



Race GTE, FIA World Endurance Championship, Race 5, Sakhir (Bahrain)

Porsche takes world championship lead with a one-two result

Stuttgart. Facing difficult conditions, the Porsche GT Team has achieved its third win of the season in the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC. At the six-hour race in Bahrain, Frenchman Kévin Estre and Neel Jani from Switzerland in the No. 92 Porsche 911 RSR narrowly beat their works driver colleagues Gianmaria Bruni from Italy and Austrian Richard Lietz. Thanks to the one-two result in the Kingdom of Bahrain on the Persian Gulf, Porsche has moved into the lead of the manufacturers' championship before the final round of the season. In the GTE-Am class, the customer teams Dempsey-Proton Racing and Project 1 claimed podium steps with their ca. 515 PS nine-eleven cars.

“It was a difficult weekend because there was a lot of pressure – we definitely had to perform today,” explains Alexander Stehlig, Head of Operations FIA WEC. “We needed to earn maximum points in order to stay in the fight for the championship heading to the final round. It worked. I’d like to thank all the mechanics, engineers and drivers – that was a perfect performance. From the outside, perhaps this double victory looked easy – it was anything but that. The tyres had to endure long stints in intense heat. It always hangs on the knife’s edge. We balanced this beautifully. Now we go up against our rivals on an equal footing for the big finale next weekend. I’m really looking forward to it!”

In an air temperature of 35 degrees Celsius and with a considerably hotter track surface, round five of the season turned into the expected heated battle in the truest sense. Taking up the race from positions one and two on the grid, Kévin Estre and

Gianmaria Bruni kept their cool and successfully fended off their competitors' attacks. The next challenge was to manage their Michelin tyres over long distances on the extremely demanding asphalt, which the experienced drivers did perfectly – thanks as well to the first-class work of their pit crews. The experiences from the three practice sessions helped to maintain the pace over the hour-long stints. The No. 92 car in the GTE-Pro class crossed the finish line a mere 0.690 seconds ahead of the identical sister car. With this result, Estre and Jani managed to slash the gap in the drivers' world championship to just one point as they head to the final round in Bahrain next weekend. Bruni and Lietz rank third. In the manufacturers' classification, Porsche has recaptured the lead.

In the GTE-Am class, the race on the Bahrain International Circuit was not only marked by tyre management but also by lap times of the amateur drivers. In the tight competition among 13 vehicles, Christian Ried and Egidio Perfetti gave a particularly impressive performance. The Dempsey-Proton team owner from Germany delivered strong stints at the wheel of the No. 77 racer, with his teammates Matt Campbell from Australia and New Zealander Jaxon Evans among the fastest in the field on the way to claiming second place in their class. Perfetti shared the cockpit of Project 1's No. 56 car with the Italians Matteo Cairoli and Riccardo Pera. In the decisive stint midway through the race, the Norwegian maintained a steady podium course with his customer RSR and laid the foundation for third place. The No. 88 technically identical 911 fielded by Dempsey-Proton Racing achieved position 13. GR Racing's entry took the flag in sixth place.

The FIA WEC finale takes off next Saturday, 6 November, again on the Bahrain International Circuit. The sixth and final round of the season will be contested over eight hours.

Drivers' comments after the race

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "That was a very critical victory for us in the No. 92 car and an extremely important one-two result for Porsche. This gives us every

chance to fight for the title at the finale. As a team, we gave a perfect performance. I'd like to thank our teammates in the sister car for not making life too difficult for us. That really helped. Now I'm looking forward to the decisive race. We definitely want to achieve a similar top result again."

Neel Jani (Porsche 911 RSR #92): "A one-two success for the Porsche 911 RSR – it couldn't be better. We drove with our sister car in formation for the entire race. Right at the end, they stopped their attack. Many thanks to our colleagues! First place today is hugely important for us to be in the best position in the drivers' world championship for the final round. We're now just one point behind the leaders. Next weekend we'll do everything to scoop the title pool at the season finale."

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "Mission accomplished. We wanted positions one and two – and we did it. It couldn't be better for Porsche. I'm very grateful to be part of this big Porsche family. We've taken another step towards the possible title win. Hopefully, we'll take a much bigger step next Saturday."

Richard Lietz (Porsche 911 RSR #91): "It was crucial to preserve the tyres over the distance. Bahrain is extremely demanding so you have to take care. If you overexploit the peak grip at the start on fresh tyres, you pay the price at the end of the stint. That's why our focus was always on not putting too much energy into the tyres. This worked well. We also decided not to fight against our team colleagues because that would have cost us a lot of time. From my point of view, this was a perfect race for Porsche."

Matt Campbell (Porsche 911 RSR #77): "We finally achieved our first podium result of the season. I take my hat off to the team. They won the fight against the No. 56 Porsche for us today. Our pit crew did a flawless job. I simply had to do my best and keep the car on the track. So, a huge thank you to the team."

Egidio Perfetti (Porsche 911 RSR #56): "We experienced a lot of bad luck during the season. With this in mind, we're very pleased with today's podium result. The three of

us drivers were really quick over the entire race distance. However, we kept losing a little time during our pits stops, which prevented an even better result. Still, we're satisfied. We would've been even happier if we'd been the fastest Porsche in our class, but unfortunately, that wasn't the case."

Race result

GTE-Pro class

1. Estre/Jani (F/CH), Porsche GT Team, Porsche 911 RSR #92, 174 laps
2. Lietz/Bruni (A/I), Porsche GT Team, Porsche 911 RSR #91, 174 laps
3. Calado/Pier Guidi (GB/I), AF Corse, Ferrari 488 GTE #51, 174 laps
4. Serra/Molina (BR/E), AF Corse, Ferrari 488 GTE #52, 174 laps

GTE-Am class

1. Keating/Pereira/Fraga (USA/L/BR), Aston Martin Vantage GTE #33, 172 laps
2. Ried/Campbell/Evans (D/AUS/NZ), Dempsey-Proton Racing, Porsche 911 RSR #77, 172 laps
3. Perfetti/Cairolì/Pera (N/I/I), Team Project 1, Porsche 911 RSR #56, 172 laps
- Wainwright/Barker/Gamble (GB/GB/GB), GR Racing, Porsche 911 RSR #86, 171 laps
6. Wainwright/Barker/Gamble (GB/GB/GB), GR Racing, Porsche 911 RSR #86, 171 laps
13. Andlauer/de Leener/Al Qubaisi (F/B/UAE), Dempsey-Proton Racing, Porsche 911 RSR #88, 166 laps

Full results and points' standings: fiawec.alkamelsystems.com

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