



PORSCHE

Press Release

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Interim report 1, Nürburgring 24 Hours, Nürburgring-Nordschleife (Germany)

Porsche uses heavy Eifel rain to catch up until race halted

Stuttgart. The Nürburgring 24-hour race was stopped after a little more than seven hours due to heavy downpours and too much water on the racetrack. Until this point, Porsche's customer teams made the most of the difficult weather conditions to advance up the field: all seven of the 911 GT3 R racers are still in the contest despite multiple incidents on the track. The two KCMG vehicles are running in the top ten, with the No. 18 entry driven by Porsche ambassador Timo Bernhard as well as Jörg Bergmeister (both Germany), works driver Earl Bamber (New Zealand) and Dennis Olsen (Norway) on fifth place. The No. 19 sister car shared by double-starter Olsen, Josh Burdon (Australia), Alexandre Imperatori (China) and Edoardo Liberati (Italy) is on ninth. Directly behind them is the best Frikadelli Racing vehicle crewed by works driver Mathieu Jaminet (France), Lars Kern, Lance David Arnold (both Germany) and Maxime Martin (Belgium). Four other 911 GT3 R are among the top 21 as they wait for the race to resume. Porsche expects the heaviest rain to arrive around midnight.

Comments after six hours

Sebastian Golz (Project Manager Porsche 911 GT3 R): "Our two major tasks are to keep the cars on the track and choose the right tyres for the conditions. Our competitors' lap times are very strong, but the balancing act we've seen until now has been between being fast and losing the car. We managed to advance up into the top ten and that was a huge step: We started with traffic all around us in the rain and, at times, the competitors had to drive with virtually zero viz in the spray."

Timo Bernhard (Porsche 911 GT3 R #18): “During my stint, I ended up fighting among a pack of four or five cars. That was cutthroat. I tried to find my rhythm, and ultimately my speed was pretty good. Unfortunately, I also had a little tête-à-tête: I wanted to overtake but the driver in front didn’t see me. In my attempt to avoid contact I slid to the inside. Something like that shouldn’t happen, it was my fault. The race is still long and we’re heading into a long night. We have to keep cool, especially in such weather conditions, because, when it rains, you’re often just a passenger on the Nordschleife. Still, our driver crew is strong, we have a great team and the Porsche feels fantastic.”

Jörg Bergmeister (Porsche 911 GT3 R #18): “In my first 90-minute stint I was the fastest car on the track at times and managed to make up ground – not bad for a retired person. But the conditions will not get easier. That’s just how the Eifel lives and breathes!”

Dennis Olsen (Porsche 911 GT3 R #19): “A good first double stint! We started from P22 and managed to plough through the field. The Porsche feels terrific in the rain, and the race started well for us. I’ll take a double break now and then jump back into our No. 18 car for another double stint.”

Nico Menzel (Porsche 911 GT3 R #25): “That was one of the most exhausting double stints I’ve ever driven. I started on used tyres because we’d taken the punt on a drying track. Then it started to rain again, which didn’t make my life any easier. I drove eight laps as if on ice. Things improved a lot once we’d fitted new tyres, and I was able to make some progress. But lap to lap the conditions keep changing from a drying track to torrential downpours.”

Klaus Abbelen (Porsche 911 GT3 R #30): “I’ve never experienced such a difficult stint. There are probably no ideal tyres for such conditions, and then the big oil spill on top – catastrophic. The tyres were so smeared that I couldn’t get them clean any more so I only drove seven laps – without hitting anything.”

Mathieu Jaminet (Porsche 911 GT3 R #31): “That was a tough and difficult double stint. In the first run, I raced on wet tyres and struggled with a lack of grip. What’s more, a vehicle spilled a lot of oil. Sometimes I was close to losing the car but luckily managed to keep it on the track. In the second stint, we mounted the so-called ‘drying-wet’ rubber. That was the right choice – until rain set in again...”

Maxime Martin (Porsche 911 GT3 R #31): “That was a bit tricky, but the race started out well for us. I could hardly see in the spray. The Porsche felt really good, but we then experienced some minor problems with the tyres. Now we can attack even harder.”

Christian Engelhart (Porsche 911 GT3 R #33): “I actually had a lonely stint without seeing another GT3 car the whole time, so I was able to find my rhythm. Initially, I struggled with the tyres. It was difficult getting them up to temperature. The less water there was on the racetrack, the better it got. Under these difficult conditions, the drivers are generally behaving themselves. Let’s see what the night brings.”

Martin Ragginger (Porsche 911 GT3 R #44): “It was important for me to get accustomed to the 24-hour race as quickly as possible. Because the track was constantly going between wet and damp, the pace kept changing. Our Porsche is running well. Although there aren’t as many cars competing, a couple of overtaking situations cost me a lot of time. The conditions are tough. I focused on finding a good speed and on not making any mistakes.”

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