



PORSCHE

Press Release

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Le Mans Series, round 1 in Le Castellet, France

### **Early retirement for Porsche teams as victims of start crash**

**Stuttgart.** At the season-opener of the Le Mans Series, four of the five Porsche 911 GT3 RSR were caught up in a start crash that was not their fault. For all three professional Porsche teams contesting the GTE-Pro class, this marked an early end in Le Castellet after their vehicles suffered too much damage. After the formation lap, the safety car stayed out on the track with lights off while the start lights for the race were turned to green. This led to an unfortunate chain reaction: The back-markers in the field were still accelerating while those at the front were braking hard. The starter field was pushed together over the entire width of the track, leading to a collision. Luckily, the Porsche drivers remained largely uninjured.

After six hours of racing, the sole, unaffected Porsche 911 GT3 RSR brought home victory in the newly-created GTE-Am sports car class. In this class, only one professional driver is permitted per vehicle. The second 911 in the GTE-Am class received the flag in sixth, after the vehicle underwent extensive repairs due to the start crash.

“Well, that was the shortest race of my life,” said Porsche works driver Richard Lietz (Austria) laconically. “After the formation lap, the lights were already green, but because of the packed field it wasn’t possible to register that the safety car hadn’t yet left the track. Suddenly I was torpedoed from the left and pushed into the wall. I had no chance to avoid the accident.” Lietz’s teammate Marc Lieb (Germany) summed up: “This is a nightmare for us. All three GTE-Pro 911 have been shunted out of the race through no fault of our own. Richard and I had a great race set-up. Maybe we could have managed a podium result. For the next race in Spa, this means we have

to go hard out.” Last year, the Felbermayr-Proton duo, Lieb and Lietz, claimed victory at Le Castellet which laid the foundation for their title win in the sports car class.

The start driver for ProSpeed Competition, Porsche works driver Marco Holzer (Germany), was relieved he could get out of his demolished 911 GT3 RSR without serious injury. “After the start lights turned green everyone accelerated,” said Holzer. “Then suddenly they slammed on the brakes at the front. I was hit hard from the rear and slid sideways over the circuit, nudging another vehicle in the process.” Holzer contests his second season for the Belgian squad in the LMS. His teammate in the 2011-version 911 is race professional Marc Goossens (Belgium).

Factory pilots Wolf Henzler (Germany) and Patrick Pilet (France) were also caught up in the crash. The mechanics from IMSA Performance Matmut even attempted to repair the badly damaged 911 GT3 RSR, but the damage was too severe to repair at the track in time.

With this, the pleasure of winning the GTE-Am class with Felbermayr-Proton’s 2010-spec 911 was somewhat dampened. The performance of the team was particularly astounding considering that the blue Porsche 911 GT3 RSR was manned by three ambitious gentlemen drivers. Team owner Christian Ried (Germany) shares the cockpit with two Austrians Horst Felbermayr Junior and Horst Felbermayr Senior. The French duo Nicolas Armindo and Raymond Narac achieved sixth in the GTE-Am class after their 911 GT3 RSR underwent 75 minutes of repairs. The disappointment was particularly bitter because Armindo, as LMS new-comer, had built up the hopes of his IMSA Performance Matmut squad for a class win after posting the best time in qualifying.

**Statistics: 1<sup>st</sup> race LMS in Le Castellet, F**

**Result class GTE Am\***

1. Ried/Felbermayr Jr./Felbermayr Sen. (D/A/A), Porsche 911 GT3 RSR, 167 laps
2. Perazzini/Cioco/Lerneret (I/I/B), Ferrari F430, 167
3. Broniszewski/Peter (PL/A), Ferrari F430, 167
4. Christodoulou/Hummel/Quaife (GB/NL/GB), Ferrari F430, 166
6. Armindo/Narac (F/F), Porsche 911 GT3 RSR, 137

\* The result is preliminary, as a protest against the start procedure and hence the race classification has been made.

Round two of the Le Mans Series takes place on Saturday, 7 May, in Belgium's Spa-Francorchamps.

## This is the Le Mans Series

Contested for the first time in 2004, the Le Mans Series (LMS) is open for sports prototypes and GT vehicles. The regulations are based on the rules of the Le Mans 24 hour race. Five six-hour races are contested this season throughout Europe.

**GTE Pro class:** This most popular class amongst car manufacturers (previously known as the GT2 class) is traditionally the best supported: Slightly modified standard sports cars with up to 500 hp and a minimum weight of 1,245 kilograms.

**GTE Am class:** Like the GTE Pro, but with 2010-spec vehicles. In addition, the regulations dictate that each vehicle must have one professional driver at the most.

**LMP1 class:** Sports prototypes with up to 750 hp and a minimum weight of 900 kilograms (petrol engines) or 930 kilograms (diesel engines).

**LMP2 class:** Sports prototypes with ca. 440 hp, GT class homologated engines and an 825 kg minimum weight.

**FLM class:** Prototype brand trophy series for the ORECA FLM 09.

All race cars start together but are classified separately according to the class. Points are only allocated for placings in each class. Championship titles are awarded for drivers, manufacturers and teams in all five classes. With four title wins in 2005, 2006, 2009 and 2010, Porsche works driver Marc Lieb is the most successful pilot in the series.

Please note: Images of the Le Mans Series are available for accredited journalists from the Porsche Press Database under the internet address <https://presse.porsche.de>. On this website you can also activate the **Porsche Motorsport SMS Info Service** to receive the latest news and information from race tracks around the world via text messages.