

Porsche Penske Motorsport optimistic ahead of anniversary race

27/09/2025 Porsche Penske Motorsport will tackle the 100th race in the history of the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) from the fourth row of the grid. At Fuji Speedway, Julien Andlauer set the seventh-fastest time in the Hyperpole session at the wheel of the Porsche 963.

The Frenchman shares the ca. 500 kW (680 PS) hybrid prototype in Japan with his compatriot Mathieu Jaminet. Both are former Porsche Juniors. In the sister car, Kévin Estre missed out on a top ten spot during qualifying. The Frenchman and his Belgian teammate Laurens Vanthoor will start the six-hour race from 17th. Fielding the third Porsche 963, customer team Proton Competition will head into round seven of the FIA WEC season from 18th place.

Compared with Friday's practice sessions, qualifying was held in slightly cooler conditions, with 24°C air temperature and track temperatures of 37°C. In the LMGT3 class, American Ryan Hardwick advanced to the Hyperpole session for the top ten after setting the sixth-fastest time in Manthey 1st Phorm's Porsche 911 GT3 R. His Italian teammate Riccardo Pera then secured fifth on the grid with a lap time of 1:40.414 minutes. Factory driver Richard Lietz from Austria completes the trio in the ca. 416 kW

(565 PS) Weissach-built GT3 car. The Iron Dames Porsche 911 GT3 R missed out on reaching the Hyperpole, with Célia Martin qualifying 17th. The Frenchwoman shares the car with Switzerland's Rahel Frey and Michelle Gatting from Denmark.

"Qualifying was incredibly close, with the first 17 cars separated by just one second. It's a shame for Kévin Estre – he tried his best but narrowly missed out. Our No. 5 Porsche with Julien Andlauer made it into Hyperpole, finishing eight tenths off the fastest time. For tomorrow, though, we can count on a strong race performance – we know our car is competitive," summarised Urs Kuratle, Director Factory Motorsport LMDh. "Adding to the challenge is the unpredictable weather. We're hoping for mixed conditions, which usually play to our advantage, but we're confident even if it stays dry."

"Obviously we're disappointed that our No. 6 race car didn't get the opportunity to pull a strong lap together. It's starting position is not representative of the true speed," underlined Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport. "Julien did a good job to get into Hyperpole. Our potential today was probably to get to third or fourth place. We're happy with our race pace. I'm looking forward to seeing where we finish tomorrow."

Round seven of the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) gets underway on Sunday, 28 September, at 11:00 am local time (4:00 am CEST). In Germany, Sport 1 will stream the six-hour race free of charge online and also broadcast parts of it on TV. Additional coverage is available via the FIA WEC's paid live services (fiawec.tv and app, including live timing) and on Eurosport.

Driver comments after the qualifying

Julien Andlauer (Porsche 963 #5):"Qualifying done! I think we prepared really well for the race during the free practice sessions. Fourth in the first segment and seventh in Hyperpole – I just couldn't quite pull it all together. Our Porsche has huge potential, and we've maximised almost everything. With the six-hour race potentially experiencing mixed weather, we should be in contention for a top-five finish or even the podium if everything goes smoothly."

Kévin Estre (Porsche 963 #6):"This was probably the worst qualifying of my WEC career. I just couldn't get a clean lap and wasn't able to push the car any faster. There's still some setup work to do, and I also need to improve. Julien Andlauer has shown what the Porsche is capable of. We're now focusing on a thorough analysis."

Nico Varrone (Porsche 963 #99):"We lacked the necessary performance at Fuji during all the free practice sessions. After making some adjustments, our Porsche 963 is now operating in a better performance window. Things have improved since the start, but we're still not competitive enough. More analysis and work are needed to find extra pace for tomorrow."

Riccardo Pera (Porsche 911 GT3 R #92):"Fifth on the grid is a nice result and gives us a strong starting position for the race, which is what really counts. We're focused on the championship, where we lead by

19 points. That means staying smart through any challenges and getting through cleanly. I'm confident we have the package to do just that."

Rahel Frey (Porsche 911 GT3 R #85):"We're definitely not happy with qualifying. Free practice went great, everything worked well, and we could certainly have achieved more, but today Célia didn't feel comfortable with the car – we need to figure out why. Our pace was strong at Le Mans, São Paulo, and Austin, but unfortunately, we're starting from the back, which makes things tricky. Now it's our chance to show again what we can do, and we trust the team to back us with a solid strategy. Tomorrow, anything is possible."

Qualifying result

Hypercar class:
1. Lynn/Nato/Stevens (GBR/FRA/GBR), Cadillac #12, 1.28,236 minutes
2. Bamber/Bourdais/Button (NZL/FRA/GBR), Cadillac #38, 1.28,675 minutes
3. Riberas/Sörensen (ESP/DEN), Aston Martin #009, 1.28,705 minutes
7. Andlauer/Jaminet (FRA/FRA), Porsche 963 #5, 1.29,031 minutes
17. Estre/Vanthoor (FRA/BEL), Porsche 963 #6, 1.29,920 minutes
18. Jani/Pino/Varrone (CHE/CHL/ARG), Porsche 963 #99, 1.30,085 minutes

LMGT3 class:
1. Barrichello/McIntosh/Hasse Clot (BRA/USA/FRA), Aston Martin #10, 1.39,981 minutes
2. Leung/Galael/Sato (GBR/INA/JPN), McLaren #95, 1.40,011 minutes
3. Cottingham/Baud/Saucy (GBR/FRA/CHE), McLaren #59, 1.40,013 minutes
5. Hardwick/Lietz/Pera (USA/AUT/ITA), Porsche 911 GT3 R #92, 1.40,414 minutes
17. Frey/Gatting/Martin (CHE/DNK/FRA), Porsche 911 GT3 R #85, 1.42,284 minutes

Full results and championship standings: fiawec.alkamelsystems.com.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



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Video

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Image Sublines

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Title: Urs Kuratle, Director Factory Motorsport LMDh, FIA WEC, Fuji, qualifying, 2025, Porsche AG
Subline: Urs Kuratle

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Title: Porsche 963, Porsche Penske Motorsport (#5), Julien Andlauer (FRA), Mathieu Jaminet (FRA), FIA WEC, Fuji, qualifying, 2025, Porsche AG
Subline: Porsche 963 in Fuji

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Subline: Nico Varrone

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