

Endurance test in Aragón: Sebastian Vettel in the Porsche 963

26/03/2024 Four-time Formula 1 world champion Sebastian Vettel successfully tested the Porsche 963 at Motorland Aragón. The German completed a total of 118 laps over a total of 581 kilometres in two double stints. For Vettel, it was the first racetrack test with a hybrid prototype in accordance with LMDh regulations. Porsche Penske Motorsport is preparing for the 24 Hours of Le Mans on 15/16 June with an endurance test on the 5.345-kilometre circuit near Alcañiz in Spain.

Sebastian Vettel has prepared meticulously for his stint with the hybrid prototype. On 14 March, the 53-time Formula 1 race winner paid a visit to the FIA WEC team at the Porsche Penske Motorsport facility in Mannheim. One day later, the Heppenheim native completed an extensive simulator session at the Porsche Motorsport Centre in Flacht and familiarised himself with the special features and complex controls of the Le Mans race car. This was followed on 21 March by the first familiarisation kilometres with the Porsche 963 on the in-house test track at the Weissach Development Centre. In dry weather with tarmac temperatures between 20 and 25 degrees Celsius and 10 to 13 degrees cool air, the F1 champion completed almost two Grand Prix distances in Aragón without any problems.

"Of course, I also keep an eye on other motorsport disciplines and know many drivers who are active in the WEC and Le Mans. At some point, my curiosity was so great that I had the idea of trying it out myself. Porsche gave me the opportunity to test a current hypercar with the 963," says Sebastian Vettel. "After the seat adjustment, the simulator session and the roll-out in Weissach, I already had a good feeling. Driving the Porsche 963 on the track here in Aragon - that was definitely fun. I first had to get used to everything and find my rhythm. The driving experience is different simply because of the roof over your head, as well as dealing with the higher weight and the tyres. The Porsche works drivers were very helpful and explained to me what was special and what I needed to get used to. That made it easy for me."

Experience with hybrid systems

The Porsche Penske Motorsport works team has won both the season opener of the North American IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, the 24 Hours of Daytona, and this year's first race of the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) in Qatar with the Porsche 963. At the WEC highlight, the 24 Hours of Le Mans, record holder Porsche is aiming for its 20th overall victory. There, as at the other rounds of the WEC, the entire starting field has relied on a biofuel since March 2022.

"Aragon is one of the few places in Europe where we can run around the clock and gives us an opportunity to run 36 hours straight in preparation for Le Mans. The quite long back straight that gives us the top speed of more than 300 km/h we see on the Circuit des 24 Heures," explains Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport. "Having Sebastian Vettel here is a unique opportunity for the team. He is a four time Formula 1 World Champion. He has massive experience with hybrid systems and high performance racing cars. Having his fresh unique perspective on where the car is and gives feedback on our systems and performances is a unique opportunity. We are happy to have him here. He came out of the car with a smile which is all good."

In addition to Vettel, a total of seven Porsche works drivers will take part in the endurance test. Matt Campbell (Australia), Michael Christensen (Denmark) and Frédéric Makowiecki (France) will share the Porsche 963 with starting number 5 in the WEC, while Kévin Estre (France), André Lotterer (Germany) and Laurens Vanthoor will drive the sister car with the number 6. They will be joined in Aragon by reigning DTM champion Thomas Preining from Austria.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



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