

# Le Mans 1970 – the first overall victory for Porsche

**The history of motor racing at Porsche is inextricably linked with the 24 Hours of Le Mans. No manufacturer has won the classic endurance race more often. The first overall victory dates back to 1970.**

Porsche lost the most exciting Le Mans race of all time in 1969. After several changes of leadership, Hans Herrmann in the Porsche 908 came behind Jackie Ickx in the Ford GT40 by just over a second. The new Porsche 917s were the fastest cars on the track, but not yet stable enough. After a long lead, they dropped out. However, this twelve-cylinder racing car put Porsche in a position to set the pace at the front for the first time since the manufacturer first appeared on the starting line in 1951.

By 1970, the 917s were more reliable and capable of a top speed of 380 km/h. For the entire race, one of these Porsche cars was at the head of the field. The major competitor from Italy was hardly slower, but the the Ferrari 512 S cars encountered some bad luck. Before the first half of the race was complete, most of the Ferraris had been eliminated, mainly due to collisions. The Matra-Simca and Alfa Romeo factory teams played no role in this race. Jo Siffert, who was driving a Gulf Porsche 917 for John Wyer's team, had a clear lead when he popped out of fourth gear after the tenth hour and then over-revved the engine. At this point, Hans Herrmann and Richard Attwood took over the lead in a 917 entered by Porsche Salzburg. Many engineers and mechanics from Zuffenhausen were behind this team. In training, the German–British duo had only come in 16th position. The race was won after a rather monotonous second half without any threat from the 917 long tail driven by Gerard Larrousse and Willi Kauhsen, which was constantly misfiring in the rain.

For Hans Herrmann, this race marked the end of a long racing career. Before leaving Sindelfingen-Maichingen for Le Mans, he promised his wife: 'I'll stop if I win.' He was true to his word. Hans Herrmann and Richard Attwood celebrated the first overall victory for Porsche, which was followed by another 18 successes by 2017.