kilometre circuit in the US state of Georgia, the 911 RSR became entangled in a collision with a sports prototype and was thrown out of contention.

911 RSR the most successful GT race car of recent years

However, while the farewell performance did not run according to plan, this did not diminish the impressive successes of the 911 RSR. Since its debut in 2013, this race car has contested a total of 73 races in the WEC Sports Car World Endurance Championship, the IMSA SportsCar Championship in the USA and Canada as well as the European Le Mans Series and secured 21 victories and eight championship titles. Some of these victories were secured at the most illustrious long distance classics such as Le Mans, Daytona, Sebring, Watkins Glen and Petit Le Mans, making the 911 RSR, which is based on the seventh generation of the iconic 911 sports car, the most successful GT race car of recent years. Its successor will also celebrate its race debut in the USA at the Daytona 24-hour classic on January 28/29, 2017.

In the GTD class, in which customer teams field the Porsche 911 GT3 R, Park Place Motorsports scored second place with drivers Jörg Bergmeister (Germany) as well as the Americans Patrick Lindsey and Matthew McMurry. For the 911 GT3 R, which notched up its first win in the IMSA SportsCar Championship at Laguna Seca, this was its sixth podium result in its maiden race season.

Dr Frank-Steffen Walliser, Head of Porsche Motorsport: "We experienced an exciting race today. It's a shame that we lost our number 911 contender through no fault of our own. But the team fought hard and didn't waste any time in getting the car back on its wheels so that it could at least drive the last two laps. And the number 912 could have scored a better result, too. Still, we rank third in the manufacturers classification against strong opposition. We are thrilled for our customer team, Park Place Motorsports, who took up the race with their 911 GT3 R from second on the grid and turned it into a second place on the podium after a tough fight."

Patrick Pilet (911 RSR #911): "It was another difficult race for us. Still, I'm very proud of the team. They supported us with great pit stops. As expected, we didn't have the fastest car at the beginning of the race, but we were confident that we'd gain ground over the course of the race with better grip. Despite this, we were running in the top five for quite some time, and we were even up to third place after one of the fast and perfect pit stops. What happened then is simply part of motor racing. We can't change it. Now we'll work hard on our new 911 for 2017 to get it fit and ready for the season-opener at Daytona."

Nick Tandy (911 RSR #911): "The wrong decision of another driver cost us a possible top result today. He wanted to overtake at a place where you normally can't overtake. It took me completely by surprise. After our 1-2 victory in Texas the entire team worked very hard to wind up the season well at Petit Le Mans. That makes it all the more sad that it didn't work out as we'd imagined."

Earl Bamber (911 RSR #912): "It was rather strange to race my 911 RSR for the last time. At the same time I'm looking forward to its successor. Next season we aim to bring home wins and titles with it. Today we couldn't fight for the top spots. Ultimately, it was just a matter of getting to the finish without problems."

Frédéric Makowiecki (911 RSR #912): "That wasn't exactly an ideal finale. We've achieved quite a bit this year by scoring two wins and six podiums. But all in all Petit Le Mans was symbolic for the whole season – we often couldn't match the pace of the opposition. I hope and I'm confident that this will change with our new car in 2017."

Race result

GTLM class

1. Fisichella/Vilander/Calado (I/SF/GB), Ferrari 488 GTE, 398 laps
2. Hand/Müller/Bourdais (USA/D/F), Ford GT, 398
3. Gavin/Milner/Fässler (GB/USA/CH), Chevrolet Corvette, 398
4. Garcia/Magnussen/Rockenfeller (E/DK/D), Chevrolet Corvette, 397
5. Bamber/Makowiecki/Christensen (NZ/F/DK), Porsche 911 RSR, 395
6. Edwards/Luhr/Wittmer (USA/D/CAN), BMW M6, 391
7. Briscoe/Westbrook/Dixon (AUS/GB/NZ), Ford GT, 372
8. Serra/Pier Guidi/Bertolini (BRA/I/I), Ferrari 488 GTE, + 350
9. Auberlen/Werner/Farfus (USA/D/BRA), BMW M6, 317
10. Pilet/Tandy/Lietz (F/GB/A), Porsche 911 RSR, 229

GTD class

1. Keating/Bleekemolen/Miller (USA/NL/USA), Dodge Viper, 385 laps
2. Bergmeister/Lindsey/McMurry (D/USA/USA), Porsche 911 GT3 R, 384
3. Balzan/Nielsen/Segal (I/DK/USA), Ferrari 488, 384
4. Marsal/Palttala/Lawrence (USA/SF/USA), BMW M6, 384
5. Snow/Sellers/Miller (USA/USA/USA), Lamborghini GT3, 383
6. Aschenbach/Bell/v. Moltke (USA/USA/USA), Audi R8, 383
9. Riberas/Farnbacher/James (E/D/USA), Porsche 911 GT3 R, 366

Final GTLM result after 11 races

Drivers

1. Millner, Gavin, Corvette, 345 points
2. Briscoe, Westbrook, Ford, 328
3. Garcia, Magnussen, Chevrolet, 319
4. Bamber, Makowiecki, Porsche, 313
5. Fisichella, Vilander, Ferrari, 305

6. Hand, Müller, Ford, 301
7. Auberlen, Werner, BMW, 298
8. Pilet, Tandy, Porsche, 285
9. Edwards, Luhr, BMW, 267

Manufacturers

1. Chevrolet, 359 points
2. Ford, 341
3. Porsche, 330
4. Ferrari, 317
5. BMW, 314

Teams

1. #4 Corvette Racing, 345 points
2. #67 Ford Chip Ganassi Racing, 328
3. #3 Corvette Racing, 319
4. #912 Porsche North America, 313
5. #62 Risi Competizione, 305
6. #25 BMW Team RLL, 301
- #66 Ford Chip Ganassi Racing, 301
8. #911 Porsche North America, 285
9. #100 BMW Team RLL, 267
10. #68 Scuderia Corsa, 164

Info

The first race of the 2017 IMSA SportsCar Championship is contested on 28/29 January at the Daytona 24-Hour classic in Daytona/Florida.

This is the IMSA SportsCar Championship

The IMSA SportsCar Championship is a sports car race series contested in the USA and Canada, which was run in 2014 for the first time. The series was formed from the merger of the American Le Mans Series and the Grand-Am Series. Sports prototypes and sports cars start in four different classes: GTLM (GT Le Mans), GTD (GT Daytona), P (Prototype) and PC (Prototype Challenge). The Porsche 911 RSR runs in the GTLM class, with the new Porsche 911 GT3 R contesting the GTD class.

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Fifth place at the last works outing for the 911 RSR, Press release, 10/02/2016, Porsche AG

Close qualifying at season finale Petit Le Mans, Press release, 10/01/2016, Porsche AG

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