

Podium Return. Porsche GT Team Settles for Third-Place Despite Being in Contention to Win.

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Podium Return. Porsche GT Team Settles for Third-Place Despite Being in Contention to Win.

The Porsche GT Team has concluded round five of this season's IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship with a return to the GTLM class podium. In an eventful race at the VIRginia International Raceway (VIR) in Alton, Virginia, Britain's Nick Tandy and his French teammate Frédéric Makowiecki earned a third-place result instead of the victory the No. 911 Porsche 911 RSR was in contention to take. Bad luck plagued the sister car of reigning champions Earl Bamber (New Zealand) and Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium). Midway through the race, a damaged diffuser and pit stop to make repairs dropped the second factory car down the field. The No. 912 car took the flag in fifth-place. As at the previous two races, the 2019-generation Porsche 911 RSR was the fastest vehicle in the fierce GTLM-class competition among manufacturers. Once again, however, fortune did not shine on the "works" squad. In the GTD category, the Porsche 911 GT3 R fielded by the customer squad Wright Motorsports finished in sixth-place with factory driver Patrick Long (Manhattan Beach, California) and Ryan Hardwick (Atlanta, Georgia).

While in the lead, a puncture saw polesitter Makowiecki pit early after just eleven laps. As part of a safety car phase, the No. 911 managed to work its way back up the order to the front and pull clear. However, the gap of up to 18 seconds was not enough to secure the long-awaited maiden victory for the new Porsche 911 RSR in IMSA. Shortly before the end of the two-hour, 40-minute race, the No. 911 sustained a second tire puncture. The pit stop for repairs threw Tandy back to third-place. In heated pursuit over the final laps, the British racer turned the fastest lap of the GT-only race with a time of one-minute, 41.333-seconds. Despite this he was unable to close the gap to the top.

While in the lead, the ca. 515-hp works cars were able to pull clear of the field several times. Thanks to their incredible consistency at the highest level, both vehicles were good for victory, however the No. 912 car driven by defending GTLM-class champions Bamber and Vanthoor was hampered by bad luck. During a fierce duel with a BMW, the diffuser at the rear sustained damage at the restart after a safety car phase. The ensuing repairs over two pit stops dropped the vehicle three laps down in the field.

Under the conditions, fifth-place was the best possible result.

In the manufacturer's classification, Porsche heads to round six of the season at Michelin Raceway Road Atlanta on September 6 ranked in third-place. In the driver's standings, Bamber and Vanthoor retain second-place. Their colleagues Makowiecki and Tandy have advanced to fourth-place as a result of the podium.

In the GTD class for vehicle complying with the FIA GT3 regulations, the Porsche 911 GT3 R fielded by the Wright Motorsports privateer effort continued its season of consistency with a sixth-place finish. Long and Hardwick put in an impressive charge in the 500+hp race car. After starting the race from the twelfth grid spot, the pair steadily worked their way through the field. The team ranks sixth in the GTD point standings.

Steffen Höllwarth, Head of Operations IMSA Championship.

"Both cars started the race from the first grid row, we were leading with both vehicles and ultimately finished in third and fifth. That's bitterly disappointing. Two punctures on our number 911 car, extensive repairs on 912 – that was the end of our winning chances. Our pace was great, and the team worked perfectly. For the upcoming race at Road Atlanta we want to finally get through a race without hiccups and claim the first win of the year with the new Porsche 911 RSR."

Frédéric Makowiecki, Driver, No. 911 Porsche GT Team Porsche 911 RSR.

"I'm absolutely gutted. To be honest, this third-place is the saddest podium of my career. We were so strong this weekend. It's just terrible that third was the best we could do. This result is so unjust for the team, the car and us drivers. And it also makes me sad that we're falling further and further down the rankings in the championship."

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

"Our car was truly perfect and the team did a flawless job. We can be proud of that. If you can make it to the podium against such tough competition despite two punctures, then that's a good indication of the strength. And that's precisely what makes me optimistic for the future."

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

"I'm utterly frustrated. Our unlucky streak just doesn't end. During the last three races, we were on course to win only to be robbed of the fruits of our hard work. Something always crops up. The team worked perfectly, our car was ultra-fast and the drivers tapped the full potential. Sadly, there was an unlucky contact which damaged the rear. Now we're looking ahead. At some point, we'll be on the sunny side again."

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

"We were looking good in the race and our pace was really strong. Then suddenly a BMW drove into the rear of my car after the restart. The diffuser was so badly damaged that the entire rear section had to be replaced. That threw us so far back that we lost all contact to the lead. It's just sad because we really deserved to win today."

Patrick Long, Driver, No. 16 Wright Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3 R.

"Today was a successful one. Sixth doesn't yield quite the result that we put together to charge from behind. Sometimes you finish off the podium and it's still a sweet result. I'm proud of everyone for battling through. It was great to watch Ryan hold off some ten-year veterans in his stint. That put us in the position to fight inside the top-ten. It became a fuel saving game at the end of the race, and no one was really able to push. We were light on our feet and had plenty of tire left. We could have used a yellow flag, but many would tell the same story. We'll push on to Road Atlanta for a longer race where qualifying may have less of a load bearing weight on the outcome. I'm happy with our progression and we'll push on."

Ryan Hardwick, Driver, No. 16 Wright Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3 R.

"What a race! I've never been so proud of a sixth-place finish in my entire life! After starting from 12th on a track that is notoriously difficult to overtake on, our Wright Motorsports team made some stellar strategy calls and executed lightning fast pit stops which put us inside the top-five early in the race. It felt great for me to be in the fight and battling with the race leaders at the front of the field for most of what ended up being a double stint for myself. I had a little moment with another car on the final lap of my stint that cost us a couple positions, but I'm still very proud of our team and our final result from VIR. I'm personally gaining confidence with every lap I drive this Porsche, and I'm really looking forward to racing at my hometown track at Road Atlanta in a couple weeks!"

Masters Class. Kingsley and Metni Win GT3 Cup Challenge USA at VIR.

2020 is positioning itself to be one of the most competitive in the history of the IMSA Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge USA by Yokohama. Four races into the season, the one-make Porsche championship has had three drivers step to the front as contenders for wins and the championship. Appropriately to a series which, by using only the Porsche 911 GT3 Cup race car, focuses on driver talent for young up-and-comers as well as drivers pursuing a dream after focusing on other careers first, the three who have stepped forward fit those two distinct groups. The two, 45-minute races held at VIRginia International Raceway (VIR) over the weekend were proof of that hypothesis with two winners and four podium finishers in the tightly contested events on the 3.27-mile, 17-turn road course in Alton, Virginia.

Saturday's first race put Jeff Kingsley (Canada) on the top step of the podium in the No. 16 Kelly-Moss Road & Race Porsche 911 GT3 Cup race car just ahead of teammates Alan Metni (Austin, Texas) and Sebastian Carazo (Puerto Rico). The podium finish also gave Metni the Masters class victory – for drivers over 45-years-old. The third-place was Carazo's best career finish to-date.

Sunday's race, pre-cursor to the Michelin Pilot Challenge event, was again a display of intense competition. The No. 99 of Metni started from pole position by virtue of his fastest race lap on Saturday. Despite having intense pressure from Kingsley and 2020 IMSA Hurley Haywood Scholarship

winner Riley Dickinson (New Braunfels, Texas) and a late race caution that put added pressure, Metni held on to capture his first overall victory. It was also the first time a Masters class driver has won overall since Craig Duerson at Road America in 2013.

Alan Metni, Driver, No. 99 Kelly-Moss Road & Race Porsche 911 GT3 Cup.

"It's fitting that it happens there, this is the first place I ever podiumed three-and-a-half years ago in (the) Gold (Cup class, for previous-generation cars). I'm really happy to have it happen here. I just had to keep my head down and racing my race and driving as close to the perfect lap as I could come up with. Fortunately, when they tangled with each other, they slowed each other down a little bit, gave me a little room to breathe. The guys at Kelly-Moss gave me a great car. The race is won in the training and this is the hardest working team in motorsports today."

High Five. Nolasport Enters Five Porsche Race Cars for SRO Road America Weekend.

The New Orleans, Louisiana-based team of Nolasport makes their way north to Road America this week with four Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport machines and a sole Porsche 911 GT2 RS Clubsport. The track in Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin two SRO GT World Challenge America races for GT3-spec race machines (90-minutes), two GT Sports Club (GTSC) events, 40-minutes each for the GT2-based racers and three each of GT4 America Sprint (50-minute) and SprintX (60-minute) using GT4-spec, road-based race cars.

Nolasport is going into the second half of the SRO season with impressive momentum.

Jason Hart (Dallas, Texas) and Matt Travis (Houston, Texas) of the No. 47 Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport have stood on the podium for five of their eight races this season, and currently lead the Pro/AM championship at 142 points, 20 points ahead of the next pair of drivers.

Sean Gibbons (Dallas, Texas) and Zac Anderson (Dallas, Texas) have maintained a perfect podium record with a podium finish in all eight races, which includes five class wins. The No. 7 duo is leading the SprintX AM championship at 176 points, 66 points ahead of the next pair of drivers, also in a Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport.

In the No. 46 Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport, father-son duo of David Walker (Dallas, Texas) and Russel Walker (Dallas, Texas) made their professional racing debut at Sonoma Raceway August 6-9, where they walked away with a third-place finish in their first race and finished just shy of the podium in fourth-place for the second and third races of the weekend.

All three cars will be competing in three 60-minute events, which includes a make-up round from the canceled Lime Rock Park (Connecticut) weekend.

Pulling double duty in the No. 48 Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport and No. 48 Porsche 911 GT2 RS

Clubsport is Dallas, Texas-resident Jason Hall. The weekend will also serve as Hall's professional race debut.

Nolasport, owned by Jon Scheurich, has created a name for themselves in Porsche racing over the last few years. The Porsche maintenance and repair shop entered their first race in 2015 with the IMSA Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge USA by Yokohama. In 2016, the inaugural year of the Porsche Cayman GT4 Clubsport race car, the team claimed both Pro and Am championships in PCA Club Racing's GT4-spec series. Since then, they have remained active in PCA Club Racing, IMSA Michelin Pilot Challenge and SRO America.

While half of the Nolasport crew will be in Wisconsin operating the five Porsche race cars, the other half of the crew will be in Colorado Springs, Colorado for the 98th running of Pikes Peak International Hill Climb. They will be supporting the Yokohama-sponsored GT4 Clubsport being piloted by Blake "Bilko" Williams as part of the Porsche Pikes Peak Trophy by Yokohama.

Jon Scheurich, Principal, Nolasport.

"We are excited about our growing team for SRO and for the chance to be a part of Pikes Peak. None of this would be possible without the effort and determination of the crew at both the shop and the track."

Jason Hart, Driver, No. Nolasport Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport.

"Road America is always a track I look forward to, as well as the town of Elkhart Lake. Matt and I are having a blast this year in SprintX with four overall wins so far! With three races this weekend and the weather looking like it may rain, we would certainly enjoy a repeat rain win. The field is strong so we will be going to work in the car to put forth a maximum effort as always."

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