

CLASSIC DRIVER



Snapshot, 1970: It's Le Mans or bust for Ferry Porsche

16 June 2019 | Alex Easthope

It's just before 4:00pm at Le Mans in 1970, and after missing out so narrowly on the overall spoils from last year's thrilling 24-hour race, Ferry Porsche is pinning all his hopes on the company's radical new 917K prototype...

It's a tense time for Ferry Porsche and his race director Rico Steinemann, who have invested heavily to ensure that their new short-tail 917K doesn't lose out this time around. John Wyer, who was employed to run Porsche's factory cars under the Gulf banner this year, and his talented engineer John Horsmann have transformed the 917 from a car previously deemed un-driveable by some into a proven race winner, seemingly by simply lopping off the gargantuan tail. Alas, the increased drag has come at the cost of overall speed on La Sarthe's achingly long straights, and Vic Elford has put the slippery Salzburg-entered long-tailed car on the pole position. But pole doesn't mean much at Le Mans, as Porsche discovered last year. Little does he know that, 24 hours after he waves the tricolour to commence the race at 4:00pm, one of his 917Ks — an underdog no less — will cross the finish line first, claiming the marque's maiden Le Mans win.

Photo: Rainer W. Schlegelmilch via Getty Images

<https://www.classicdriver.com/en/article/classic-life/snapshot-1970-its-le-mans-or-bust-ferry-porsche>

© Classic Driver. All rights reserved.