



Porsche Penske Motorsport shows fighting spirit in Texas

02/09/2024 Both Porsche 963 fielded by the Porsche Penske Motorsport works team finished in the points at the USA round of the FIA World Endurance Championship. The No. 6 hybrid prototype charged from P14 on the grid to cross the finish line in sixth place on the Circuit of the Americas. The identical sister car achieved seventh place after a difficult start to the race.

The race

With this result, works drivers Kévin Estre from France, André Lotterer from Germany and Belgium's Laurens Vanthoor defended their lead in the drivers' championship. In the manufacturers' championship, Porsche ranks second with two races left on the calendar. The Manthey customer team continued its strong performance in Texas: Both Porsche 911 GT3 R finished the race on the podium in the LMGT3 class.

After a mediocre qualifying session on Saturday, Porsche Penske Motorsport experienced a difficult

race day. On the hot 50-degree asphalt of the Circuit of The Americas (COTA), the two works-run Porsche 963 cars managed to match the pace of the frontrunners. However, an unscheduled pit stop for the No. 5 car and a drive-through penalty for the sister car hampered their chance of a better result. Over 65,000 spectators travelled to the track on the outskirts of the Texas capital Austin and were treated to a gripping six-hour race from lights to flag.

"We came here with high expectations and were disappointed with the overall result," said Thomas Laudenbach, Vice President Porsche Motorsport. "The close competition over six hours clearly showed how many cars are now in the fight – even those that joined the championship this year. The race was okay in terms of lap-time performance, however, under the current competitive conditions, we have to start further up the grid to make it onto the podium."

"That was anything but easy today," says Urs Kuratle, Director Factory Motorsport LMDh. "Our drivers didn't have optimally set-up cars in the qualifying or the race. What's more, we faced sweltering conditions, which put extreme physical demands on the drivers and the team. Our works drivers did a great job, and the team delivered perfect pit stops. We're not overly thrilled with the results but we did what we could under the given circumstances."

"The race didn't run entirely smoothly for both works cars. We need to take a closer look at that," states Jonathan Diuguid. The Managing Director of Porsche Penske Motorsport explains: "Since Le Mans, Ferrari and Toyota have been faster than us. It's now up to us to make the right call for the upcoming race in Japan and get back among the frontrunners. The situation in all championship classifications is still tight. Our goal hasn't changed: we're here to win titles."

In the manufacturers' championship, Porsche ranks second, just eleven points shy of the leader. Estre/Lotterer/Vanthoor have successfully defended their lead in the drivers' championship, with their teammates Campbell/Christensen/Makowiecki lying fourth.

Despite steady lap times, the six-hour race in Austin proved only moderately successful for the Hertz Team Jota customer team. The No. 38 contender earned one world championship point for tenth place, with the No. 12 sister car spending a long time in the pits due to a technical defect – and thus finished outside the rankings. Proton Competition's identical racing car took the flag in eleventh place.

Manthey plants both Porsche 911 GT3 R on the LMGT3 podium

In the LMGT3 class, the seasoned Manthey customer team again underlined its blistering form. Championship leaders Alex Malykhin from Great Britain, Joel Sturm from Germany and Austrian Klaus Bachler finished second in the No. 92 car, with third place going to the sister car shared by Yasser Shahin (Australia), Morris Schuring (Netherlands) and Richard Lietz (Austria). The team from Germany's Eifel region heads into the two final races of the year with a significant points advantage.

The seventh and penultimate race of the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC will be contested on

15 September at the Fuji Raceway in Japan.

Drivers' comments on the race

Frédéric Makowiecki (Porsche 963 #5): "Unfortunately, we had to make an unplanned pit stop very early in the race. What a shame. Still, there are also many positives: our pace was great. I think we can be proud of the work we've done. Our car was difficult to drive at the beginning of the weekend. But by the start of the race, we'd made significant progress. We're now looking forward to Fuji."

André Lotterer (Porsche 963 #6): "We successfully limited the damage. Had we not been handed a drive-through penalty, fifth place would probably have been within reach but our comeback was still pretty decent after a disappointing qualifying. It was the first race weekend this year where not everything went perfectly. Despite that, we earned some important points. We're still leading the drivers' championship. Next up is Fuji. I've spent many years in Japan, so it's a home race for me."

Phil Hanson (Porsche 963 #38): "We put in a strong drive today and at times were the fastest Porsche on the track. However, we're not happy with the final result. We were between the two works cars and looked sure to harvest points. Unfortunately, a late puncture set us back significantly. We did a good job and got the car into the ideal operating window – we couldn't do much more today. Luck simply wasn't on our side."

Julien Andlauer (Porsche 963 #99): "We learned a lot as the race progressed and improved bit by bit – with the car and me personally. My driving style is slightly different to that of my teammate Neel Jani. I had to get used to the chosen setup during the first stint. Over the weekend, we made big progress in terms of our experience with the Porsche 963. Hopefully, that'll show at the next race."

Joel Sturm (Porsche 911 GT3 R #92): "We achieved a great result under difficult conditions. It's not what we expected, so we're all the happier with the result. It has further boosted our lead in the championship. Although we climbed the podium again, we still need to make more tweaks for the next race."

Morris Schuring (Porsche 911 GT3 R #91): "It was a day of surprises. After starting from P16, we would have been completely happy with a result in the points – the fact that we clinched a podium result was truly unexpected. Richie and Yasser did a great job. I'm also satisfied with my performance. As far as the team's concerned, everything was fantastic: setup, pit stops, strategy – just perfect."

Race result

Hypercar class:

1. Kubica/Schwartzman/Ye (PL/ISR/CHN), Ferrari #38, 183 laps
2. Conway/Kobayashi/de Vries (UK/J/NL), Toyota #7, + 1.780 seconds

3. Fuoco/Molina/Nielsen (I/E/DK), Ferrari #50, + 26.282 seconds
6. Estre/Lotterer/Vanthoor (F/D/B), Porsche 963 #6, + 1:36.873 minutes
7. Campbell/Christensen/Makowiecki (AUS/DK/F), Porsche 963 #5, + 1:41.494 minutes
10. Hanson/Button/Rasmussen (UK/UK/DK), Porsche 963 #38, - 1 lap
11. Andlauer/Jani/Tincknell (F/CH/UK), Porsche 963 #99, - 1 lap
- DNF. Illott/Stevens/Nato (UK/UK/F), Porsche 963 #12, - 111 laps

LMGT3 class:

1. James/Manchinelli/Riberas (UK/I/E), Aston Martin #27, 164 laps
2. Bachler/Malykhin/Sturm (A/UK/D), Porsche 911 GT3 R #92, + 20.538 seconds
3. Lietz/Shahin/Schuring (A/AUS/NL), Porsche 911 GT3 R #91, + 51.859 seconds

Full results and championship standings at fiawec.alkamelsystems.com

Qualifying

The best Porsche 963 fielded by the Porsche Penske Motorsport works team will tackle the six-hour race in Austin from the third grid row. In qualifying, Matt Campbell planted the hybrid prototype on position six. The Australian shares the cockpit of the number 5 car with his works driver teammates Michael Christensen from Denmark and Frédéric Makowiecki from France.

The sister car crewed by Kévin Estre (France), André Lotterer (Germany) and Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium) will start the race from P14. In the LMGT3 class, Manthey PureRxcing's Porsche 911 GT3 R will tackle round six of the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC from fourth place. The customer team's racing car currently leads the team championship.

In sunny conditions and air temperatures of 31 degrees Celsius, the heated asphalt on the Formula 1 circuit near the Texas capital Austin offered little grip. In the top Hypercar class qualifying, close lap times made for a nail-biting battle to advance into the Hyperpole session. While works driver Kévin Estre missed out on the shootout of the fastest ten cars with 14th place, Matt Campbell put in a last-ditch sprint to improve to sixth place. The Australian also turned heads in the Hyperpole: On his last flying lap, Campbell again catapulted to sixth place.

"We'd hoped to do better and aren't happy with the result," states Urs Kuratle. The Director of Porsche Factory Motorsport LMDh adds: "We didn't give our drivers an optimally set-up car today – and the timesheets clearly underlined this. I hope we're better prepared for the six-hour race."

Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director of Porsche Penske Motorsport, says: "In the practice sessions, we noticed that our pace was consistently fast over longer distances. We need to deliver another flawless performance, then anything is possible on race day."

The two Porsche 963 racers fielded by the Hertz Team Jota customer outfit will head into the so-called

“Lone Star Le Mans” event from positions ten and 17. Proton Competition’s identical vehicle will start the third-to-last race of the FIA WEC season from position 16.

Manthey PureRxcing’s Porsche 911 GT3 R achieves commendable grid spot

The best Porsche 911 GT3 R in the LMGT3 class will start from the second row. Alex Malykhin qualified fourth in the shootout of the ten fastest cars. The Belarusian-born driver shares driving duties in Manthey PureRxcing’s No. 92 contender with Germany’s Joel Sturm and the former Porsche Junior Klaus Bachler from Austria. The trio currently leads the championship. Yasser Shahin missed out on advancing into the Hyperpole with 16th place. The Australian shares the No. 91 car run by Manthey EMA with the Dutchman Morris Schuring and the Austrian Porsche works driver Richard Lietz.

Focus on tyres: fast and twisty turns pose unique challenges

With air temperatures exceeding 30 degrees Celsius and glaring sun, the temperatures on the dark asphalt of the “Circuit of The Americas” (COTA) often rise above the 50-degree mark. This puts stress on the Michelin tyres in the fast, snaking corners at the beginning of the second sector: Between turns 2 and 6, these stresses reach peak values. The swift changes of direction dramatically increase the temperatures of the slick racing rubber – around 30 times per stint, 60 in a double stint and over 180 times during a normal race.

“From the second-corner entrance to the exit of turn 6, we notice an increase in the surface temperature of 20 to 25 degrees Celsius,” explains Romain Gineste, Head of Track Engineering LMDh WEC Porsche Motorsport. The upper limit of the Michelin slicks’ operating window is 110 degrees Celsius. “High temperatures mean increased tyre wear. To survive longer distances, we must caution our drivers to be careful. It’s a vicious circle: if you overstress the tyres, the temperatures rise so much that they drop out of the ideal operating window. As a result, this increases the risk of sliding – which then makes the tyre temperatures rise even further. As the lap times increase, the tyres deteriorate more quickly. There is only one to prevent this: ease off at the right time!”

The peak temperatures built up in the so-called “esses” are quickly put into perspective as the race continues. Even before the hairpin bend (turn 11), the data approaches the normal range, and the tyres cool off further on the following back straight. “As soon as we change the wheels, I check all the values,” explains Philippe Rocher, who supports Porsche Penske Motorsport as the Tyre Technician at Michelin Motorsport. “The limiting factors in Austin are the rear right and front left tyres, so we keep a close eye on them.” The temperatures on the surface of the slicks vary considerably over a lap on the 5.513-kilometre racetrack. “These peaks are pronounced in Austin, but we’re more concerned with the average values over a lap,” explains Romain Gineste. “Interestingly, despite all the pronounced upward swings, the core temperature of the tyre and the air inside the wheel remain very constant. That’s how it should

be!"

The six-hour race of the FIA WEC near the Texas capital Austin gets underway on Sunday, 1 September at 13:00 hours local time (20:00 CEST).

Drivers' post-qualifying quotes

Matt Campbell (Porsche 963 #5): "We encountered some difficult conditions in Qualifying and Hyperpole. It was a stark contrast to Free Practice in the morning. Ultimately, we finished sixth on the grid. I think that the position is okay. I'm confident we'll look good in the six-hour race."

Kévin Estre (Porsche 963 #6): "The car was tricky to drive. I didn't manage to pull together an optimum lap time under these conditions. My first attempt was okay. On the second lap, it looked like I would shave some more time off. Unfortunately, I veered slightly off the track limits. It probably wouldn't have made a big difference anyway. We may be starting far back, but we still have plenty of time to work our way up the field in the race."

Norman Nato (Porsche 963 #12): "That was my very first qualifying in a Hypercar. I'm satisfied: first attempt, entry into the Hyperpole as one of only two Porsche drivers. Nevertheless, the race against the clock was anything but easy. Compared to this morning's third Free Practice session, the track temperatures were significantly higher. This changed the behaviour of the car. I'm sure we'll perform better in the race. That has always been the case so far."

Jenson Button (Porsche 963 #38): "That wasn't too illustrious. My first lap didn't go to plan because I probably didn't yet have the tyres in the ideal operating window. The second attempt was better – until I spun. It likely wouldn't have been enough for a grid position near the front anyway. I'm really disappointed because our car felt great in the morning."

Alex Malykhin (Porsche 911 GT3 R #92): #92: "I made a few mistakes in qualifying, especially during my fastest lap in the final sector. Maybe I made the wrong decision regarding my flying lap: I probably should've attempted it one lap earlier. I then did the same in the Hyperpole. Everything went much better there. I don't think much more would've been possible. In terms of our position in the championship, things are looking positive."

Qualifying result

Hypercar class:

1. Pier Guidi/Calado/Giovinazzi (I/UK/I), Ferrari #51, 1:50.390 minutes
2. Kubica/Schwartzman/Ye (PL/ISR/CHN), Ferrari #83, 1:50.667 minutes
3. Bamber/Lynn (NZL/UK), Cadillac #2, 1:50.680 minutes
6. Campbell/Christensen/Makowiecki (AUS/DK/F), Porsche 963 #5, 1:50.874 minutes

10. Ilott/Stevens/Nato (UK/UK/F), Porsche 963 #12, 1:51.532 minutes
14. Estre/Lotterer/Vanthoor (F/D/B), Porsche 963 #6, 1:51.984 minutes
16. Andlauer/Jani/Tincknell (F/CH/UK), Porsche 963 #99, 1:52.225 minutes
17. Hanson/Button/Rasmussen (UK/UK/DK), Porsche 963 #38, 1:52.320 minutes

LMGT3 class:

1. James/Mancinelli/Riberas (UK/I/E), Aston Martin #27, 2:05.587 minutes
2. Bovy/Gatting/Frey (B/DK/CH), Lamborghini #85, 2:05.759 minutes
3. Heriau/Mann/Rovera (F/USA/I), Ferrari #55, 2:06.001 minutes
4. Bachler/Malykhin/Sturm (A/UK/D), Porsche 911 GT3 R #92, 2:06.176 minutes
16. Lietz/Shahin/Schuring (A/AUS/NL), Porsche 911 GT3 R #91, 2:07.691 minutes

Full results at fiawec.alkamelsystems.com

Preview

Porsche Penske Motorsport will line up on the grid with two Porsche 963 at the Circuit of The Americas (COTA) on 1 September. The FIA World Endurance Championship WEC returns to the Formula 1 track near Austin for the third-to-last round of the 2024 season. The race will run for six hours.

Between 2015 and 2017, Porsche clinched three consecutive victories in Texas with the 919 Hybrid. This year, Porsche arrives leading the manufacturers' standings. Factory drivers Kévin Estre from France, André Lotterer from Germany, and Laurens Vanthoor from Belgium are on top of the drivers' championship. The customer team Manthey holds the lead in the LMGT3 class with their two Porsche 911 GT3 R.

Porsche Motorsport has fond memories of the Grand Prix circuit in the US state of Texas. In 2015, 2016, and 2017, the Porsche 919 Hybrid secured overall WEC victories in Austin. The 911 RSR also won in the GTE Pro class in 2015. For this Sunday's 6-hour race (1 September), Porsche Penske Motorsport aims to replicate past successes with their two Porsche 963. Customers Hertz Team Jota and Proton Competition will field three more Weissach-built hybrid prototypes. In the LMGT3 category, the experienced partner team Manthey will race two Porsche 911 GT3 R.

"We are very much looking forward to the FIA WEC's return to Austin," states Thomas Laudenbach, Vice President Porsche Motorsport. "On one hand, we have great memories of past WEC events in Texas, and on the other hand, we are returning after a successful test. Our factory team is well-prepared for the challenge. The third-to-last race of the year marks the beginning of the 2024 season's final push. We are leading both the manufacturers' and drivers' standings, and we aim to maintain and extend this lead with a strong result in Austin. We anticipate a very tight competition and a quite literally hot race."

"We learned a lot during our recent tests in Austin. At the end of July, we encountered both heavy rain and intense heat," explains Urs Kuratle, Director Factory Motorsport LMDh. "We covered more than

three WEC race distances during the test, and everything ran smoothly. Additionally, in the presence of several other Hypercar competitors, it became clear that the fans can look forward to an exciting six-hour contest. I'm confident that both Porsche 963 from the works team, as well as the three identical customer-run cars, will be in the mix at the front."

"The circuit is a world-class facility and has put on fantastic races for the WEC championship nearly a decade ago," states Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport. "Our organisation has had exposure to the track in both IndyCar as well as with our NASCAR teams. Additionally, our sportscar team will have invested some test days in COTA prior to hitting the track on the race weekend. This race will test both the cars and the drivers, as Texas in the middle of summer can be very warm. The Porsche Penske Motorsport WEC team has been performing well in all conditions in 2024, so we will be pushing for our organizations first win at COTA."

The race

The 6-hour race at Circuit of The Americas (COTA) is titled "Lone Star Le Mans". The FIA World Endurance Championship WEC previously visited the Formula 1 circuit between 2013 and 2017 and again during the 2019/20 season. With three overall victories, Porsche is the most successful manufacturer in these WEC races held just outside the Texas capital of Austin. At the end of August and beginning of September, air temperatures often soar close to 40 degrees Celsius, with asphalt temperatures exceeding 50 degrees. This presents a significant challenge for tire management as the surfaces heat up considerably.

The 5.513-kilometre circuit with 20 corners has hosted Formula 1 Grands Prix eleven times since its opening in 2012. The facility is known for its distinctive observation tower, a steep climb leading into the first corner, and a fast sequence of corners at the beginning of the second sector. The track is also characterized by extremely bumpy asphalt. As in São Paulo, the race direction is counter-clockwise. Many drivers favour the event in the US, as Austin is celebrated as the "Live Music Capital of the World," offering a high entertainment value with its numerous clubs and bars.

An overview of the drivers and vehicles

Hypercar (Porsche 963):

Porsche Penske Motorsport #5: Matt Campbell (AUS), Michael Christensen (DK), Frédéric Makowiecki (F)

Porsche Penske Motorsport #6: Kévin Estre (F), André Lotterer (D), Laurens Vanthoor (B)

Hertz Team Jota #12: Will Stevens (UK), Callum Hogg (UK), Norman Nato (F)

Hertz Team Jota #38: Jenson Button (UK), Phil Hanson (UK), Oliver Rasmussen (DK)

Proton Competition #99: Julien Andlauer (F), Neel Jani (CH), Harry Tincknell (UK)

LMGT3 (Porsche 911 GT3 R):

Manthey EMA #91: Yasser Shahin (AUS), Morris Schuring (NL), Richard Lietz (A)
Manthey PureRxcing #92: Alex Malykhin (UK), Joel Sturm (D), Klaus Bachler (A)

TV / Stream

German free-to-air TV channel Sport1 will broadcast the final four hours of the sixth round of the FIA WEC live on Sunday, 1 September, starting at 23:00 (CEST). This channel, along with the pay-TV provider Sport1+, will also offer several highlights from Austin during the following week. Additionally, channels from the Eurosport group will show parts of the race. Live timing and streaming are available through the FIA WEC's paid app.

Championship Standings FIA WEC

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Further comments ahead of the race

Matt Campbell (Porsche 963 #5): "We've tested at Austin multiple times, which was really beneficial. However, we weren't alone on track as other manufacturers were also present. We feel well-prepared. Let's see if that translates into the race. As far as I know, a few minor changes were made to the track after our last test, so there will be something new to discover. But that's the same for everyone. The event in Texas has always been very entertaining, and I'm sure this year will be no different – very exciting and very hot."

Laurens Vanthoor (Porsche 963 #6): "With only three races left, the goal is clear: We want to become world champions! From now on, we'll be more strategic, focusing on consistent points finishes. Of course, we want to win every race if we get the chance. Our recent test at the circuit went well. Austin is a very cool city, although it does get extremely hot. I'm looking forward to it. I always enjoy racing in the US."

Dieter Gass (Teamchef Hertz Team Jota): "We're excited to return to Austin. The track is very demanding and interesting for drivers with a good mix of fast corners and a long straight. After São Paulo, where we lost out on a better result due to a few small mistakes, we're aiming for another strong performance in Austin, similar to what we achieved in the first half of the season."

Neel Jani (Porsche 963 #99): "I expect a tough race for us because, unlike the other Hypercar teams, we haven't tested there. We'll have to learn quickly during practice. I know Austin and the conditions from my LMP1 days: the weather always brings some excitement. It can get extremely hot, and suddenly intense thunderstorms with heavy rain can occur – we've experienced it all. I think we'll see different tire strategies due to the heat, which will make it exciting and interesting for teams, drivers,

and fans.”

Morris Schuring (Porsche 911 GT3 R #91): “In São Paulo, we showed great potential, but unfortunately, we didn’t get the result to match. We want to change that in Austin and have done a test there – not with the 911 GT3 R, but with Cup cars based on the 911. It helped me get a good feel for the track. My co-driver Yasser Shahin put in a great performance, and Richard Lietz was also satisfied. We feel well-prepared and want to defend our team’s top positions. It will be my first race in the US, and I’m really looking forward to it!”

Joel Sturm (Porsche 911 GT3 R #92): “After our victory in Brazil, we’re heading to Austin with a bit of a points cushion. The confidence within the team is very high. Our aim in Texas is to further extend our lead at the top – or at least, maintain it. I’m expecting a tough race. The Circuit of The Americas has several long straights, which don’t play to our car’s strengths. But our Manthey team has proven time and time again how formidable it is. We handle every challenge that comes our way. I’m confident that we’ll score a lot of points in Austin and take another step towards the championship.”

The schedule (local time, CEST -7)

Friday, 30th August

12:40 hrs – 14:10 hrs: Free Practice 1

17:10 hrs – 18:40 hrs: Free Practice 2

Saturday, 31st August

11:00 hrs – 12:00 hrs: Free Practice 3

15:00 hrs – 15:12 hrs: LMGT3 Qualifying

15:20 hrs – 15:30 hrs: LMGT3 Hyperpole

15:40 hrs – 15:52 hrs: Hypercar Qualifying

16:00 hrs – 16:10 hrs: Hypercar Hyperpole

Sunday, 1st September

13:00 hrs – 19:00 hrs: Race

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Path: Porsche Penske Motorsport shows fighting spirit in Texas/Images/img_3.jpg

Title: Morris Schuring (NL), Richard Lietz (A) (l-r), Manthey EMA (#91), FIA WEC, Austin, Race, 2024, Porsche AG

Subline: Morris Schuring and Richard Lietz

Path: Porsche Penske Motorsport shows fighting spirit in Texas/Images/img_4.jpg

Title: Urs Kuratle (Director Factory Motorsport LMDh), Mathieu Jaminet (F) (l-r), Race 6, FIA WEC, Austin, USA, 2024, Porsche AG

Subline: Urs Kuratle

Path: Porsche Penske Motorsport shows fighting spirit in Texas/Images/img_5.jpg

Title: Alex Malykhin (UK), Joel Sturm (D), Klaus Bachler (A), Manthey PureRxcing (#92), Porsche 911 GT3 R, Race 6, FIA WEC, Austin, USA, 2024, Porsche AG

Subline: Manthey PureRxcing

Path: Porsche Penske Motorsport shows fighting spirit in Texas/Images/img_7.jpg

Title: Thomas Laudenbach, Vice President Porsche Motorsport, 2024, Porsche AG

Subline: Thomas Laudenbach (Vice President Porsche Motorsport)

Path: Porsche Penske Motorsport shows fighting spirit in Texas/Images/img_8.jpg

Title: Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport, 2024, Porsche AG

Subline: Jonathan Diuguid (Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport)

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