Where We Left Off. Porsche and IMSA Look Toward Sebring for Third WeatherTech Round.

14/07/2020 Three Porsche-built race cars will finally get their chance to unload at the 3.74-mile, 17-turn facility and challenge for multiple class victories at the Grand Prix of Sebring.

In March, the Porsche GT Team, the North American factory racing arm for the German marque, and privateer Porsche entrants were ready to “respect the bumps” of Sebring International Raceway at the annual Mobil 1 Twelve Hours of Sebring. However, the COVID-19 crisis struck and forced the teams to remain locked-down and wondering what was next. What was next was a five-month wait for the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship to return to Florida for its second race of the 2020 season – rescheduled to Daytona Beach, Florida where the sport had also opened its season in January. On July 18, three Porsche-built race cars will finally get their chance to unload at the 3.74-mile, 17-turn facility and challenge for multiple class victories.

The Grand Prix of Sebring is a two-hour, 40-minute race taking the green flag at 5:35 p.m. ET/2:35 p.m. PT on Saturday. The 68th Running of the Mobil 1 Twelve Hours of Sebring has been rescheduled as the WeatherTech Championship season-finale on November 12 – 14.

“We claimed podium spots at the first two races in Daytona and by now we’re the only manufacturer to finish on the podium at all races," said Pascal Zurlinden, Director Factory Motorsport. "The 2020 season has started very well. Now there’s just one thing missing: We want to achieve the first win in the USA for the 2019-spec Porsche 911 RSR."

Currently leading the GTLM class Drivers and Team Championship standings, the No. 912 driver pairing of Earl Bamber (New Zealand) and Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium) will attempt to move one position ahead of where they have placed the ca. 515 HP Porsche 911 RSR-19 race car in the last two events – up to first-place after second-place runs in both the 24-Hour and two-hour, 40-minute races at Daytona. The No. 911 Porsche GT Team factory entry shared by Nick Tandy (Great Britain) and Frédéric Makowiecki (France) currently sits fourth in the Driver and Team competitions. Tandy has won the last two IMSA WeatherTech events at Sebring – both at the 12 Hours – and he and “Fred Mako” have finished in third-place in both events held this season. A win by either pairing would move the sports car maker from third-place in the Manufacturers’ standings into the championship lead. Porsche currently trails BMW and Chevrolet by one marker.

Wright Motorsports will continue to carry the Porsche banner in the customer-focused GTD category. The John Wright-lead organization is looking for a victory with Porsche factory driver Patrick Long (Manhattan Beach, California) and Ryan Hardwick (Atlanta, Georgia).

Practice for the third race of the North American sports car season begins Friday, July 17. A second practice and a qualifying session will build the intensity throughout the day to Saturday evening's green flag. The race will be shown live on NBCSN beginning at 5:30 p.m. ET/ 2:30 p.m. PT

Pascal Zurlinden (Director Factory Motorsport): "We claimed podium spots at the first two races in Daytona and by now we're the only manufacturer to finish on the podium at all races. The 2020 season has started very well. Now there's just one thing missing: We want to achieve the first win in the USA for the 2019-spec Porsche 911 RSR. Our factory squad in North America did an exceptional job under difficult conditions recently. I'm sure that our team will put in another strong performance at Sebring. I'm particularly pleased that the IMSA management and the local authorities have managed to make real motor racing possible again with a well thought-out health-protection concept. A huge thank you to all involved."

Steffen Höllwarth (Head of Operations IMSA Championship): "The IMSA races now come in quick succession. After the successful Daytona events, we're travelling to our next mission in Sebring feeling very good. We've won the twelve-hour race on this track in the past two years. However, the weather conditions were different because the long-distance classic was contested in the cooler month of March. Like at Daytona recently, we have to be prepared for heat and thunderstorms at the Sebring Sebring International Raceway. Due to the compact weekend programme, it'll be important to sort ourselves out in the first free practice. There's barely any time for detailed analyses or extensive setup changes. If you're fast from the get-go, you have the best chance of beating the tough competition in the GTLM class."

Nick Tandy (Porsche 911 RSR #911): "We're coming to Sebring as the winners of the last two twelve-hour events. That feels great. We're extremely motivated. Sebring is one of my all-time favourites. We want to continue our good run on this 'mogul terrain' as seamlessly as possible. Our new 2019-spec Porsche 911 RSR is sure to cope very well with the special Sebring conditions. We aim to score the first win of the season."

Frédéric Makowiecki (Porsche 911 RSR #911): "At the last two races in Daytona, we were a bit off with our strategy, and that impacted the result. But, there is no doubt that our Porsche 911 RSR has everything it needs to succeed in the cutthroat GTLM-class competition. We aim to prove this at the next race by continuing our winning streak there and taking the lead with the latest version of the RSR for the first time in the 2020 season. Sebring is our track!"

Earl Bamber (Porsche 911 RSR #912): "After two double podium results for the Porsche 911 RSR at the first two rounds of the season, our goal is clear: we want to clinch the first win. The signs look good. Our car is definitely competitive. Porsche has won the Sebring 12 Hours in recent years, and our tests there with the new vehicle ran well. The heat will certainly be difficult to cope with. The name of the game on this extremely challenging and bumpy racetrack is to maintain full concentration at all times. That'll be a key factor to a possible success."

Laurens Vanthoor (Porsche 911 RSR #912): "In view of the heat forecast for Sebring, it'll be extremely

exhausting. At Daytona recently, it was very warm, but there were more opportunities there for us drivers to catch our breath. That is certainly not the case at Sebring. Because of these conditions, the teams might opt for an additional driver change. On the other hand, we're now in the lead after two second places. If we keep finishing second and defend the title, I could easily live with that."

Image Sublines

Path: Inside E podcast – episode 9/Images/img_1.jpg
Title: Porsche 911 RSR (911), Porsche GT Team: Patrick Pilet, Nick Tandy, Frederic Makowiecki, Sebring, 2019, PCNA
Subline: 2019 12 Hours of Sebring

Link Collection

Link to this article
https://newsroom.porsche.com/en_US/motorsport/porsche-imsa-weathertech-sebring-21492.html

Media Package
https://pmdb.porsche.de/newsroomzips/9921c1a7-2d29-40de-ab35-d4bc38ecdd3b.zip