

Porsche Penske Motorsport returns to the venue of the 963's maiden win

09/04/2025 After two stellar performances at the long-distance races in Daytona and Sebring, Porsche Penske Motorsport now switches to sprint mode. Round three of this season's IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship in Long Beach is one of the two shortest races of the year, with the event contested over just 100 minutes on the streets of the port city near Los Angeles.

In the top GTP class, the Porsche Penske Motorsport factory team and the JDC-Miller MotorSports customer outfit will field three Porsche 963 racers. In the GTD category, AO Racing campaigns a 911 alongside the 911 GT3 R from Wright Motorsports. Factory driver Laurens Vanthoor from Belgium joins the driver lineup in this category.

The preview

After bringing home victories from the 24 Hours of Daytona and the 12 Hours of Sebring, Porsche ranks first in all categories of the IMSA WeatherTech Sports Car Championship (IWSC). For the first time this season, the Porsche 963 fielded by the Porsche Penske Motorsport factory team will be helmed by just two drivers. The No. 7 car, which won both endurance races in Florida, will be driven by reigning IMSA champion Felipe Nasr of Brazil and "Mister 24 Hours" Nick Tandy of Great Britain. The No. 6 sister car will be shared by Frenchman Mathieu Jaminet and Australian Matt Campbell.

"We have the best memories of the sprint race in Long Beach: It was there, in our 2023 debut season, that we celebrated very first victory with our Porsche 963," explains Thomas Laudenbach, Vice President Porsche Motorsport. "Although we're now switching from endurance to sprint mode, our goal remains the same: We want to bring home another win and pull further ahead in the championship standings."

"The race in Long Beach is completely different from the two classics at Daytona and Sebring," says Urs Kuratle, looking ahead to the upcoming race on the outskirts of Los Angeles. The Director Factory Motorsport LMDh adds: "There are very few opportunities to overtake on this narrow street circuit so it's crucial to qualify as far up the grid as possible. We've gained a lot of important insights over the past two years and we now want to use what we've learned to hopefully clinch our second victory in Long Beach."

"Our team just ran two cars flawlessly for 36 hours of racing in the Floridian leg of the season. Now we head to California with a completely different racing style as we enter a sprint on the streets of Long Beach," states Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport. "It's not just a case of running the cars for fewer hours, the whole approach from driving style to set-up changes when you're only racing for 100 minutes, with one critical pit stop. The team has had previous success at Long Beach and will be aiming for another victory."

In the top GTP class, another hybrid prototype from Weissach will compete alongside the two Porsche 963 racing cars from Porsche Penske Motorsport. The JDC-Miller MotorSports customer squad entrusts the No. 85 vehicle to Gianmaria Bruni from Italy and Tijmen van der Helm from the Netherlands.

AO Racing's "Rexy" races as GTD guest entrant

Like last year, the GTD Pro class will not be contested in the streets of Long Beach. Instead, two Porsche 911 GT3 R fielded by Wright Motorsports will tackle the GTD category in California with regular drivers Adam Adelson and Elliott Skeer from the USA. Moreover, AO Racing makes a guest appearance in the GT class, in which ambitious amateurs share a cockpit with a professional racing driver. Here, factory driver Laurens Vanthoor from Belgium shares driving duties in the dinosaur-liveried

911 dubbed “Rexy” with Jonny Edgar from the UK.

The race

The Long Beach Grand Prix Circuit hosts round three of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship. The 3.167-kilometre street circuit features eleven turns and is regarded as the American equivalent of the storied Formula 1 circuit in Monaco. The Long Beach Street Course runs clockwise around the Convention Center. Its unique features include the sweeping start-finish straight along the Pacific coast and the sharp right-hander at the end of the lap, set to the backdrop of the historic Queen Mary cruise ship.

Along with the Detroit Grand Prix in May, the sprint over 100 minutes is the shortest race of the IMSA season. The temporary street circuit has served as a racetrack since 1975, and this year celebrates its 50th anniversary. Long Beach also hosted Formula 1 eight times between 1976 and 1983. On the second weekend in April, the popular American IndyCar series will also be contested at Long Beach, where the Penske team campaigns three single-seaters.

Drivers' comments before the race

Mathieu Jaminet (Porsche 963 #6): “After Daytona and Sebring, we now head to Long Beach – the differences could hardly be greater. We’re facing a short sprint on a narrow street circuit. That’s a sure guarantee of big thrills and a great vibe. Last season didn’t go so well for us, but the year before, we celebrated our first victory with the 963. Wonderful memories! Hopefully, we can repeat our strong performances from the first two races of the season. We’re excited to go head-to-head with our sister car for the win.”

Felipe Nasr (Porsche 963 #7): “We’ve had a dream start – our victories at Daytona and Sebring are simply brilliant. It was impressive to see the high level of engagement from the team. Now we’re turning our full attention to the upcoming sprint race. The atmosphere in Long Beach is always terrific, and the street circuit offers unparalleled challenges. We want to continue our top form and win again!”

Tijmen van der Helm (Porsche 963 #85): “Our pace at Sebring was great over long stretches but unfortunately, luck wasn’t on our side. Now we’re heading to Long Beach with some good ideas about how to find an even better setup for our race car. We were fast on this street course last year. The team now aims to build on that and bring home a strong result.”

Elliott Skeer (Porsche 911 GT3 R #120): “For my teammate Adam and me, the Long Beach Grand Prix is closer to home than any other race. That's why we consider it our home race. Family and friends are coming, which will be a lot of fun! Last year didn’t go as planned for us. We want to be at the front next weekend. Long Beach is one of those courses that's impossible to book for a track day. Opportunities to drive on this special circuit are few and far between, so we’re keen to enjoy this amazing experience.”

Laurens Vanthoor (Porsche 911 GT3 R #177):"I'm particularly fond of the race in Long Beach. Street circuits are always spectacular, and the proximity to Los Angeles makes it even more appealing. I'll be driving the 'Rexy' Porsche 911 GT3 R. My daughter is a dinosaur fan and is even more excited about it than I am. The guest appearance at the Long Beach Street Course fits perfectly into my calendar. I'm super excited about this event and hope that we'll achieve a great result with the team."

Porsche's racing cars contesting the Long Beach Grand Prix

GTP class (Porsche 963):
Porsche Penske Motorsport #6: Matt Campbell (AUS), Mathieu Jaminet (FRA)
Porsche Penske Motorsport #7: Felipe Nasr (BRA), Nick Tandy (GBR)
JDC-Miller MotorSports #85: Gianmaria Bruni (ITA), Tijmen van der Helm (NLD)

GTD class:
Wright Motorsports #120: Adam Adelson (USA), Elliott Skeer (USA)
AO Racing #177: Jonny Edgar (GBR), Laurens Vanthoor (BEL)

The schedule (local time = CEST -9 hours)

Friday, 11 April
09:00 – 10:00 hrs: Free practice 1
13:00 – 14:30 hrs: Free practice 2
17:10 – 17:25 hrs: Qualifying GTD
17:35 – 17:50 hrs: Qualifying GTP

Saturday, 12 April
14:05 – 15:45 hrs: Race

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



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