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Motorsport News

January 19, 2021

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**Dear Journalist:**

Early each week, Porsche Cars North America will provide a weekend summary or pre-race event notes package, covering the Porsche Carrera Cup North America, IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, SRO GT World Challenge America, the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC), FIA ABB Formula E World Championship or other areas of interest from the world of Porsche Motorsport. Please utilize this resource as needed, and do not hesitate to contact us for additional information.

- Porsche Cars North America Motorsport Public Relations Team

**Porsche Motorsport Weekly Event Notes: Tuesday, January 19, 2021**

**This Week.**

- ROAR to Life. 2021 IMSA Season Comes Alive with Annual Pre-Season Daytona Test.
- To the Point. Team Hardpoint EBM Announces Driver Squad for Rolex 24.
- Californian To Top. deJong Takes Esports Supercup Points Lead After Round 2.
- Wright Challenge. Veteran Porsche Team Joins Michelin Pilot Challenge.

**ROAR to Life. 2021 IMSA Season Comes Alive with Annual Pre-Season Daytona Test.**

Any sense of the familiar is a welcome sight in these “unique” times and the ROAR Before the Rolex 24 is a very familiar and welcome sight to start the new year. While the traditional first weekend of January date for the multi-day IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship and IMSA Michelin Pilot Challenge open test has been moved to January 22 – 24, its importance as a tuning tool for teams and machines has remained. This



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weekend six Porsche customer race teams will ring the new year back into life with the sound of normally aspirated flat-six race engines in Daytona Beach, Florida to ready for the Rolex 24 At Daytona endurance race the following weekend.

The storied history of Porsche motorsport has been built on privateer entrants. With the conclusion of the 2020 IMSA season, the seven-year success story of the Porsche GT Team factory program came to an end ushering the customer teams back into the spotlight. In the top GT class, GTLM, new faces will blend with veterans as Proton Competition – a longtime Porsche entrant and winner in the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) and at the 24 Hours of Le Mans – will make its IMSA debut in partnership with a returning Porsche operation. Known as WeatherTech Racing, the combination brings the Porsche 911 RSR knowledge of Proton to the IMSA record of WeatherTech. Competing in the top GT class against the best factory operations in North America, the ROAR is a key learning tool for Porsche factory drivers Gianmaria Bruni (Italy), Kévin Estre (France) and Richard Lietz (Austria) along with Porsche Young Driver Academy graduate Cooper MacNeil (Hinsdale, Illinois) to learn each other and the most advanced racing Porsche 911 on the planet at the 3.56-mile infield road course of the Daytona International Speedway.

While many may stay focused on the factory teams in the GTLM or prototype classes, it will likely be the customer programs of the WeatherTech Championship GTD class where the best racing will take place in 12 days. In the class of 20 cars, 25 percent are built in Weissach, Germany. The five Porsche 911 GT3 R race cars are entered by a quintet of experienced race teams. Pfaff Motorsports brings the popular “Plaid Porsche” back to the IMSA WeatherTech GTD class after COVID restrictions kept the Canadian team in its home and native land for all but two races in 2020 – one of which was the



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Rolex 24 where they finished a frustrated 13th in class after a strong run for most of the early going. Owned and operated by Canada's largest Porsche dealer, Pfaff Porsche, the No. 9 Porsche 911 GT3 R will be piloted by Porsche factory driver and 2019 WeatherTech GTLM Champion Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium), Porsche factory ace Matt Campbell (Australia), past Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge Canada (2018) and WeatherTech Sprint Cup (2019) champion Zach Robichon (Canada) and Porsche Test and Development Driver Lars Kern (Germany).

Wright Motorsports, recognized as a leader among even the elite of Porsche customer programs, returns with the stellar lineup that saw them finish as runner-up in the 2020 class championship and notch a win at the season-closing Mobil 1 Twelve Hours of Sebring. The No. 16 Wright Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3 R will be led by North America's only Porsche "works" driver Patrick Long (Manhattan Beach, California) again teamed with fulltime co-driver Ryan Hardwick (Atlanta, Georgia). Belgium's Jan Heylen – who lives in Dunedin, Florida – is back as a third for the endurance races along with his full-season role co-driving with Hardwick in the Wright Motorsports-prepared Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport in the Michelin Pilot Challenge. Young Porsche specialist Klaus Bachler (Austria) rounds out the car for the Ohio-based entry. Wright will also play a supporting role with the No. 64 Team TGM Porsche. New to the WeatherTech Championship but returning to the Porsche-fold, the Georgia-area based organization owned by Ted Giovanis (Highland, Maryland) brings the seasoned driver pairing of Giovanis, Owen Trinkler (Nashville, Tennessee) and brothers Hugh and Matt Plumb (Wilmington, Delaware and Chesapeake City, Maryland respectively) together at the three-day test session.



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The two remaining Porsche privateers on the entry list for the ROAR include one of the most experienced and one of the least experienced programs campaigning the rear-engined, Porsche GT3-spec race car. New to the Porsche paddock – and new as an organization – Team Hardpoint EBM (Earl Bamber Motorsports) sees 2019 WeatherTech GTLM Champion Earl Bamber (New Zealand) taking-up his role as an owner/driver in the No. 88. Joining the popular Porsche star will be fellow owner Rob Ferriol (Fayetteville, North Carolina) who will be making his first start in the Rolex 24 and in a Porsche 911 GT3 R. Ferriol does have two seasons of Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge USA experience under his belt to ease the learning curve. Also helping that curve will be Katherine Legge (Great Britain) and Christina Nielsen (Denmark). Legge is making her competitive debut after season-ending injuries in 2020. The former IndyCar driver and multi-time IMSA GTD class winner will be making her first start in a Porsche. Nielsen is a two-time WeatherTech GTD Champion (2016, 2017) marking her return to Porsche with Team Hardpoint EBM having last won a GTD class race with the German marque in 2018.

Black Swan Racing is one of the more veteran Porsche teams in the 2021 paddock. The No. 540 Porsche 911 GT3 R is entered for owner/driver Timothy Pappas (Boston Massachusetts), IMSA GTLM Champion and Porsche great Patrick Pilet (France), GTD class winner Patrick Lindsey (Santa Barbara, California) and 2020 Porsche Mobil 1 Supercup Champion Larry ten Voorde (Netherlands). The Black Swan machine finished in fifth-place in the 2020 edition of the Rolex 24, one position behind the No. 16 Wright Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3 R who jump-started its year with a fourth-place in class last January.



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**To the Point. Team Hardpoint EBM Announces Driver Squad for Rolex 24.**

Team Hardpoint EBM makes its 2021 IMSA WeatherTech Sports Car Championship debut in the GT Daytona (GTD) class, with full-time drivers and team co-owners Rob Ferriol (Fayetteville, North Carolina) and Earl Bamber (New Zealand) joined by Katherine Legge (Great Britain) and Christina Nielsen (Denmark) for the season-opening Rolex 24 At Daytona.

Ferriol and Bamber will campaign a Porsche 911 GT3 R throughout the 2021 season, but for the twice around the clock classic, they will be behind the wheel of the No. 88 VB Enviro Care/Richard Mille Porsche 911 GT3 R sporting a livery that will become more familiar to the pairing of Nielsen and Legge in the future.

For Team Hardpoint EBM, the move to Porsche comes in the program and team co-owner Ferriol's second year of IMSA WeatherTech competition, but first season as the newly minted joint venture between Team Hardpoint and Earl Bamber Motorsport (EBM). The move serves as a return to Ferriol's roots, who got his start in IMSA's single-make Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge USA just three seasons ago. It also represents a class change for long-time Porsche driver Bamber, who debuts in the GTD class after scoring championships in the GTLM class with the Porsche GT Team "works" program.

The 2021 Rolex 24 at Daytona will be Ferriol's first appearance in the race. While Bamber is preparing for his first Rolex 24 in the GTD class, he has three podium finishes in the event - including a runner-up a year ago. Bamber will co-drive the season with Ferriol after their late-2020 announcement introducing the collaboration between Team Hardpoint and Earl Bamber Motorsport.



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Legge is also no stranger to the IMSA paddock, with four career wins and a championship runner-up in the season-long GTD championship in 2018. Legge's 2018 run included a runner-up in the Rolex 24 At Daytona, her best finish in the race to date in eight attempts. Nielsen became the first woman to win a major full-season professional sports car championship in North America with a GTD title in 2016 and is a four-time race winner in the class. Her last win came behind the wheel of a GTD Porsche 911 GT3 R in 2018 at Road America.

The season gets underway officially with the Roar Before the Rolex 24, a three-day test session at Daytona International Speedway, January 22 – 24. That weekend culminates with a one hour, 40-minute qualifying race for the Motul Pole Award. That race will set the grid for the following weekend's Rolex 24 At Daytona.

**Rob Ferriol, Driver/Co-Owner, No. 88 Team Hardpoint EBM Porsche 911 GT3 R.**

“So much has been written and said about the Rolex 24 at Daytona over the course of its history, to be able to debut Team Hardpoint EBM at this storied event is just an amazing and humbling opportunity. We've been hard at work since the checker dropped not long ago at Sebring, bringing together two organizations to create what we hope will be a lasting presence in the IMSA paddock for years to come.”

“We've put together a wonderful team for the Rolex 24, both on and off the track. It's no secret that Earl, Katherine, and Christina have all had success in IMSA, but to be able to bring all that experience together into one entry, and then join them on track as a driver, is the icing on the cake. I can't think of a better way to start 2021.”

**Earl Bamber, Driver/Co-Owner, No. 88 Team Hardpoint EBM Porsche 911 GT3 R.**



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“I’m really, really excited to join Team Hardpoint EBM. It’s the first time for Rob to compete in the 24 hours, and I’m coming off back-to-back podiums there so I think we’ve got a really strong line-up. Rob proved last year that he was a force to be reckoned with in the series and obviously to have Katherine Legge and Christina Nielsen driving with us for the first event is awesome. I can’t wait to get there. Everyone has done a great job this year, the field is absolutely huge so I can’t wait to get down to Daytona.”

**Katherine Legge, Driver, No. 88 Team Hardpoint EBM Porsche 911 GT3 R.**

“I am excited on so many levels to get our season kicked off with Team Hardpoint EBM. Last year was one to forget for me, but my legs are 100-percent race ready and I am chomping at the bit to get back in a race car. I am very grateful to the team and to Porsche for this opportunity, and for helping in my quest to showcase female talent. I believe we will be the first ever equally diverse team to have competed at Daytona 24. I’m looking forward to working with Rob and Earl, and learning how to wheel a Porsche, as it will be my first time with the marque. A huge thanks to our partners VB Enviro Care, Richard Mille, and to Porsche. We are going to do big things this year and I couldn’t be more excited to partner with them.”

**Christina Nielsen, Driver, No. 88 Team Hardpoint EBM Porsche 911 GT3 R.**

“I am thrilled to be joining Team Hardpoint EBM and being with a group of people who have so much experience with Porsche,” Nielsen said. “I look forward to driving the new generation of the GT3 R, since the last time I sat in a Porsche was in the previous model. I am grateful for partners like VB Enviro Care, Richard Mille, and Porsche who have given us the opportunity to showcase that Motorsport truly is an equal playing field for men and women. Daytona is still one of the races in the IMSA WeatherTech



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Championship where everything hasn't worked out perfectly over the 24 hours, so I am still very much on the hunt for that podium and that watch!"

### **Californian To Top. Mitchell deJong Takes Esports Supercup Points Lead After Round 2.**

Temecula, California's Mitchell deJong has moved to the top of the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup (PESC) point standings after two race weekends for the digital one-make series. The Porsche Young Driver Academy North America graduate finished second in the sprint race and in fifth-place in the main event on January 16. The defending virtual series champion, Sebastian Job (Great Britain), scored his first win of the 2021 season at round two. Representing the Red Bull Racing Esport team, the British driver won the 18-lap main race on the virtual Circuit de Catalunya in Barcelona. Joshua Rogers (Australia) claimed second-place after a spirited charge through the field. Prior to this, the Australian had commanded qualifying and the sprint race.

After two of ten race weekends on the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup calendar, Mitchell deJong leads the drivers' standings with 124 points, followed by Rogers (118), Dayne Warren (107) and Maximilian Benecke (86). With 72 points, Sebastian Job is in seventh-place.

The 40 sim racers will tackle the third race weekend of the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup with their digital Porsche 911 GT3 Cup at the virtual rendition of the Autodromo Internazionale in Imola, Italy, on January 30.





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**Wright Challenge. Veteran Porsche Team Joins Michelin Pilot Challenge.**

Entering the Roar Before the Rolex 24 open test at Daytona International Speedway, Wright Motorsports announced an expansion of its Porsche customer racing team to include a full-season entry in the 2021 IMSA Michelin Pilot Challenge. Ryan Hardwick (Atlanta, Georgia) and Jan Heylen (Belgium) will race the No. 16 Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport in the road-car based support series.

The idea to run in both the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship and Michelin Pilot Challenge came from Hardwick after watching some of his fellow GTD competitors gain track time in the support series each weekend. As race weekends were condensed in the 2020 season, seat time became even more valuable for Hardwick, the Am in the Pro/Am lineup with Porsche Factory Driver Patrick Long (Manhattan Beach, California). Heylen is included among the GTD class drivers which participated in the Pilot Challenge's GS class, earning valuable insight and experience to improve with every lap.

The Michelin Pilot Challenge currently acts as the support series to the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Challenge, sharing ten race weekends with the headlining series. The 2021 schedule is comprised of 10 races, with eight of them having a runtime of two hours, and the remaining two running for four. The series is comprised of two classes: the Grand Sport (GS) and Touring Car (TCR). The No. 16 Porsche will compete in the GS class, making its on track debut for the first practice session on Friday, January 22.

The 425 HP, 3.8-liter normally aspirated flat-six Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport is the German manufacturer's entry in the international GT4 classes. Based directly on the road-going Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 has been a regular in the Michelin Pilot Challenge



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since the series inception. This iteration of the mid-engine machine made its international debut at Daytona in 2019.

The first race of the year will be the BMW Endurance Challenge at Daytona, held on Friday, January 29 at 1:35 p.m. Eastern Time. The race will air in its entirety on [imsa.tv](http://imsa.tv) and NBC Sports Gold TRACKPASS. For full event information, visit [imsa.com](http://imsa.com).

**John Wright, Owner, No. 16 Wright Motorsports Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport.**

“We met with Porsche and came to the decision that it would be beneficial to everyone to have the manufacturer represented by a great customer racing team like Wright Motorsports. Jan will be able to continue his strong driving record in the series, and Ryan will be able to gain more experience to continue to improve his progression in GTD. We know they’ll be a strong pairing and we’ll take full advantage of the extra time on track.”

**Ryan Hardwick, Driver, No. 16 Wright Motorsports Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport.**

“I have yet to race in the Michelin Pilot Challenge, and I’m really looking forward to racing in a new series. I’m also very excited to be teaming up with Jan Heylen who has already proven to be a front runner in that series. I appreciate the support from John Wright and the team for putting so much work into such a short off season to not only prepare our GTD car for the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship season, but also a new Porsche Cayman for a full season in the Michelin Pilot Challenge. This opportunity will really be a blessing for me in gaining more track time. Jan and I can be competitive for podiums and wins, but I think this will also help us greatly in GTD as well.”



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**Jan Heylen, Driver, No. 16 Wright Motorsports Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport.**

“I’m very excited to start the new season with Ryan and Wright Motorsports in the Michelin Pilot Challenge. It’s great to see Wright Motorsports making their debut in GT4 as well as Ryan making the step to gain more experience and gain track time on the GTD weekends. There’s nothing like GT4 racing, with lots of action and close racing. It’s everything we love. With the continued support from Porsche Motorsport North America and Wright Motorsport, I know we’ll be at Daytona with a strong car.”

**Photography.**

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Current news, images and notes relating to Porsche can be found in our press kit. Please contact Frank Wiesmann or Tom Moore for the latest Porsche Motorsports media kit.

### **About Porsche Cars North America, Inc.**

One Porsche Drive, Atlanta, GA 30354 USA

Established in 1984, Porsche Cars North America, Inc. (PCNA) is the exclusive U.S. importer of the Porsche 911, 718 Boxster, 718 Cayman, Macan, Cayenne, Panamera and Taycan. Headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, since 1998, PCNA is also home to the first Porsche Experience Center in North America featuring a module-based 1.6-mile driver development track, business center, and fine dining restaurant, 356. The company operates a second Porsche Experience Center near Los Angeles. That 53-acre complex features a driver development track with eight educational modules totaling 4.1-miles, a business center, and Restaurant 917. PCNA supports 192 independently owned and operated Porsche dealerships in the U.S., including supplying parts, service, marketing, and training. They, in turn, work to provide Porsche customers with a best-in-class experience that is in keeping with the Porsche brand's 70-year history of leadership in the advancement of vehicle performance, safety, and efficiency. PCNA is an indirect wholly-owned subsidiary of Porsche AG, which is headquartered in Stuttgart, Germany. At the core of this success is Porsche's proud racing heritage that boasts some 30,000-plus motorsport wins to date.

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