

Best Porsche 911 GT3 R finishes 51st Eifel marathon in fifth place

21/05/2023 The Porsche 911 GT3 R fielded by the Rutronik Racing customer team has wrapped up the 24-hour race at the Nürburgring in fifth place. In an intense competition with many incidents and collisions, Julien Andlauer from France, Dennis Olsen from Norway and Matteo Cairoli from Italy gave a flawless performance at the wheel of the best-placed 911.

The race

The identical model campaigned by Falken Motorsports with the starting number 44 achieved tenth place after suffering several setbacks. At the 51st running of the endurance classic in Germany's Eifel region, a total of 32 GT3 cars headed into the battle for overall victory on Saturday afternoon. In sunny conditions and temperatures of around 15 degrees Celsius, one of Falken Motorsports' two Porsche 911 GT3 R made the best start into the race. At times, Nico Menzel advanced to third place with the No. 44 car.

His teammate Tim Heinemann then kept the car in the top five only to be struck by the first setback: he hit the crash barriers after a side impact while lapping a slower car. The repairs threw the Falken 911 far down the field. Not to be discouraged, Menzel, Heinemann and their teammates Joel Ericsson from Sweden and Martin Ragginger from Austria gradually worked their way back into the top group. However, all hopes of a podium finish were dashed when Tim Heinemann had to drive about two-thirds of the 25.378- kilometre racetrack at slow speed after sustaining tyre damage on Sunday morning. Ultimately, the No. 44 car took the flag in tenth place.

The fewer the incidents, the better the result: This was the motto that Rutronik Racing followed from start to finish in front of 235,000 spectators. The 911 GT3 R run by the customer squad from Germany covered the entire distance unscathed and finished fifth overall. The drivers Julien Andlauer from France, Matteo Cairoli from Italy and Dennis Olsen from Norway deliberately drove less aggressively during the critical hot starting phase and the strenuous night in the “Green Hell”. The only minor hiccup for the No. 96 car was a 32-second penalty. After completing 162 laps, Rutronik Racing set a new distance record in the 24-hour race together with four best-placed cars.

The 51st edition of the popular endurance classic in the Eifel did not look particularly good for Porsche over long stretches. Manthey EMA’s much-loved “Grello” retired early after around ten hours of racing. As a result of hitting the tyre wall early on, the team suffered several punctures and ultimately had to park the No. 911 car in the pits for safety reasons. After just two and a half hours, Lionspeed by Car Collection’s race was over: works driver Matt Campbell ended up in the barriers at the end of his first stint and sustained damage to the No. 24 Porsche 911 GT3 R. The No. 33 entry fielded by Falken Motorsports and the 911 cars from Dinamic GT and Huber Motorsport also had to retire after collisions.

“We have two cars in the top 10, which is more or less in line with our expectations,” summarises Sebastian Golz. The Porsche 911 GT3 R Project Manager adds, “Congratulations to Rutronik Racing and Falken Motorsports. These two teams managed to go the distance relatively trouble free. Falken did sustain two punctures, but Rutronik got through the laps cleanly. They kept out of trouble, consistently worked their way to the front and got the most out of the race. Fifth place is a well- deserved reward.”

Porsche’s customer cars also performed impressively in many other classes. With 44 cars, the sports car manufacturer from Stuttgart was the most well represented brand in the 130-strong field. The No. 161 Porsche 911 GT3 Cup from KKrämer Racing won the Cup2 category. The latest Cup car based on the 992 generation was the fastest non-GT3 vehicle in the race, finishing 17th overall. “In terms of its basic concept, we designed the current Porsche 911 GT3 Cup as a vehicle for the Porsche Mobil 1 Supercup and Porsche’s many one-make cup racing series,” explains Tobias Hütter, GT Sport Specialist. “That makes us all the more pleased that it also proved its value as a highly competitive endurance racing car at one of the world’s toughest 24-hour events. Of course, we also owe this result to the strong performance of our customer teams and their drivers. They did a first-class job at the Nürburgring.

Comments on the race

Fabian Plentz (Team Principal Rutronik Racing): “We had a difficult start from 21st place on the grid. Our pace wasn't particularly strong until nightfall. But when the temperatures dropped more significantly, we found a really good rhythm. We managed to put in some double stints and catch up. In the morning we were running in sixth place and then we moved up another position – that's all we could squeeze out of the race. The gap to the top was simply too big. Our team and drivers did a great job.”

Dennis Olsen (Porsche 911 GT3 R #96): “Once again, the ‘Green Hell’ lived up to its name. It was an incredibly tough race. We did our utmost and the team worked perfectly. We got through the race without any technical problems. Everything was perfectly prepared. Nevertheless, it became very clear that the other manufacturers could set a better pace. We accomplished what we set out to do and have to be satisfied with the result. Fifth place almost feels like a podium finish after today's battle. Now, my sights are set on the coming weekend and the start of the DTM season. I'm really looking forward to it.”

Tim Heinemann (Porsche 911 GT3 R #44):“We were within striking distance of the podium early in the race, but then came the first mishap – a high-speed spin, puncture and considerable time cost. In the morning we fought our way back into the top five. And then? More damage. We tried everything and managed to mitigate the damage by finishing tenth. Our mechanics worked incredibly hard. It's a shame because more could have been possible. Now we have to live with this result. It felt great representing such a prestigious brand like Porsche in front of more than 230,000 spectators. Next up for me is the DTM. The tests went well. I'm confident and hope that, as a newcomer, I can muscle my way into the top 10 in the DTM.”

Race result

1. Catsburg/Bamber/Fernandez Laser/Pittard (NL/NZ/D/UK), Ferrari 296 GT3 #30, Frikadelli Racing Team, 162 laps
2. Wittman/S. van der Linde/D. Vanthoor/Martin (D/RSA/B/B), BMW M4 GT3 #98, Rowe Racing, 162 laps
3. Marciello/Stolz/Ellis (I/D/D), Mercedes-AMG GT3 #4, Team GetSpeed, 162 laps
5. Olsen/Cairoli/Andlauer (N/I/F), Porsche 911 GT3 R #96, Rutronik Racing, 162 laps
10. Ericsson/Heinemeier/Menzel/Ragginger (S/D/D/A), Porsche 911 GT3 R #44, Falken Motorsports, 160 laps
DNF. Fetzer/Ledogar/Kern/Dumas (D/F/D/F), Porsche 911 GT3 R #25, Huber Motorsport, 105 laps
DNF. L. Vanthoor/Heinrich/Güven/Engelhart (B/D/TR/D), Porsche 911 GT3 R #54, Dinamic GT, 83 laps
DNF. Bachler/Müller/Picariello (A/D/B), Porsche 911 GT3 R #33, Falken Motorsports, 77 laps
DNF. Christensen/Estre/Makowiecki/Preining (DK/F/F/A), Porsche 911 GT3 R #911, Manthey EMA, 62 laps
DNF. Kolb/Campbell/Jaminet/Pilet (D/AUS/F/F), Porsche 911 GT3 R #24, Lionspeed by Car

Collection, 16 laps

The race - interim 2

As the night draws to an end, two Porsche 911 GT3 R have maintained contact with the leaders at the 24-hour highlight on the Nürburgring. After 18 hours of racing, Rutronik Racing lies in fifth place with the 911 helmed by Dennis Olsen, Matteo Cairoli and Julien Andlauer. Falken Motorsports is currently running in eighth place with the GT3 vehicle shared by Nico Menzel, Tim Heinemann, Joel Eriksson and Martin Ragginger. Both vehicles are still on the same lap as the leaders.

The cool, dry night at the Nürburgring brought numerous setbacks. At daybreak, three of the seven customer-run 911 GT3 R still had a chance of finishing among the frontrunners. In addition to the cars fielded by Rutronik Racing and Falken Motorsports, Huber Motorsport's 911 was also running in the top 15. Sharing driving duties in the No. 25 car are the works driver Romain Dumas from France, the two Germans Lars Kern and Dennis Fetzer as well as Frenchman Côme Ledogar.

However, the blistering speed of the race on the 25.378-kilometre combination of the historic Nordschleife and the original layout of the Grand Prix circuit took its toll right from the start. First, Manthey EMA suffered a setback with its so-called "Grello". After an impressive charge from 20th on the grid, the Frenchman Kévin Estre was back in eighth place, only to have a puncture cause him to slide into the tyre barrier at the end of his second stint. However, after the repairs were completed, the team was unable to solve the ongoing problems on the left rear wheel. At 1.30 a.m. on Sunday morning, Manthey EMA withdrew the vehicle driven by Estre and his works driver teammates Michael Christensen (Denmark), Frédéric Makowiecki (France) and Thomas Preining (Austria) for safety reasons. By this time, the No. 24 entry from Lionspeed by Car Collection was already out of the race. After lengthy repairs when Matt Campbell slid off the track, the team called it quits after a good two and a half hours.

In the first third of the race, the No. 44 Porsche campaigned by Falken Motorsports defended its position as the best-placed Porsche. For a brief time, the 911 GT3 RS driven by Austria's Martin Ragginger, Joel Eriksson (Sweden) and the two Germans Nico Menzel and Tim Heinemann held third place. At around midnight, bad luck hit the quartet: While lapping a slower car in the Flugplatz section of the track, Heinemann slid into the tyre barrier. Including the pit stop, the GT3 car fell back to P14 behind the No. 33 sister car but was back in eighth place by eight o'clock the next morning.

At around 3:30 a.m., the Falken Porsche driven by Sven Müller (Germany), Klaus Bachler (Austria) and the Belgian Alessio Picariello was also hit by a slower vehicle, which shunted it into guardrail. After repairs were made, the team rejoined the race, only to call the car into the pits for good 90 minutes later. For the No. 54 Porsche from Dinamic GT, the race was over at 4:45 a.m. after a hefty collision in the Bellof-S area. Driver Laurin Heinrich was released from the medical centre after a routine check.

"We already lost four out of seven cars before the final third of the race," Sebastian Golz sums up. The

Porsche 911 GT3 R project manager adds: “The shock of the accident between the Dinamic GT car and the Dacia is still fresh in our minds. We're very relieved that our driver Laurin Heinrich and the driver of the Dacia are doing well so far. Now, we're concentrating on the three nine-elevens still in the race. The Porsches from Rutronik Racing, Falken and Huber are currently running well. We'll have to wait and see how our performance develops as temperatures rise. Hopefully, we can fight for a top-five result.”

Drivers' comments after 18 hours

Nico Menzel (Porsche 911 GT3 R #44): “I drove a double stint from the night into the day. A lot was happening on the track and risk management wasn't always easy: If you took the risk, you could make up a massive amount of time - or you could destroy the car. We were at our limit and within the top 10, which is a realistic position for us. Cool temperatures suit us better. When it gets warmer, we have to look after the rear tyres. Overall, we got the Porsche over the distance quite well. Tim hit a curb briefly during the night while lapping other drivers, lost the car and did a 360-degree spin. This also resulted in his car nudging the guardrail, which unfortunately caused a puncture. But the repair only cost us three and a half, maximum four minutes. The guys did a great job. We're going all-out now. Maybe we can still clinch a top-five result.”

Julien Andlauer (Porsche 911 GT3 R #96):“Overall, I'm pretty happy because we got through the night well - the car is in one piece and we're unscathed. The cooler temperatures suited our set-up philosophy and improved our competitiveness. If it gets warmer again now, we may suffer. The Porsche drives like it's on rails, which boosts our confidence behind the wheel. The engineers have made the right decisions and our mechanics are doing a great job during the pit stops. Everything is going according to plan so far. Only on the straights do we lack the top speed to be able to continue fighting at the front. We're currently in the top five, so maybe we can still make up a position or two.”

Lars Kern (Porsche 911 GT 3 R #25): “The night stints were okay. We ran the softer tyre compound, which made the car feel better to me. So far everything is going well, we just needed to find our direction and the right air pressure at the beginning.”

The race - interim 1

The Porsche 911 GT3 R fielded by the customer team Falken Motorsports has asserted itself among the frontrunners in the early stages of the Nürburgring 24 Hours. After the first three hours of racing through the “Green Hell”, the No. 44 entry fielded by the experienced customer squad is running in eighth place. As the second-best 911, the No. 96 car from Rutronik Racing is putting in a steady push to catch up without taking unnecessary risks. Bad luck, however, has plagued Manthey EMA and Lionspeed by Car Collection, with both teams involved in incidents early on and sustaining significant damages.

In slightly cloudy conditions and temperatures of around 15 degrees Celsius, Falken Motorsports' No.

44 car made a strong start among the 130-strong field. After tackling the race from position six on the grid, Nico Menzel handed the Porsche 911 GT3 R to youngster Tim Heinemann in fifth place. At the wheel of the ca. 415 kW (565 PS) 911, the German put in a flawless stint and at times advanced to third place. After two more pit stops, the car is running eighth after three hours.

While the No. 33 sister car from Falken Motorsports is in 23rd place due to damage at the rear after a shunt while lapping slower traffic, the GT3 car of Rutronik Racing is now making progress. First, Norwegian Dennis Olsen made up positions, now the Italian Matteo Cairoli is maintaining contact with the top 10 in P17. The two 911 racers campaigned by Dinamic GT and Huber Motorsport are currently in 19th and 21st.

In the first two hours of racing, works driver Kévin Estre put on a stunning show at the wheel of Manthey EMA's Porsche 911 GT3 R. In supreme style, the Frenchman catapulted the fans' favourite car, known as "Grello", from 20th to eighth place. Shortly before the end of his stint, however, a puncture saw Estre slide into the barriers in the Tiergarten section. The repairs to the rear of the car threw the team almost two laps back. The No. 24 entry from Lionspeed by Car Collection has already retired from the race. Toward the end of his stint, Australia's Matt Campbell ran onto the grass at the exit of the Ex-Mühle area and spun into a tyre wall. After lengthy repairs, the team sent the 911 back out but ultimately had to call it quits after about two and a half hours.

"Two of our top cars were already out of the fight for victory after two hours," states Sebastian Golz. The Porsche 911 GT3 R project manager adds: "Matt Campbell went too wide in the early stages and spun into the tyre barriers. A puncture caused Kévin Estre to plough into the barriers shortly before the end of his stint. It's such a shame because Manthey EMA had a great pace and strategy. Now we have to keep our fingers crossed that we don't experience other incidents and that the remaining cars finish the rest of the race unscathed. Let's see what comes out of it."

Drivers' comments after the start

Tim Heinemann (Porsche 911 GT3 R #44): "I had a free run with no direct rivals in front of or behind me. This meant I had no reference regarding my lap times. There was constant bad luck in the heavy traffic – all hell broke loose in "Green Hell". But our car doesn't have a single scratch. We're still going well – that's the most important thing."

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 GT3 R #911): "We started from far down the grid but had a strong pace and good strategy in the early stages. I was making very good progress but got stuck behind a Ferrari for a long time. On the last lap of my second stint, a tyre blew out while braking for the last corner. It looks like a piece of debris cut the rubber. I couldn't do a thing about it at that point and crashed. The damage to our car is extensive. Unfortunately, that throws us out of contention for victory."

Patrick Kolb (Porsche 911 GT3 R #24): "Our start wasn't particularly good. Initially, we lost ground but then fought our way back up the order. Apparently, there was a misunderstanding between my

teammate Matt and the driver of a slower car while overtaking. Such things happen often on the Nordschleife, particularly because of the many different vehicle classes. That's why we have a love-hate relationship with this race."

The qualifying

The top qualifying session took place on Friday afternoon on a dry track in spring-like temperatures. Like last year, it was the Nürburgring born-and-bred local, Nico Menzel, who planted one of the seven Porsche 911 GT3 R cars on the best grid position in the decisive segment of the individual time trial. In the second race car fielded by Falken Motorsports, Austria's Klaus Bachler, Germany's Sven Müller and Belgium's Alessio Picariello secured a seventh grid row spot. Two positions ahead of them, Porsche works drivers Mathieu Jaminet from France and Matt Campbell from Australia, as well as Germany's Patrick Kolb and Patrick Pilet head into the 24-hour race through the famous "Green Hell".

To explain: The top qualifying session consists of two segments. In the second of the two, a total of 19 vehicles fought for pole position and the front grid spots. Thirteen racing cars had already earned themselves entry into the individual time trials thanks to top results in the Nürburgring Endurance Series and the races of the so-called qualifiers weekend – including the two 911 campaigned by Falken Motorsports and the 911 GT3 R of Lionspeed by Car Collection Motorsport.

The five remaining places in the final shoot-out were decided on Friday afternoon in the first top qualifying section. Here, a total of 21 GT3 racing cars from seven manufacturers pitted themselves against each other. The race had to be red-flagged and restarted after an accident in the Hatzenbach section, which was covered in dirt. The four Porsche customer teams involved in this session narrowly missed out on advancing to the final round: Works driver Kévin Estre was just 34 thousandths of a second short of fifth place in the Manthey EMA car. Italian Matteo Cairoli (Rutronik Racing) was seventh, Laurin Heinrich from Germany (Dinamic GT) finished ninth and Frenchman Côme Ledogar set the twelfth-fastest lap time in Huber Motorsport's Porsche.

"We got off to an unfortunate start in the top qualifying: We'd hoped to advance to the second individual time trial segment with one or two racing cars," says Sebastian Golz, Project Manager Porsche 911 GT3 R. "Kévin Estre drove a superb lap but in the end, we were still a bit short of making progress. In Top Qualifying 2 we put in a clean drive with sixth place for the Falken Motorsports car. Nevertheless, we have to see where we're lacking performance – if we look at the lap times, the gap to the top is still too big. We now have to work on that. Otherwise, we're satisfied. Fundamentally, the cars are running well. Now we're preparing for the race."

The 24-hour race on the Nürburgring is contested on the 25.378-kilometre combination of the historic Nordschleife and the original layout of the Grand Prix circuit. The endurance classic gets underway on Saturday at 4:00 pm. A total of 133 racing cars will line up on the grid, 44 of which are Porsches.

TV coverage and live streaming of the event

The free-to-view TV channel RTL NITRO televises the entire 51st edition of the endurance classic live. Live footage is also available on the channels of the 24-hour race on YouTube and Facebook. Moreover, the website https://www.24h-rennen.de provides live reports and shows the timing of all sessions.

Comments after Top Qualifying

Nico Menzel (Porsche 911 GT 3 R #44):"That was better than expected, sixth on the grid is really good for us. I'm surprised to end up as the best Porsche driver in the class. The individual time trial is one of the highlights of the race weekend for me: As a sportsman, you live for these moments when everything counts. My lap was perfect. We've improved with the car. That gives us a positive feeling for the upcoming race."

Mathieu Jaminet (Porsche 911 GT 3 R #24): "Our result is not a surprise. When even the 'Grello' doesn't make it into the top 5 in the first run, it's pretty clear what you can expect – or not. We don't have the pace of the top cars and we're still struggling with the setup. I gave everything again on the second lap, but the lap time remained almost identical. That's all we could do today. We only saw qualifying as a test anyway, after our GT3 R was completely disassembled and rebuilt overnight to iron out a gremlin."

Klaus Bachler (Porsche 911 GT 3 R #33): "There's hardly a feeling more awesome than getting the chance to drive two free laps on the Nordschleife all by yourself. The pace set by the other drivers is unbelievable. With our new Porsche 911 GT3 R, we're pushing many corners almost at full throttle and at the absolute limit – there's a lot of adrenaline flowing through the veins. I managed a solid lap. We'll have to see where more would have been possible. But I'm satisfied. Our starting position for the race is okay."

Qualifying result (SP9 class)

1. Raffaele Marciello (I), Luca Stolz (D), Philip Ellis (D), Edoardo Mortara (CH), Mercedes-AMG GT3 (#4), Mercedes-AMG Team Bilstein, 8:09.058 minutes
2. Maro Engel (D), Jules Gounon (F), Daniel Juncadella (E), Mercedes-AMG GT3 (#3), Mercedes-AMG GetSpeed, 8:09.480 minutes
3. Kelvin van der Linde (RSA), Marco Mapelli (I), Jordan Pepper (RSA), Nicki Thiim (DK), Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo 2, Abt Sportsline, 8:10.498 minutes
6. Joel Eriksson (S), Tim Heinemann (D), Nico Menzel (D), Martin Ragginger (A), Porsche 911 GT3 R (#44), Falken Motorsports, 8:11.211 minutes
12. Patrick Kolb (D), Matt Campbell (AUS), Mathieu Jaminet (F), Patrick Pilet (F), Porsche 911 GT3 R (#24), Lionspeed by Car Collection Motorsport, 8:12.257 minutes
14. Klaus Bachler (A), Sven Müller (D), Alessio Picariello (B), Porsche 911 GT3 R (#33), Falken

Motorsports, 8:12.599 minutes
20. Michael Christensen (DK), Kévin Estre (F), Frédéric Makowiecki (F), Thomas Preining (A), Porsche 911 GT3 R (#911), Manthey EMA, 8:11.721 minutes
21. Dennis Olsen (N), Matteo Cairoli (I), Julien Andlauer (F), Porsche 911 GT3 R (#96), Rutronik Racing, 8:12.583 minutes
23. Laurens Vanthoor (B), Laurin Heinrich (D), Ayhancan Güven (TR), Christian Engelhart (D), Porsche 911 GT3 R (#54), Dinamic GT, 8:14.391 minutes
26. Dennis Fetzer (D), Côme Ledogar (F), Lars Kern (D), Romain Dumas (F), Porsche 911 GT3 R (#25), Huber Motorsport, 8:16.562 minutes

The preview

Seven Porsche 911 GT3 R fielded by six customer teams will fight for overall victory at this year's 24-hour race on the Nürburgring-Nordschleife (20/21 May). The GT3 cars from Weissach go up against 27 vehicles from six rival manufacturers in the top SP9 class.

Of the expected 136 entries, the Stuttgart sports car manufacturer campaigns by far the largest contingent. A total of 44 racing vehicles from Zuffenhausen will compete in twelve different categories. With its professional customer squads, Porsche has its sights set on clinching its 14th overall victory at the storied 24-hour race in Germany's Eifel region. The results and insights from the Qualifiers event and previous races of the Nürburgring Endurance Series (NLS) were encouraging. Nevertheless, uncertainties remain: The Porsche 911 GT3 R, which was launched for the 2023 season and is based on the 992-generation nine-eleven, will line up on the grid of the 24-hour classic for the first time. In preparation for this year's highlight on the famous Nordschleife, the Falken Motorsports team finished three of the NLS races in the top ten.

"It doesn't matter how many kilometres you cover in the 'Green Hell', it's never enough to be assured of victory at the 24-hour race," warns Sebastian Golz ahead of the endurance race in the Eifel. The Project Manager Porsche 911 GT3 R adds: "Our customer teams compete this year with our brand new GT3 car. In preparation, the focus was on finding a baseline setup for the three tyre partners Falken, Michelin and Pirelli. We have worked systematically on developing the car in test and tuning sessions, at the NLS races and the 24-hour Qualifiers event. That gives us and our partner teams cause for optimism as we head to the highlight event."

Many other racing cars from Stuttgart will line up alongside the latest Porsche 911 GT3 R – including the 911 GT3 Cup from two different model years and several versions of the Porsche Cayman as well as vehicles like a 911 Carrera, which was prepared on a private initiative to tackle the "Green Hell". A total of 44 cars sporting the Porsche emblem are registered for the 51st edition of the long-distance race. Thus, the brand from Zuffenhausen makes up almost a third of the 136-strong field.

"Porsche is by far the most strongly represented brand at the Nürburgring 24-hour race this year. This shows that we continue to enjoy a high level of trust from our partners and customers, even in

challenging times, and that our products are well established on the market," says Michael Dreiser, Director Sales Porsche Motorsport. "I'm sure that our new Porsche 911 GT3 R will perform strongly in the tough competition of the top SP9 class. The customer teams are extremely professional and all cars are crewed by first-class drivers. And in the other fiercely-contested classes, our customers are sure to deliver some action-packed racing, for example in the Cup 2 class with the 911 GT3 Cup and the Cup 3 class with the 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport."

The race

The 24-hour race on the Nürburgring will be contested for the 51st time on 20/21 May. After the debut event in June 1970, the race twice around the clock was cancelled three times: in 1974 and 1975 due to the oil crisis at that time and in 1983 due to construction work. Since 2005, the race has been held on a 25.378-kilometre combination of the historic Nordschleife and the modern Grand Prix circuit. The racetrack features more than 70 corners, including the famous steeply-banked "Karussell". The steepest incline of the undulating course has a gradient of 18 percent with the steepest downhill section at a maximum of 11 percent. On the 2.6-kilometre "Döttinger Höhe" straight, the racing cars achieve a top speed of over 280 km/h.

Compared to other 24-hour races, the Eifel classic features a few special rules. The grid line-up at the front is determined by individual time trials. This spectacular session (Top Qualifying 2) is preceded by two stages. Thirteen vehicles have already secured a spot as part of this year's NLS races as well as at the 24-hour Qualifiers event. Another six cars can make it into the final individual time trial in the "Top Qualifying 1" session. A classification system – the so-called Balance of Performance (BoP) – is intended to level out the competitiveness of the different GT3 models in the top SP9 class. This can be done using regulating factors such as engine power, vehicle weight and fuel tank quantities, among other things.

An overview of Porsche teams and drivers (SP9-Klasse)

Porsche supports the customer teams Dinamic GT, Falken Motorsports, Lionspeed by Car Collection Motorsport, Manthey EMA and Rutronik Racing in the Eifel by supplying drivers from its driver squad, among other things. The WEC drivers Kévin Estre, Michael Christensen and Frédéric Makowiecki as well as DTM driver Thomas Preining form the powerful quartet in Manthey EMA's 911 GT3 R with the nickname "Grello". Matt Campbell from Australia and Frenchman Mathieu Jaminet join forces with Lionspeed by Car Collection Motorsport. Belgium's Laurens Vanthoor drives the No. 54 Porsche 911 campaigned by Dinamic GT.

Lionspeed by Car Collection Motorsport (Porsche 911 GT3 R #24)
Patrick Kolb (D), Matt Campbell (AUS), Mathieu Jaminet (F), Patrick Pilet (F)

Huber Motorsport (Porsche 911 GT3 R #25)

Dennis Fetzer (D), Côme Ledogar (F), Lars Kern (D), Romain Dumas (F)

Falken Motorsports (Porsche 911 GT3 R #33)
Klaus Bachler (A), Sven Müller (D), Alessio Picariello (B)

Falken Motorsports (Porsche 911 GT3 R #44)
Joel Eriksson (S), Tim Heinemann (D), Nico Menzel (D), Martin Ragginger (A)

Dinamic GT (Porsche 911 GT3 R #54)
Laurens Vanthoor (B), Laurin Heinrich (D), Ayhancan Güven (TR), Christian Engelhart (D)

Rutronik Racing (Porsche 911 GT3 R #96)
Dennis Olsen (N), Matteo Cairoli (I), Julien Andlauer (F)

Manthey EMA (Porsche 911 GT3 R #911)
Michael Christensen (DK), Kévin Estre (F), Frédéric Makowiecki (F), Thomas Preining (A)

Comments before the race

Mathieu Jaminet (Porsche 911 GT3 R #24):"We're about to take on the toughest race of the year. Often, it's the ever-changing weather conditions that top off the already very strenuous driving on the Nordschleife. Our preparation wasn't quite ideal because we got very little track time with our team Lionspeed by Car Collection. But the performance is there: We're already safely in the ‚Top Qualifying 2' with our car, so we can concentrate fully on working on the setup in all the sessions before the shootout for the best grid positions. Let's see how well we do in the race."

Lars Kern (Porsche 911 GT3 R #25):"Our Huber Motorsport team has advanced into the pro category this year. I think that's great. I drove for the team in 2022 and feel right at home there. I think our driver squad is really good. In addition, we've already gotten to know the new Porsche 911 GT3 R extensively. There are still refinements to be made so that we can maintain as fast a pace as possible, not just over a single lap but over a complete stint. I'm hoping for good weather and an exciting 24 hours of racing."

Klaus Bachler (Porsche 911 GT3 R #33):"This year, I'm competing in the top GT3 class at the 24-hour race for the eighth time. I've already been able to fight for a top spot a few times. In 2021, I probably achieved my best result to date: we only just missed out on a podium result shortly before the end of the race and finished in fourth place. I'm hoping that this year I'll manage to finish on the podium and - if everything goes well – we'll also be able to fight for overall victory."

Nico Menzel (Porsche 911 GT3 R #44):"This is my first time competing with Falken Motorsports at my home race. The team gave me a warm welcome the minute I arrived. Falken's tyre is working very well this year. We have ticked off an extensive test programme and tried out a lot, and the preparatory races went well. Now we have to see where we stand compared to the competition. I think it's great to be

back in a Pro class car after the last few years in the Pro-Am class. We have a very capable driver squad to attack at the front."

Laurin Heinrich (Porsche 911 GT3 R #54):"I'm particularly looking forward to my first start in the 24-hour race at the Nürburgring. It has always been my goal to compete there in the top class - an absolute highlight in my career! Our Dinamic GT team is experienced and well-positioned, and the driver squad is strong, as well. We have a great mix of experience and youth on board. Our preparation races went very well. Together with our partners, I think we can head into the race feeling optimistic."

Dennis Olsen (Porsche 911 GT3 R #96):"One of the absolute highlight races of the season is just around the corner and I can't wait for the weekend to get underway. The new Porsche 911 GT3 R has shown great potential compared to the previous generation. Together with Rutronik Racing, we're very well prepared and ready for the 'Green Hell'."

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 GT3 R #911):"I'm super excited about the Nürburgring 24 Hours and can't wait to drive the 'Grello' again. I think we still have a score to settle after the early retirement last year. The preparations went okay, but we still lacked a bit of performance. Let's see what tweaks we can still make before the race."

The schedule (all times CEST)

Thursday, 18 May
1:15 pm – 3:00 pm: Qualifying 1
8:00 pm – 11:30 pm: Qualifying 2

Friday, 19 May
1:30 pm – 2:45 pm: Qualifying 3
5:30 pm – 7:15 pm: Top Qualifying

Saturday, 20 May

12:40 pm – 1:25 pm: Warmup
4:00 pm: Start Nürburgring 24 Hours

Sunday, 21 May
4:00 pm: Chequered flag Nürburgring 24 Hours

Nürburgring 24 Hours – Porsche's overall wins:

1976:Müller / Hechler / Quirin (Porsche 911 Carrera)
1977: Müller / Hechler (Porsche 911 Carrera)

1978:Müller / Hechler / Gschwendtner (Porsche 911 Carrera)
1988:Dören / Holup / Faubel (Porsche 911 Carrera RSR)
1993:de Azevedo / Konrad / Wirdheim / Katthöfer (Porsche 911 Carrera)
2000:Mayländer / Bartels / Alzen / Heger (Porsche 911 GT3 R)
2006:Luhr / Bernhard / Rockenfeller / Tiemann (Porsche 911 GT3 MR)
2007:Lieb / Bernhard / Dumas / Tiemann (Porsche 911 GT3 RSR)
2008:Lieb / Bernhard / Dumas / Tiemann (Porsche 911 GT3 RSR)
2009:Lieb / Bernhard / Dumas / Tiemann (Porsche 911 GT3 RSR)
2011:Lieb / Bernhard / Dumas / Luhr (Porsche 911 GT3 RSR)
2018:Lietz / Pilet / Makowiecki / Tandy (Porsche 911 GT3 R)
2022:Estre / Christensen / Cairoli (Porsche 911 GT3 R)

Video

https://newstv.porsche.com/porschevideos/242801_en_3000000.mp4
https://newstv.porsche.com/porschevideos/242892_en_3000000.mp4

Link Collection

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