



## **Porsche Motorsports Long Beach Report**

*Source: Porsche Motorsport*

### **PORSCHEs, ACURAS, FERRARIS STAGE CLASSIC BATTLE THROUGH THE STREETS OF LONG BEACH; PENSKE PORSCHE DRIVER MAINTAIN LMP2 CLASS POINTS LEAD**

#### **Flying Lizard Motorsports Porsches finish second and third in GT2 after Ferrari tire gamble pays off**

LONG BEACH, Calif. – April 19 – The Penske Porsche RS Spyders of Timo Bernhard (Germany) and Romain Dumas (France) maintained their LMP2 championship points lead over the American Le Mans Series with a second place finish at the Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach's Tequila Patron ALMS street race, while teammates Patrick Long (USA) and Sascha Maassen (Germany) finished third in class, equaling their best finish of the season.

With Brabham/Sharp Acura winning the LMP2 class 1.04 seconds over the Bernhard/Dumas Porsche, the Acura breaks a 13-race LMP2 winning streak for the Penske Porsches which began more than a year ago at the 2007 St. Petersburg's event. Even after the disappointing second-place finish today, Dumas/Bernhard maintain their LMP2 points lead (66 to 56) over the Acura drivers, and continued their streak of 14 races in a row of LMP2 podium finishes.

"The yellow flags and race traffic – our friends at many of the races last year when we won the championship – worked against us today," said Bernhard, who put the RS Spyder on the pole, and ran second overall and second in class most of the race.

"We had bad luck in traffic, especially overtaking the slower GT1 and GT2 cars – and did not want to risk the important points we earned to gain a position when the conditions were not safe," he said.

Hartmut Kristen, head of Porsche Motorsport world-wide, agreed, and praised the efforts of the drivers.

"The Penske Porsche drivers gave maximum effort, and we still had a chance for victory right up to the checkered flag," said Kristen.

Patrick Long surged from his fourth starting position in the #6 Porsche RS Spyder to take the lead on the first corner after the green flag. Despite pressure from the more powerful LMP1 Audi of Lucas Luhr, Long held the overall race lead for all 55 minutes of his stint, turning the car over to Sascha Maassen with 45 minutes left to go in the 100-minute event.

But in the shuffle of pit stops for all the top competitors, the #7 Bernhard/Dumas Porsche, now being driven by Romain Dumas, took the lead, but was passed by the LMP1 Audi driven by Marco Werner only one lap after the restart, and then the Brabham

Acura passed Romain with only four laps to go in the event. Maassen was able to hold off the other Acuras to finish third in class, preserving Porsche's lead in the manufacturer's championship.

The Dyson Racing Porsche RS Spyders finished fifth and seventh in the LMP2 class, with the Butch Leitzinger/Marino Franchitti entry fifth and the Chris Dyson/Guy Smith car seventh.

In the GT2 class for production-based sports cars, the Porsche – Ferrari battle continued right where it left off two weeks ago in St. Petersburg, with the Flying Lizard Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3 RSRs (Wolf Henzler/Jorg Bermeister and Patrick Pilet/Johannes van Overbeek) running one-two in front of the Melo/Salo and Farnbacher/Mueller Ferraris for the first hour of the race.

During the only pit stop made by all the contenders – under yellow for debris on the track – the two Lizard Porsches had good stops, but the Farnbacher/Mueller Ferrari gambled by not changing tires, taking a four-second lead when the green flag dropped. The Melo/Salo Ferrari had trouble re-starting after its pit stop, so it was a three car battle for the last 40 minutes.

A late yellow flag brought the cars back together in close competition, but, despite the fact the Henzler gave the Ferrari several looks to pass in the corners, he could not overtake it in the end. The Pilet/van Overbeek team car finished third. In the GT2 point standings, Bergmeister/Henzler trail Farnbacher/Mueller by six points.

"It was a tough finish – I had a great battle with Dirk Mueller the end. I had two or three chances to pull alongside him and tried to overtake. But I had to back off - he was fighting hard for his position for sure and we made the decision not to take the risk to save our GT2 points. It was tough to find a solid passing opportunity - I had to be very careful not to lose too much time trying to pass - because Patrick was right behind me in the #46 team car. I didn't want to either lose a position or put Patrick at risk. A few minutes before the end of the race, Patrick was hit by another car, and then bumped me – I lost rear grip and almost spun," said Henzler.

The Seth Neiman/Lonnie Pechnik Flying Lizard Porsche was seventh, after a banner broke loose from the guardrail and wrapped itself around the rear splitter of the car, causing the pair to lose a lap early in the race. Eighth was the VICI Racing Porsche of Nathan Swartzbaugh and Craig Stanton, rebounding from the DNS at St. Petersburg due to a pre-race crash.

The Farnbacher Loles Porsche 911 GT3 RSR of Marc Basseng/Alex Davison finished fifth after the cooler holding the ice water for the cool suite broke loose, hitting several important switches including the shut-off switch and the radio. Perhaps a couple of reports from the drivers involved show just how destructive a minor problem can be:

Alex Davison: "That was really disappointing because we were running quite well; our times were more or less the same as the leading cars. Unfortunately, the cool box came loose in the car. It was flying around all over the cockpit, hitting up to the windscreen, over on my lap and just smashing into everything. Four or five times, it switched the ignition off. At the same time, all the water had leaked out of the box and was leaking out of the car and going on the tires. Two times when the car stopped, another car hit me from behind. I thought, 'This is dangerous. We're going to get taken out,' so I came in the pits. But the cool box whacking into the radio must have done something, so we had no communication. I came in and jumped out and I signaled – held the cool box up – and I thought the guys saw it, but by the time I got back to the pits, I realized Marc had driven off and it was still in there. It's a pity because we ended up stopping under green and it cost us two positions."

Marc Basseng: "We only finished sixth and we were two laps behind, but again, we showed we have a really good car and we are a good team. The cool box got loose in the car, so I was fighting

with a 10-kilogram [22-pound] cool box during the safety car. I couldn't handle the car with the loose cool box on the passenger seat, so first I removed the ice, but it still wasn't good. So I disconnected the cool box and threw it out of the car. After the restart, I was behind the three leading cars and I was going the same times – sometimes quicker – and I think that really shows that we are a good team and we have a good car. Next time, I hope we have a little bit more luck to get a victory."

The Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach's Tequila Patron ALMS street race will telecast on a delayed-basis on ABC-TV at 12:30 PM Eastern time tomorrow, Sunday, April 20.

The next race for the American Le Mans Series is the Larry H. Miller Dealerships Utah Grand Prix Presented by the Grand & Little America Hotels on Sunday, May 19, at Miller Motorsports Park in Toole, Utah.