



Interim report 1, Nürburgring 24-hour race, Nürburgring-Nordschleife (Germany)

Porsche 911 GT3 R impresses in turbulent start phase on a wet track

Stuttgart. The Porsche 911 GT3 R has impressively demonstrated its strengths in the initial phase of the 24-hour race. In ever-increasing rain during the first hour, works driver Kévin Estre put in an inspired drive. Taking up the race from eleventh in the so-called “Grello” run by the Manthey customer team, the Frenchman worked his way to the top within just four laps. After the first hours of racing, the No. 911 car is comfortably holding its own among the top group.

The identical 911s fielded by Huber Motorsport and KCMG also made impressive progress in the early phase. Germany’s Nico Menzel overtook numerous vehicles during his first stint, with his compatriot Marco Seefried even reaching fourth overall in the No. 23 car. Thanks to this performance, Huber Motorsport now holds a clear lead in the Pro-Am class. Joshua Burdon brought the No. 18 entry of the Asian customer team KCMG up to sixth place.

Bad luck, however, has hampered the Frikadelli Racing squad. Australia’s Matt Campbell made up numerous places during the first hour of racing before handing the No. 30 car off to Earl Bamber. The New Zealander had just become used to the tricky conditions on the drying Nordschleife when he had to return to the pits with damaged power steering. The repairs cost the crew four laps. A little later, a puncture caused the car to spin. The No. 31 sister car is still running among the top 10, despite a spin, as is Rutronik Racing’s Porsche 911 GT3 R. The two more than 500 PS vehicles campaigned by Falken Motorsports are currently chasing down the leading pack.

“First of all, we can say that after our mediocre performance in the wet qualifying session, we made the right choices based on our analyses. In the extremely wet early phase, the cars were very fast, and all of our customer teams made up a lot of ground,” concludes Sebastian Golz, Project Manager Porsche 911 GT3 R. “So far we’ve seen that all vehicles are maintaining a steady and strong pace. That makes us very confident for the next few hours. The fact that Frikadelli Racing’s number 30 car had to pit for repairs was a bit of a setback.”

Drivers’ comments on the race so far

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 GT3 R #911): “We opted against wet tyres at the start – and that decision was spot on. Our Porsche 911 GT3 R was simply fantastic in the initial phase so I was able to reach the front pretty quickly. But then it got very, very difficult. The first part of the track was literally underwater but the second half was dry. That was incredibly stressful mentally, but it turned out really well.”

Nico Menzel (Porsche 911 GT3 R #23): “That was an exciting and exhausting start to the race. We went out on slicks but the rain became too heavy and we had to pit early to change the tyres. Afterwards, the track was so wet in some areas that it was simply a matter of keeping the car on the road. I managed that well. At times we actually matched the pace of the frontrunners. We’re leading the Pro-Am category and are doing well. It can continue like this.”

Josh Burdon (Porsche 911 GT3 R #18): “I openly admit: When it started to rain on some parts of the track before the start, I got a bit nervous. But that quickly disappeared once the race got underway. Our team made the right tyre choice. By the time I came into my first pit stop, I’d made up about ten positions, and then a couple more in the second stint. At the end of my drive, I handed the car over to my teammate in fifth place. That’s not too bad considering that we started from P26.”

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