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New Porsche sports prototype to be called RS Spyder



Porsche AG continues its long motorsport tradition with the building of an open sports prototype for customer use in endurance racing. Porsche expresses this in the choice of the name for the new racer: The type designation "RS Spyder" stems from a long success story which began back in 1953 with the Spyder 550 1500 RS. The first open Porsche Spyderys competed at the 1954 Carrera Panamericana. In 1956 Umberto Maglioli clinched the first major overall win for Porsche driving a 550 A Spyder at the Targa Florio in Sicily under race director Huschke von Hanstein. This victory marks the start of a success streak that preliminarily came to an end with a Porsche Spyder taking the overall win at the Le Mans 24 hour race in 1997.

The new RS Spyder completed an initial three-day test programme under race-like conditions on the Estoril circuit in southern Portugal. Director of Motorsport Hartmut Kristen summarises the results: "The new 3.4-litre V8 engine, the transmission and chassis fulfilled the high expectations that we had after the roll-out and first shake-down on our test track at the R&D centre in Weissach. We are therefore very optimistic about further tests."



In Estoril, works drivers Lucas Luhr (Monaco) and Sascha Maassen (Belgium) shared the cockpit of the open sportscar that Penske Motorsports will enter in the Le Mans prototype class 2 (LMP2) of the American Le Mans Series (ALMS). The pair pilots the RS Spyder at its inaugural race on 1st October in Atlanta (USA) and at Laguna Seca (USA) on 16th October. Emmanuel Collard from France joins the duo for the "Petit Le Mans" race in Atlanta, which runs over a distance of 1,000 miles or a duration of ten hours.

Luhr and Maassen won two GT championships each with Porsche in the ALMS and secured victories in the Gran Turismo class at virtually every major sportscar race, amongst others at the Le Mans 24 hour race and in Sebring. Emmanuel Collard belongs to the most experienced sportscar pilots. Together with Luhr and Maassen the Frenchman won the Sebring 12 hour race in 2001 driving a Porsche 911 GT3 RS.



The test and race programme that began at Estoril serves as preparation for 2006, when Penske Motorsports will run two RS Spyders over the entire ALMS racing season and assist Porsche in further developing the car for possible ALMS customer teams in the future.

Text/Photos: Porsche

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