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WEC: Porsche sets fastest lap of the day

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Hartley set the fastest lap of the day in the afternoon with a time of 1:44.594 minutes. The championship leaders, Romain Dumas (FR), Neel Jani (CH) and Marc Lieb (DE), in the sister car nearly completely missed the morning session because of a precautionary battery change. They came third in the afternoon session with Marc Lieb setting their fastest lap time (1:46.264 minutes). The six drivers with the two Le Mans Prototypes completed a total of 122 laps in constantly dry and mild conditions.

Porsche has a 59-Point advantage

The Weissach based LMP1 team is hoping for an early win for its second consecutive world championship title in Shanghai. To secure the manufacturers' trophy Porsche, which currently has a 59-point advantage, needs this to be at least 44 points at the end of the weekend. So far this season the Porsche Team has achieved five race wins with its two 919 Hybrids and leads the manufacturers' world championship with 263 points ahead of Audi (204) and Toyota (174). With the current advantage being 59 points, the team could start partying if the gap was at least 44 points after six hours of racing.

We very much regret the loss of Audi as a great competitor from the 2017 WEC season on. Porsche will compete in the entire 2017 WEC season as planned. So far Porsche has derived a huge benefit in terms of knowledge and innovations for production cars from the LMP1 programme – this applies in particular to the 24-hour race at Le Mans. To be too relaxed in this year's fight for the championship would be wrong, warned Fritz Enzinger.

Porsche trio top the standings in the championship

In the drivers' world championship, the trio of Romain Dumas (FR), Neel Jani (CH) and Marc Lieb (DE) top the standings with 140 points ahead of the best-placed Toyota (117) and Audi drivers (111.5). To secure an early title win, Dumas/Jani/Lieb would have to extend their current 23-point advantage in Shanghai to 26 points. The crew of the sister Porsche, Timo Bernhard (DE), Brendon Hartley (NZ) and Mark Webber (AU), has 93.5 points to its tally and ranks fourth.

The Weissach developed Porsche 919 Hybrid produces a system power of over 662 kW (900 HP). Its combustion engine is a ground breaking downsizing motor: the very compact two-litre V4 turbocharged petrol engine drives the rear axle with almost 368 kW (500 HP). Two different energy recovery systems – brake energy from the front and exhaust energy – feed a lithium ion battery that, on command, passes on the energy to an E machine to power the front axle with an extra boost of over 294 kW (400 HP).

Facts and Figures

In 2015 Hartley/Webber (1:42.719 minutes) and Dumas/Lieb (1:43.488 minutes) locked out the front row of the grid. (In the WEC the average of the respective best laps of two drivers counts for the grid position.)

Last year about two thirds of the race were held on a wet track. Bernhard/Hartley/Webber won ahead of Dumas/Jani/Lieb. What back then was the fourth one-two race result of the season for Porsche secured an early title win in the manufacturers' world championship.

The WEC efficiency regulations limit the amount of energy that can be used per lap. In Shanghai the Porsche 919 Hybrid can use 4.95 megajoule of electrical power from energy recovery systems and 1.395 kg/1.910 litres of petrol.

At normal race speed (no safety car) the Porsche 919 Hybrid is due for refuelling after every 31 laps at the latest.

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.

A set of Michelin slick tyres should ideally last two fuel tank fills. However, in order to set the best lap times, it may be sensible to change tyres more often.

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. 6.5 sets of dry weather tyres are available per car for qualifying and the race.

A lap of the Shanghai International Circuit, used for Formula One Grands Prix since 2004, is 5.451 kilometres. It has 16 corners – nine right-handers and seven left-handers – of which the well known "snail corner" at the beginning of each lap counts as a double right-hander. From a bird's eye view the track's layout is reminiscent of the Chinese characters of "shàng" that translates into "upward" or "up" and also is part of the city name of Shanghai.

The circuit is located about 40 kilometres outside the city centre.

Quotes after Free Practice

Team Principal Andreas Seidl: "It was a solid first day for us. We were testing various set-up options and made some steps in the right direction. Our lap times were competitive on single fast laps as well as on long runs. Unfortunately, we lost an hour of running time with car number 2 in the first session. Because not all parameters of the high voltage battery were as expected, we did a precautionary battery change. This loss of track time is certainly a disadvantage for these three guys and they are not happy with the car's set-up yet. Now we have to draw the right conclusions from today's results and prepare both cars for tomorrow in the best possible way."

Drivers Porsche 919 Hybrid number 1

Timo Bernhard (35, Germany): "In the second session we had a small problem that cost us some 15 minutes, but afterwards we managed to get the most out of the session and did a lot of set-up work for the race. We got a better understanding for the tyres and got several parameters right in their operational window. The track has improved, but is still very dirty. Again the tyres tend to pick up lots of dirt, which may lead to a complex race. We have tried several things and now we have to put together all the various parts of the

puzzle. I think this has always been a strength of ours.”

Brendon Hartley (26, New Zealand): “In the morning we did longer runs and our lap times looked quite promising. In the second session Mark and I did a qualifying simulation, which was also good. Afterwards Timo continued with the race preparations.”

Mark Webber (40, Australia): “We have had a smooth day. The lap time from our qualifying simulation obviously looks nice. One minute 44 seconds is a really quick lap time here in Shanghai.”

Drivers Porsche 919 Hybrid number 2

Romain Dumas (38, France): “The car’s set-up is not the optimum yet, but it is okay to drive. To improve traction we can do some more work on the set-up. There’s quite some traffic out there, and lap times always depend on where on the lap you get the traffic. Overall I’m quite confident.”

Neel Jani (32, Switzerland): “We have had a bit of a difficult start to the weekend, because we almost didn’t drive in the first free practice session. That meant we had to do some sort of emergency programme in terms of race preparation in the second session. We want to improve a few things on the car.”

Marc Lieb (36, Ludwigsburg): “Even in the second session I found there was still relatively low grip on the track. The tyres show an extreme performance peak here. In other words, new ones turn quite quickly into old ones. Because of the time we lost in the morning we are behind with our programme, but, other than that, after the battery change everything was fine.”

Info

LMP1 qualifying will be held on Saturday from 14:00-14:20 hrs local time.

The six-hour race on the Shanghai International Circuit is the eighth and penultimate round of the 2016 FIA WEC and starts on November 6 at 11:00 hrs local time (04:00 hrs in Central Europe).

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) and at porsche.com/fiawec.

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

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

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Media Package

<https://newsroom.porsche.com/media-package/porsche-motorsport-wec-lmp1-shanghai-china-919-hybrid>

Downloads

Porsche 919 Hybrid sets fastest lap of the day, press release, 11/04/2016, Porsche AG

Match point for Porsche in the fight for the manufacturers’ championship, press release, 10/31/2016, Porsche AG

Videos

<https://player.vimeo.com/video/160098933>

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