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Porsche Motorsport Weekly Event Notes

Porsche Extends IMSA Win-Streak at Mid-Ohio. Porsche Earns World Endurance Championship GTE-Pro Manufacturer Title. And more.



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Three-Straight. Porsche Extends IMSA Win-Streak at Mid-Ohio.

The Porsche GT Team has claimed its third-straight win of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship. Porsche factory drivers Earl Bamber (New Zealand) and Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium) went up against the typically strong opposition in the GTLM class at the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course, yet celebrated their second-consecutive victory of the season, the first coming at Long Beach, California in April. The No. 911 Porsche team car of Patrick Pilet (France) and Nick Tandy (Great Britain), who won the Mobil 1 Twelve Hours of Sebring with Frédéric Makowiecki (France) to start the Porsche winning streak, finished in third-place to give the 911 RSR two of the three podium positions in the fourth race of the 2019 GTLM season. Last year, the pair in the No. 912 Porsche 911 RSR also won the race at the Lexington, Ohio-area track.

In contrast to the previous two-days of practice and qualifying, the race took place in sunny, dry conditions. As the race progressed with no caution periods, the drivers were able to take advantage of the setup of the Porsche 911 RSR over the long distance. Vanthoor, who started second on the class grid, handed the car off to Bamber approximately 50 minutes into the race while running in second-place. Thanks to consistency and strategy, the New Zealander swept into the lead shortly afterwards. The No. 912 car held on to the lead to

the checkered flag at the conclusion of the two-hour and 40-minute race.

However, the race for the No. 911 vehicle turned into a rollercoaster ride. When the race went green, Pilet jumped the start and received a drive-through penalty. After serving the punishment, the No. 911 was in last place in the GTLM class but Pilet began a spirited charge through the field. The Frenchman fought his way back toward the front turning the car over to Tandy who had his own battle to move the car into third-place. It was the first time this season the North American Porsche GT Team placed both cars on the class podium.

In the GTD category, factory driver Patrick Long (Manhattan Beach, California) and his German teammate Marco Seefried finished just off the podium in fourth-place at the wheel of the No. 73 Porsche 911 GT3 R fielded by the customer squad Park Place Motorsports. The team opted for a strategy with a late pit stop which came during the only safety car phase of the race. With his wealth of experience, American Long used his fresh Michelin tires to fight into the top-five. Bad luck plagued the customer team of Pfaff Motorsports. Putting in a strong stint, 2017 IMSA Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge Canada by Yokohama Champion Zacharie Robichon (Canada) was on pace to score a second-place finish in the 500+hp GT3 car from Weissach, Germany. His teammate, Porsche Selected Driver Scott Hargrove (Canada), defended this potential podium placing until the closing five minutes when the car went off in turn one. The No. 9 was ultimately classified in twelfth-place.

The two Porsche 911 RSR contesting the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship will be transported to Europe at the end of May. On June 15 – 16, the North American team will, like last year, join the factory cars from the FIA World Endurance Championship to tackle the 24 Hours of Le Mans (France). Both vehicles will be back in North America for the continuation of the GTLM season at the Six Hours of The Glen.

Steffen Höllwarth, Program Manager, IMSA SportsCar Championship.

"That was a perfect race with a sensational result. We had the fastest car over the distance. Our engineers did a great job with the setup. With Earl and Laurens, everything is working perfectly at the moment. But the pursuit race of the sister car was just as strong. Victory, podium place, leading all classifications plus the fact that our colleagues in the FIA WEC have just clinched the world championship yesterday – it doesn't get better than this. Now we're looking forward to the next great challenge: the 24 Hours of Le Mans."

Earl Bamber, Driver, No. 912 Porsche GT Team Porsche 911 RSR.

"The day was perfect for us. It's incredible that our run in Mid-Ohio continued seamlessly. We're leading the championship, but that doesn't mean we're leaning back. The competition will certainly not make it easy for us. Before the next IMSA race we first have to tackle Le Mans in mid-June. Hopefully everything will continue to go just as brilliantly there for us, too."

Laurens Vanthoor, Driver, No. 912 Porsche GT Team Porsche 911 RSR.

"What a wonderful race! After the free practice in wet conditions, it was difficult to find a suitable setup for the changed conditions. But our team used its huge experience to do it perfectly. Our car was the strongest in the GTLM category over the distance. We've won Long Beach, we've won at Mid-Ohio – this year and last year – we're on a fantastic roll. As far as I'm concerned, Le Mans can come now."

Patrick Pilet, Driver, No. 911 Porsche GT Team Porsche 911 RSR.

"After the jump start we launched a gigantic pursuit race. Nick, in particular, got the most out of the car in his stints, and I even had hopes of finishing in second-place. Still, third earns us all-important points. Essentially, the overall result has put Porsche in an excellent position in the championship."

Nick Tandy, Driver, No. 911 Porsche GT Team Porsche 911 RSR.

"That was an extraordinarily eventful race today. During my chase through the field I enjoyed some wonderful duels with the Ford and BMW drivers. It was huge fun. But right now I'm looking forward to our start at the Le Mans 24-hour race."

Patrick Long, Driver, No. 73 Park Place Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3 R.

"I'm really proud of our result. We started from far down the field and fought our way to the front. The yellow flag helped us a bit, but we implemented a special strategy as a team. The decision to change the tires later proved absolutely correct. Fourth-place earns us a lot of points in the championship. At the next race we'd like to be right up the front with the Porsche 911 GT3 R. It certainly has the potential."

World Champions. Porsche Earns World Endurance Championship GTE-Pro Manufacturer Title.

With a third-place and an eighth-place finish in the penultimate round of the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC), Porsche has earned 2018/2019 "Super Season" LMGTE-Pro Manufacturer Championship. The pair of Porsche 911 RSR operated by the factory Porsche GT Team accumulated enough points at Spa-Francorchamps to leave the Belgium track with the manufacturer's trophy.

However, the performance of the two "works" cars at the Six Hours of Spa was not enough to lockdown the Drivers' title. The final round, the 24 Hours of Le Mans, will be run on June 15 – 16.

In a season that included two stops at the classic facility in Belgium, Michael Christensen (Denmark) and Kévin Estre (France) finished on the podium with the No. 92 on Saturday. Their teammates, Richard Lietz (Austria) and Gianmaria Bruni (Italy), in the No. 91 were on target for a podium finish before a late-race penalty forced them to pit, leaving them in eighth-place at the checkered-flag.

Fans witnessed a turbulent six-hour race at Spa, Belgium. The changing conditions between sunshine, rain, hail and heavy snow presented teams with major challenges. With a total of 15 pit stops, the Porsche GT Team chose the right strategy in the battle for the manufacturers' championship. After multiple safety car and full-course-yellow phases, the two driver crews Estre/Christensen and Lietz/Bruni never lost their cool and converted the match point into the manufacturers' world championship title.

Christensen/Estre, the two leaders of the drivers' championship, kept calm in the chaotic weather conditions in Belgium to claim the third podium step after almost six hours of racing. Their driver colleagues Lietz and Bruni were running in third-place at the end of the race but were handed a drive-through penalty. As the race was stopped shortly before the six-hour duration due to the weather, the race director converted it into a time penalty. As a result, the No. 91 Porsche 911 RSR was classified in eighth-place and Estre/Christensen moved up one position from fourth to third-place.

In the LMGTE-Am class, the No. 77 Porsche 911 RSR fielded by Dempsey Proton Racing earned its third-straight win. Sharing the cockpit of the winning car was Porsche Young Professional Matt Campbell (Australia), Christian Ried (Germany) and Riccardo Pera (Italy). The second best Porsche customer squad was Project 1 in fifth-place finish. Porsche factory driver Jörg Bergmeister (Germany) shared driving duties in the No. 56 car with Patrick Lindsey (Santa Barbara, California) and Egidio Perfetti (Norway).

Fritz Enzinger, Vice President Motorsport.

"For Porsche, this is the continuation of successful years. First, we won six titles with our LMP1 program, and now the WEC manufacturers' title in GT racing after a crazy race. You can see how motor racing successes can inspire an entire company. I'd like to thank all of our employees who contributed to this outstanding success!"

Pascal Zurlinden, Director GT Factory Motorsport.

"It's hard to find the words to describe how proud I am that we've won the manufacturers' title for Porsche with this incredible team. The race was a rollercoaster of emotions for us. The weather threw everything at us: snow, rain, hail and sunshine. We were at the front and at the back of the field at times. The weather also turned our strategy upside down, but we simply kept pushing our way back up through the field. What a day!"

Kévin Estre, Driver, No. 92 Porsche GT Team Porsche GT Team.

"Crazy, completely crazy – that's the best way to describe this race. Most of the time it was really difficult to keep the car on the racetrack and sometimes we had to take a gamble. But the main thing is that we're the manufacturer world champions! That's a big success, a huge success. The drivers' world championship decision will have to wait until Le Mans, but we're leading by a huge margin."

Michael Christensen, Driver, No. 92 Porsche GT Team Porsche GT Team.

"That was probably the most extraordinary race in my career. As far as the weather was concerned, it couldn't have been more chaotic. Everyone in the team had to remain calm, including us drivers. It worked and in the end we climbed the podium in third place."

Richard Lietz, Driver, No. 91 Porsche GT Team Porsche GT Team.

"As expected, the weather made the race chaotic. Unfortunately, at the end we were handed a penalty, which I can't fully understand. But rules are rules and I accept that. Porsche is the manufacturers' world champion. That's what counts today!"

Gianmaria Bruni, Driver, No. 91 Porsche GT Team Porsche GT Team.

"Our goal was to claim the manufacturers' title here, and that's what we did, in spite of the very difficult race with wild weather conditions. I'm delighted to have contributed to this fantastic result for Porsche and I'm very happy to be part of this team."

Park Trifecta. Park Place Earns First Michelin Pilot Challenge Race at Mid-Ohio.

Park Place Motorsports is no stranger to victory lane. The Dallas, Texas-area team has earned race wins in the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship and Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge USA by Yokohama series in previous seasons. By winning the Mid-Ohio 120 Michelin Pilot Challenge (MPC) race on May 4, the Patrick Lindsey-led operation has earned the trifecta of IMSA series victories. A perfectly-timed strategy call put the No. 7 Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport of Alan Brynjolfsson and Trent Hindman on the top-step of the MPC podium at the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course.

Mike Johnson, Director of Race Operations, Park Place Motorsports.

"After a rough weekend in Virginia it's great to come out on top a week later in the IMSA series. Winning in Pilot Challenge is very difficult and to get a win in our third weekend as a relatively new team and car is outstanding. Alan did his job keeping the car in the top 10 for over an hour, and then Trent showed why he is the best driver in the series running the fastest laps in very difficult conditions."

Trent Hindman, Driver, No. 7 Park Place Motorsports Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport.

"The plan all along was to run Alan long in that first stint. With the changing weather conditions, we were planning on a decent amount of yellows and everyone being on different strategies. Everyone jumped when they saw the rain coming up on the radar, but we stayed patient and analyzed the situation a bit further which ultimately got us into victory lane. Hopefully, we're going to build on this for the rest of the year and bring home a couple of more wins."

Alan Brynjolfsson, Driver, No. 7 Park Place Motorsports Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport.

"This was a classic, 'everything went right,' win. This really was a full team win that showed we have what it takes to be competitive in IMSA Michelin Pilot Challenge. We had a great strategy from Mike Johnson as well as the car being set up beautifully. We stayed on slicks seeing that there was rain all around us on the radar with one small clear spot. If the radar had shifted, it would have gone against us, but thankfully it worked in our favor. I feel total confidence in Trent; I always know he's the man. I know he can always do the job if he has the right tools like he did today."

Fresh Air. Long's Luftgekühlt 6 Scheduled for May 11 in North Hollywood.

Patrick Long's Luftgekühlt 6, scheduled for May 11, has already sold out for all car and pedestrian tickets – no walk-up tickets will be sold. The event, now it is sixth year, celebrates all-things from the era of air-cooled Porsche street and race cars. This year's event will be held at Universal Studios Backlot in North Hollywood, California. Several classic race cars have been organized for display at the event, including the 1984 Bayside 962 from Gunnar Racing, the first IMSA Championship winning 914-6 from the Brumos Collection and the 1981 Le Mans-winning Porsche 936 from the Porsche Museum in Stuttgart, Germany.



Frank Wiesmann - Motorsports and Brand Heritage

Manager, Product Communications

770-290-3414

frank.wiesmann@porsche.us

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