Two podium spots for the Porsche 963, 911 GT3 R wins the GT class

14/07/2024 Porsche continues to top the leaderboard in the manufacturers' classification of the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC. The two Porsche 963 racing cars fielded by the Porsche Penske Motorsport works team wrapped up the six-hour race in São Paulo, Brazil, in second and third place. Thanks to this result, works drivers Kévin Estre, André Lotterer and Laurens Vanthoor extended their lead in the drivers' championship. In the LMGT3 class, Manthey PureRxcing celebrated its second win of the season with the 911 GT3 R and is now the exclusive leader of the team classification.

Race

The conditions at round five of the season on the Formula 1 circuit in Interlagos were totally different to the practice days: sun and air temperatures of over 25 degrees Celsius got teams and drivers sizzling after considerably cooler temperatures. Witnessed by 73,205 spectators, the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC put on a great show in both classes at its comeback to Brazil after ten years.

When the lights turned green for round five of the season, Frenchman Frédéric Makowiecki defended

his third place at the wheel of Porsche Penske Motorsport's No. 5 car. His Porsche colleague Laurens Vanthoor initially lost ground in the sister car but quickly worked his way back up the order to fifth place. In the ensuing fourth-place battle, the Belgian became entangled in a collision caused by the identical Porsche 963 fielded by the Hertz Team Jota customer team. As a result, he sustained a puncture, pitted early and temporarily lost a lap.

A spirited pursuit followed: After his two-hour stint, Vanthoor handed the hybrid prototype off to his German teammate André Lotterer in seventh place. The three-time Le Mans overall winner continued the charge to the top. Ultimately, Frenchman Kévin Estre brought the car across the finish line in second place, just ahead of the sister car shared by Makowiecki, Michael Christensen from Denmark and Australia's Matt Campbell.

"This is a mega result for us," says a delighted Thomas Laudenbach, Vice President Porsche Motorsport. "Toyota was simply out of reach today, so we're thrilled with the result. Two cars on the podium earn us a heap of points. We're currently leading both world championship classifications. Congratulations to our works team and drivers. The spectators were treated to an extremely entertaining race today. The LMGT3 class was full of action, too. Manthey again set the benchmark with the Porsche 911 GT3 R. The trip to São Paulo was well worth it for us!"

"The different conditions today put the focus on tyre strategy," states Urs Kuratle. The Director of Factory Motorsport LMDh adds: "Our works team played to its strengths in terms of strategy and did a perfect job. Both cars suffered minor setbacks on the way to the podium, but the end-result is still fantastic. Unfortunately, our customer teams didn't have such a banner day with their Porsche 963 racers. Both Proton Competition and the Hertz Team Jota deserved a better result."

"Although the race was not without incident for both works cars, this is a superb outcome," said Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director of Porsche Penske Motorsport. "Our number 6 Porsche 963 made a great comeback after an early contact and a puncture. We had to change the rear wing on the sister car after a collision with a GT car. The team handled it brilliantly. Our strategy was great too. As the championship leaders, we're now looking forward to the upcoming race in the USA."

After five of this year's eight races, Porsche leads the manufacturers' classification, four points ahead of the hottest pursuer. Estre, Lotterer and Vanthoor rank first in the drivers' championship. Their Porsche colleagues Campbell, Christensen and Makowiecki have advanced to fourth overall.

Luck evaded the customer-run Porsche 963 cars at the first WEC race in Brazil in a decade. Both Hertz Team Jota entries maintained a strong pace over long stretches and remained in contact with the leading group for a long time. However, incidents and penalties ultimately relegated the No. 38 and No. 12 vehicles to seventh and 18th place. Proton Competition's identical vehicle finished in P15.

the season

Manthey PureRxcing's Porsche 911 GT3 R proved unbeatable in the LMGT3 class. Tackling the race from the second grid spot, it took UK driver Alex Malykhin only 90 minutes to catapult the No. 92 Porsche 911 to the top. Teammates Joel Sturm from Germany and former Porsche Junior Klaus Bachler from Austria successfully defended the lead. "We didn't have the fastest car, but we managed to win the class with our tyre strategy," explains Manthey's Managing Director Nicolas Raeder. "Our tyre management during the stints worked well and ultimately, we were faster than the competition. It's a shame that number 91 missed out on the result it deserved." The car driven by Le Mans class winners Richard Lietz from Austria, Dutchman Morris Schuring and Australian Yasser Shahin took the flag in twelfth place after being hampered by several penalties and incidents.

The teams will stay on the west side of the Atlantic for round six of the 2024 season. The world championship holds another six-hour race at the Circuit of The Americas (CoTA) in Austin, Texas, on 1 September.

Drivers' comments after the race

Laurens Vanthoor (Porsche 963 #6):"What a perfect result for the championship! We didn't expect it. I'm delighted. My stints were good but unfortunately, there was an unnecessary collision with a Jota car. But anyway, we caught up and extended our lead in the world championship – it doesn't get much better than that."

Michael Christensen (Porsche 963 #5):"I was determined to turn my laps without incident, only to have a GT car rear-end our Porsche. Everyone opted for different tyre strategies, which led to constant changes in the pecking order during the race. Toyota was simply stronger today. Second and third place was the best we could do based on what was possible."

Phil Hanson (Porsche 963 #38):"What a rollercoaster ride! My first stint went perfectly. But in the second stint, my tyres deteriorated badly, and I lost a lot of ground. Things improved eventually and we were up with the frontrunners. With eight minutes left on the clock, we were still in fourth place and the podium was within reach – then we were handed a penalty and that was it for us. What a shame. A top result would've been possible for us today."

Joel Sturm (Porsche 911 GT3 R #92):"We're thrilled to be right up at the front again. The race was trickier than expected. My stints were good, I managed the tyres perfectly and defended our lead. Both our performance and strategy were spot on. Everyone in our great team did a mega job, from the mechanics to the engineers and my teammates."

Race result

Hypercar class:
1. Buemi/Hartley/Hirakawa (CH/NZ/J), Toyota #8, 236 laps
2. Estre/Lotterer/Vanthoor (F/D/B), Porsche 963 #6, -1:08.811 minutes
3. Campbell/Christensen/Makowiecki (AUS/DK/F), Porsche 963 #5, -1:15.993 minutes
7. Hanson/Button/Rasmussen (UK/UK/DK), Porsche 963 #38, -1 lap
15. Andlauer/Jani (F/CH), Porsche 963 #99, -2 laps
18. Ilott/Stevens/Nato (UK/UK/F), Porsche 963 #12, -3 laps

LMGT3 class:
1. Bachler/Malykhin/Sturm (A/UK/D), Porsche 911 GT3 R #92, 214 laps
2. James/Mancinelli/Ribeiras (USA/I/E), Aston Martin #27, -34.443 seconds
3. Caygill/Pino/Sato (UK/CHL/J), McLaren #95, -1:23.287 minutes
12. Lietz/Shahin/Schuring (A/AUS/NL), Porsche 911 GT3 R #91, -4 laps

Full results and championship standings: fiawec.alkamelsystems.com

Qualifying

The best Porsche 963 tackles the race in Brazil from the second grid row. The time-honoured Formula 1 circuit in Interlagos hosts round five of the FIA World Endurance Championship. Australian Matt Campbell posted the third quickest lap time in the No. 5 works car. Frenchman Kévin Estre wrapped up the qualifying session in fifth at the wheel of his hybrid prototype. The two identical customer cars fielded by Hertz Team Jota will start the six-hour race in São Paulo from positions seven and eight. In the LMGT3 class, the two Porsche 911 GT3 R campaigned by Manthey qualified in second and fifth.

Cool temperatures under 15 degrees Celsius during qualifying threw challenges at the teams and drivers to get the Michelin tyres into the ideal operating window. In the Hyperclass session, Matt Campbell and Kévin Estre turned three warm-up laps before attempting their flying laps. The Australian advanced into the hyperpole session as the best-placed Porsche driver, with Estre reaching the final top-10 shootout in tenth place.

Those who reached the hyperpole session had ten minutes to clock their best times on the 4.309-kilometre Grand Prix circuit. Both works drivers continued to improve in their Porsche 963 and concluded the hunt for pole position in positions three and five. “Our strong performance was exactly what we’d expected,” stated Urs Kuratle, Director Factory Motorsport LMDh. “We’re right behind the two Toyota. That’s pretty good considering we haven’t done any testing here. We’re well-prepared for the race. Hertz Team Jota’s two Porsche 963 also put in a great qualifying performance.”

“I’m very proud of our team’s qualifying result with positions three and five,” says Jonathan Diuguid,

Managing Director of Porsche Penske Motorsport. "We weren't familiar with the track coming here and the fact that we achieved such a strong performance is the result of our preparation. We did a great job in the simulator. Since we're expecting significantly higher temperatures on race day, the conditions will be completely different. Our cars are fast, and our tyre wear looks good. We'll be chasing down the Toyotas tomorrow."

The Hertz Team Jota customer team also underlined the potential of the Porsche 963 in Interlagos. Positions seven and eight were claimed by the Spa race winner Callum Ilott in the No. 12 hybrid prototype and Jenson Button, the 2009 Formula 1 world champion, in the No. 38 car. Former Porsche Junior Julien Andlauer from France planted the Proton Competition customer car on P12.

In the LMGT3 class, the two Porsche 911 GT3 R fielded by Manthey EMA and Manthey PureRxcing competed in a two-part qualification. UK driver Alex Malykhin and Le Mans class winner Yasser Shahin from Australia advanced to the hyperpole in second and ninth. In the final shootout for the best grid spots, Malykhin again achieved second place, while his brand colleague Shahin qualified fifth.

The six-hour FIA WEC race in Brazil starts on Sunday, 14 July at 11:30 hrs local time (16:30 hrs CEST).

TV / Stream

Eurosport2 will televise highlights of the race. The fee-based FIA WEC app offers live timing and a live stream of qualifying and the entire race.

Drivers' comments after the qualifying

Matt Campbell (Porsche 963 #5): "Third on the grid is great and a little more than we expected to be honest. Starting from the second grid row puts us in a solid position. The qualifying session was extremely close – I really enjoyed it. Still, with much warmer temperatures in the six-hour race, things will look completely different. We need to keep a very close eye on our tyre wear because we want to be at the front."

Kévin Estre (Porsche 963 #6):"The car handled well, but we lacked a little pace when it counted in the bid for pole position. That said, the gap is small. It's tricky getting everything just right in one hot lap on this circuit. Now we're looking ahead to the race. Let's see where we stand compared to the competition over the six-hour distance. We're aiming for another podium finish and to extend our lead in the championship."

Callum Ilott (Porsche 963 #12):"The first part of the qualifying was great. But I suddenly lost a bit of grip in the hyperpole session. That's something we'll need to look at and fix before the race. I'm a little disappointed because I know our car is capable of more than the results show. We could've done better. Anyway, seventh is a decent starting point. Let's see what we can achieve in the race."

Jenson Button (Porsche 963 #38): "The qualifying session was good but finishing eighth in the hyperpole is a bit disappointing because the car felt great. Given how close the hyperpole times were, a small improvement could've put us much further ahead. Two things ultimately prevented me from achieving a better result: I drove a little too close to the Ferrari in front. That helped initially, but then I veered off the track slightly and lost time. Secondly, we struggled with high tyre degradation which impacted our lap times, and we didn't really maximise the car. Still, we've started from worse positions. Let's see what we can do on race day."

Yasser Shahin (Porsche 911 GT3 R #91): "I'm delighted with fifth place. I managed to gain another half a second from qualifying to hyperpole. We now need to make the most of our opportunities. After our great results, like our recent class win at Le Mans, we're carrying a lot of success ballast in the car – that's the price for success, which we're happy to accept. But here in Brazil, the extra weight is a bit of a handicap, especially with so many uphill sections. But the gaps are small so I'm very happy."

Alex Malykhin (Porsche 911 GT3 R #92):"While the Porsche is running well and my lap was okay, I'm not thrilled with second place. The gap to pole position is simply too big. We have a long race ahead of us on Sunday and we'll be starting from the front row, so anything is possible."

Qualifying result

Hypercar class:
1. Conway/Kobayashi/de Vries (UK/J/NL), Toyota #7, 1:23.140 minutes
2. Buemi/Hartley/Hirakawa (CH/NZ/J), Toyota #8, 1:23.262 minutes
3. Campbell/Christensen/Makowiecki (AUS/DK/F), Porsche 963 #5, 1:23.331 minutes
5. Estre/Lotterer/Vanthoor (F/D/B), Porsche 963 #6, 1:23.408 minutes
7. Ilott/Stevens/Nato (UK/UK/F), Porsche 963 #12, 1:23.639 minutes
8. Hanson/Button/Rasmussen (UK/UK/DK), Porsche 963 #38, 1:23.701 minutes
12. Andlauer/Jani (F/CH), Porsche 963 #99, 1:23.955 minutes

LMGT3 class:
1. Bovy/Gatting/Frey (B/DK/CH), Lamborghini #85, 1:34.413 minutes
2. Bachler/Malykhin/Sturm (A/UK/D), Porsche 911 GT3 R #92, 1:34.804 minutes
3. Caygill/Pino/Sato (UK/CHL/J), McLaren #95, 1:34.860 minutes
5. Lietz/Shahin/Schuring (A/AUS/NL), Porsche 911 GT3 R #91, 1:35.471 minutes

Full results: fiawec.alkamelsystems.com

Preview

Porsche Penske Motorsport is determined to defend its lead in the FIA World Endurance Championship

at round five of the season. For the first time in ten years, the championship returns to race in Brazil from 12-14 July. The Autódromo José Carlos Pace in São Paulo will host the six-hour race. The works team competes with two Porsche 963 racing cars. Porsche customer teams Hertz Team Jota and Proton Competition campaign three more hybrid prototypes from Weissach in the Hypercar top category. In the LMGT3 class, the Le Mans winning squad Manthey fields a pair of Porsche 911 GT3 R.

Porsche Penske Motorsport aims to continue its stellar performances from the first three rounds of the season in South America. The sports car manufacturer returns to Brazil with great memories: at the last WEC race in Interlagos a decade ago, the Porsche team at that time secured its first-ever win with the 919 Hybrid. The works team is now determined to achieve a similar result next weekend. Porsche tackles the race as the leader of the manufacturers' world championship, with customer squad Hertz Team Jota and works drivers Kévin Estre from France, André Lotterer from Germany and Belgian Laurens Vanthoor at the top of the team and driver points table.

The Formula 1 circuit in Interlagos has a special chapter in the history books of Porsche motorsport: it was there that the Porsche 919 Hybrid's unforgettable winning streak really took off," says Thomas Laudenbach recalling the first triumph with the LMP1 racing car that went on to win Le Mans three times. The Vice President of Porsche Motorsport adds: "I'm curious to see how well our Porsche 963 performs on the time-honoured racetrack. After the Le Mans disappointment, we underwent a thorough analysis. From now on, we again need to make full use of our cars' potential and achieve results like those in the first three races of the year. We have one goal – to become world champions. To do this, we must score as many points as possible in Brazil."

"All of the teams and manufacturers in the FIA WEC are heading into uncharted territory with their vehicles," says Urs Kuratle, Director Factory Motorsport LMDh. "We can't fall back on current data regarding tyre wear, so it's important to learn as much as possible in the free practice sessions and quickly transfer these insights into the car setup. The track has a bit of everything: fast passages, narrow parts as well as undulating sections. I'm convinced that we'll be a top contender for victory. I'm excited to see how the avid Brazilian motorsport fans will receive us."

"It's been a fairly tight turnaround between Le Mans and São Paulo but the team in Mannheim did a fantastic job of stripping and rebuilding our two Porsche 963," says Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport. "Some of our crew and drivers have competed at Interlagos before but essentially, it's another new track on the calendar. This means we need to arrive refreshed and ready to make the most of the conditions faster than our rivals. We aim to extend our world championship lead in Brazil."

The race

The Autódromo José Carlos Pace in Interlagos on the outskirts of the metropolis of São Paulo hosts the six-hour race. 40 Formula 1 Grands Prix have been contested on the 4.309-kilometre circuit since it was built in 1942. Between 2012 and 2014, the FIA World Endurance Championship held three races

on the permanent racetrack, which is driven anti-clockwise.

The FIA WEC will race in São Paulo in July for the first time. While Central Europe enjoys the height of summer, South America's Brazil is in the middle of winter. However, the average maximum temperature in Interlagos in the coldest month of the year is still a balmy 23 degrees Celsius. Statistically, the probability of rain is significantly lower than at previous events in September (2012 and 2013) and November (2014).

An overview of the Porsche teams

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 Ilott (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)

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

The German free-TV channel Sport1 will air a live broadcast of the opening stage of the race on Sunday, 14 July from 16:15 hrs and the final phase from 20:15 hrs and offers extensive reports in the week after the event. Eurosport2 will also televise highlights from round five. The fee-based FIA WEC app offers live timing and a live stream of qualifying and the entire race.

Drivers' comments ahead of the race

Michael Christensen (Porsche 963 #5): "We'd have loved to have climbed the podium at Le Mans but unfortunately, that wasn't to be. What's the best way to forget disappointments? Get in the car, race again and win! This is my first São Paulo event and I'm excited. Some teams competed there ten years ago – but not with the current cars and the latest generation of tyres. What's more, the track has changed quite a bit since then. So, we have many new things to discover. That's good."

André Lotterer (Porsche 963 #6):"I drove the Audi LMP1 car in São Paulo back in the early days of the

FIA WEC. I won in 2013, and the year before I finished on the podium in second. It's wonderful to go back there now. Brazil has a fantastic motor racing culture. A lot of famous drivers come from there. The fans are always upbeat. It's great fun. I'd like to win there again – preferably next weekend with my teammates Kévin Estre and Laurens Vanthoor and the team. We want to move a step closer to the title."

Callum Ilott (Porsche 963 #12): "It's incredibly cool to be heading down to Brazil for the next leg of the championship. Interlagos is such a special track with a long motorsport heritage. There are many passionate fans there who live and breathe motorsport. I think the race itself will be really exciting and eventful as it's quite a tight, challenging track. Fans can look forward to some action-packed racing. I'm really looking forward to it."

Jenson Button (Porsche 963 #38):"I'm looking forward to heading back to Interlagos. I was last there eight years ago, but I have so many happy memories of the circuit. It was there that I scored my first points in Formula 1 back in 2000 with sixth place. I also won the World Championship there in 2009 as well as my last Grand Prix in 2012. That's what makes this place so iconic for me personally. The Brazilian fans are fantastic, and so passionate – they love their motorsport. As drivers, we really enjoy the track, it's flowing and fast. The multi-class racing in the WEC means lots of overtaking. It's going to be extremely challenging in a good way."

Neel Jani (Porsche 963 #99): "I last competed in São Paulo exactly ten years ago. It was an unforgettable weekend for me and my teammates Marc Lieb and Romain Dumas in the LMP1 car. We clinched our very first victory with the Porsche 919 Hybrid. What great memories. The track has a very tight infield. Lapping slower traffic is particularly tricky there. We hope to build on our Spa-Francorchamps performance. Le Mans was less than ideal, so we aim to do better this time."

Richard Lietz (Porsche 911 GT3 R #91): "I'm one of the drivers who know the circuit in São Paulo. This experience and the fact that we tested there a while back are invaluable. The car and the tyres come under enormous stress. And it'll be strenuous for us drivers – partly because we're driving anti-clockwise, which means we have more left-hand turns than usual. Our class victory at Le Mans was great, but now that we're leading the championship, our car is loaded with a lot more BoP ballast. That makes the job in Interlagos even more difficult."

Joel Sturm (Porsche 911 GT3 R #92): "This is my first time competing in São Paulo, but I'm certainly not alone. The track is completely new terrain for many of us. I can't wait! After our bad luck in Le Mans, we're not looking quite as strong in the championship as we were previously. Now we need to turn things around – ideally with another class win. We're currently tied with our brand colleagues in first place. We're targeting the title, so we must score as many points as possible in Brazil."

The schedule (local time, CEST -5 hours)

Friday, 12 July

10:45 – 12:15 hrs: Free practice 1
15:15 – 16:45 hrs: Free practice 2

Saturday, 13 July
10:30 – 11:30 hrs: Free practice 3
14:30 – 14:42 hrs: Qualifying LMGT3
14:50 – 15:00 hrs: Hyperpole LMGT3
15:10 – 15:22 hrs: Qualifying Hypercar
15:30 – 15:40 hrs: Hyperpole Hypercar

Sunday, 14 July
11:30 – 17:30 hrs: Race

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Video

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Image Sublines

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Title: Porsche 963, Hertz Team Jota, Will Stevens, Callum Ilott, Norman Nato, Qualifying, FIA WEC, São Paulo, 2024, Porsche AG
Subline: Customer team Hertz Team Jota in a Porsche 963

Path: Two podium spots for the Porsche 963, 911 GT3 R wins the GT class/Images/img_2.jpg
Title: Porsche 911 GT3 R, Manthey EMA, Yasser Shahin, Morris Schuring, Richard Lietz, Qualifying, FIA WEC, São Paulo, 2024, Porsche AG
Subline: Porsche 911 GT3 R from Manthey EMA

Path: Two podium spots for the Porsche 963, 911 GT3 R wins the GT class/Images/img_3.jpg
Title: Thomas Laudenbach (Vice President Porsche Motorsport), Qatar, 2024, Porsche AG
Subline: Thomas Laudenbach

Path: Two podium spots for the Porsche 963, 911 GT3 R wins the GT class/Images/img_4.jpg
Title: Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport, Qatar/Doha, 2024, Porsche AG
Subline: Jonathan Diuguid

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