

Motorsport Mar 2, 2020

# SRO Opener. World Challenge America Teams Launch 2020 Race Season.

Porsche Motorsport Weekly Notes



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## SRO Opener. World Challenge America Teams Launch 2020 Race Season.

The weekend's headliner is the pair of 90-minute, two-driver, Pro-Am, Am and Silver class GT World Challenge America events. Three Porsche 911 GT3 R race cars are entered in the 14-car field with past series' champions GMG Racing fielding team principal James Sofronas (Villa Park, California) and veteran Porsche racer Jeroen Bleekemolen (The Netherlands) in the top Pro-Am class, sharing the No. 14 rear-engine machine. Wright Motorsports remains a stalwart of both Porsche and the World Challenge series with the No. 20 of

Amateur class drivers Max Root (Rancho Santa Fe, California) and San Antonio-Texas' Fred Poordad. While both drivers are veterans of the IMSA Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge USA by Yokohama ranks, this weekend's opening rounds of the SRO series will be the first time either driver will compete in the SRO GT3-spec class. Texas-based Park Place Motorsports will make its return at COTA. The Patrick Lindsey (Santa Barbara, California)-led program enters the No. 73 Porsche 911 GT3 R for Texan David Ducote of Houston and local Al Metni from Austin. Both the Wright and Park Place entries will field their machines in the Am class.

The international GT4-specifications call for road cars that become factory modified race cars. No less than eight of the Porsche race cars make-up the SprintX entry list – the most of any car-make. GMG Racing has a single Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport entered for both of the two-driver format, 60-minute races with the No. 2 to be fielded for Jason Bell and Porsche expert Andrew Davis in the Pro-Am class. NOLASPORT enters three of the mid-engine German racers: the No. 7 of Sean Gibbons and Zac Anderson and No. 47 for Texan's Matt Travis and Jason Hart are in the current generation 718 Cayman GT4 while the No. 46 of Austen Smith and John Dubets will run the previous-gen Porsche Cayman GT4 Clubsport MR in the Pro-Am class. Longtime Porsche entrant TRG has entered a pair of Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport race cars with James Rappaport and Derek DeBoer sharing the No. 17 in the Am category as well as the No. 23 TRG-prepped Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport of Craig Lyons and Porsche ace Spencer Pumpelly in the Pro-Am class. The No. 37, readied by RS1, will have Charlie Bellurado and Porsche specialist Jan Heylen in the Pro-Am class 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport. Black Swan Racing principal Tim Pappas continues his full return to racing, piloting the No. 54 Porsche Cayman GT4 Clubsport MR with "man for all race cars" Bleekemolen in Pro-Am class.

The GT4 America Sprint series is the sole single-driver format officiated by the SRO in North America. All races are 50-minutes for the GT4 category cars with three Porsche-built machines entered. Jason Bell will campaign the No. 2 Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport for GMG while Pumpelly looks for the 2020 Sprint Cup title from behind the wheel of the No. 66 TRG 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport. The lone previous generation Cayman GT4 Clubsport MR in the race is the No. 54 entered by Black Swan for Pappas.

Two test sessions for each will be held on Thursday, March 5 for all series and classes with official practice opening on Friday, March 6. Qualifying and the first race for all three championships will be held on Saturday, March 7 with the second race of the season scheduled for Sunday, March 8.

Porsche has earned 14 SRO major driver championships in North America since 1994. The most recent coming in 2019 with Scott Hargrove (Canada) racing a Pfaff Motorsports-entered Porsche 911 GT3 R to a GT World Challenge America Sprint Championship and 2018 with Patrick Long (Manhattan Beach, California) claiming the Overall GT Drivers' Championship with Wright Motorsports in a Porsche 911 GT3 R.

### **Wright Sprinter. Porsche Customer Team Enters IMSA Sprint Cup with 911 GT3 R.**

Bleekemolen will bring a wealth of sports car racing experience to the team, holding professional sports car racing wins from all over the world. The 2008 and 2009 Porsche Supercup Champion also holds wins at the 24 Hours of Le Mans as well as other 24-hour events at Nürburgring, Dubai and the Circuit of the Americas. The two-time American Le Mans Series GTC champion, and three-time North American Endurance champion has also clinched wins at iconic events such as the Mobil 1 Twelve Hours of Sebring, Bathurst and Abu Dhabi.

John Wright, Team Principal, Wright Motorsports.

"We're excited to be getting our second Porsche on track to begin the WeatherTech Sprint Cup championship. Anthony has done a great job in the endurance side of our program, and after Sebring, he'll now get to run the Sprint events in his own car. Jeroen will be a fantastic addition to the program as our Pro driver, and we expect to be strong contenders for the title."

Anthony Imperato, Driver, No. 16 Henry Repeating Arms Wright Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3 R.

"I'm looking forward to the IMSA Sprint Cup season with Wright Motorsports in the Henry Repeating Arms Porsche. It's an awesome

opportunity to be driving with Jeroen. He will be a great addition to the team, and I think we will have some success this year. I can't wait to get started in Long Beach."

Jeroen Bleekemolen, , Driver, No. 16 Henry Repeating Arms Wright Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3 R.

"It's great to be able to join Wright Motorsports and Anthony for the IMSA GTD Sprint Cup. I have raced against Wright a lot, so I know just how good the team is. Anthony has been showing great speed and development, it will be nice to work together. I really like the sprint race calendar with some classic track and events. The competition will be very hard, but we should be able to fight at the front of the field. I'm really excited to get started at Long Beach."

### **Intensive Test. Makowiecki and Preining Test Porsche 99X Electric in Marrakesh.**



Frédéric Makowiecki, Factory Driver, Porsche Motorsport.

"I learned a great deal at the rookie test. My first impression of the Porsche 99X Electric is very positive. Sitting in a new car for the first time is always a real challenge. You never quite know what's in store – particularly with the new technology in a fully-electric race series like Formula E, however, I was able to get to grips with the Porsche 99X Electric. I made really good use of the laps on the challenging track here in Marrakesh for the team and for myself."

Thomas Preining, Young Professional/Test and Development Driver, Porsche Motorsport.

"The test drives with the Porsche 99X Electric were a lot of fun. Personally, I was able to learn a great deal about the specific characteristics of the car. The data will help the team further optimize the performance of the Porsche 99X Electric for future races, so it was a win for us all. I'm already looking forward to further tests with the car."

### **Marrakesh Markers. Lotterer Scores Important Points in Porsche 99X Electric.**

For the second time since his pole position in Mexico two weeks ago, Lotterer made it to the Super Pole in qualifying for the TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E Team. In the competition for the six fastest drivers, he posted a time of one-minute-17.253-seconds to secure

third-place on the grid.

After five out of 13 races, Lotterer now has 25 points and is twelfth in the drivers' standings for the ABB FIA Formula E Championship. The TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E Team is ninth in the team championship, with the same number of points.

Amiel Lindesay, Head of Operations Formula E.

"Our car was once again very strong in qualifying and the first half of the race went well too. Towards the end of the race, we had saved less energy than the cars around us which is why André (Lotterer) lost ground during the final two laps. We will take another look at that and analyze it carefully. Our aim for the future is to convert the strong qualifying performance into consistently good race results."

André Lotterer, Driver, No. 36 TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E Team Porsche 99X Electric.

"Of course, we're happy to score these points in Marrakesh. Having started from third, we'd have liked to have finished better, but the second half of the race was not easy. Nonetheless, we were still able to learn a lot. We will draw the right conclusions from our experiences today."

Neel Jani, Driver, No. 18 TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E Team Porsche 99X Electric.

"During the previous races, our pace was good, but we were unable to record the results we had aimed for. This time, it was difficult for me from the start. I did not feel right on the brakes at all during the day. We will examine that in detail. We still have plenty of races ahead of us. We will continue to work intensively and improve."



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