



Nine Porsche racing cars tackle the 24 Hours of Daytona

17/01/2024 Preview, IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, Round 1, Daytona (USA) Porsche Penske Motorsport heads into the IMSA season excellently prepared Regular drivers receive support from the FIA WEC works squad Qualification for the season opener held at the "Roar" test weekend Customer-run Porsche 963 from Proton and JDC-Miller in the top GTP class Five Porsche 911 GT3 R contest the two GT categories Porsche Penske Motorsport has set its sights on overall victory at the upcoming 24 Hours of Daytona. At the opening round of the 2024 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, the factory team competes with two Porsche 963 and a top driver line-up. The ca. 700 HP (515 kW) hybrid prototype from Weissach, Germany heads into the new season with several improvements. Two other Porsche 963 fielded by the customer teams JDC-Miller MotorSports and Proton Competition also take on the field in the top GTP category. In the two GT classes (GTD Pro and GTD), a total of five customer programs compete for honors with one Porsche 911 GT3 R each.

Atlanta. Porsche will field the hybrid prototype 963 race car for the second time at the 24 Hours of Daytona. The Porsche Penske Motorsport factory squad has turned the insights gained from the race car's debut year into further improvements and now travels with confidence to the season opener of the

2024 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship on January 27 – 28. At the endurance classic in Daytona Beach, Florida, four works drivers each helm the two racers. As the Daytona record-holder, the goal is clear and Porsche is determined to bring home a record extending 19th outright victory on the epic circuit.

“Based on our findings from last year’s outings in the IMSA series, the FIA WEC, and our test sessions, we’ve further optimized both the car and the team’s processes for the new season,” explains Thomas Laudenbach, Vice President Porsche Motorsport. “We’re confident that we’ll be considerably better prepared for the classic at Daytona this year. In 2023, we narrowly missed out on the title in North America. That shouldn’t happen this year. Our bid for the championship crown will hopefully begin with a strong race at Daytona.”

“The endurance races were our Achilles heel last year,” reflects Urs Kuratle. The Director Factory Motorsport LMDh adds: “We took a very close look at the issue of reliability and implemented appropriate measures. I’m confident that we have everything ironed out for the upcoming season. Our most recent test drives were almost entirely focused on endurance runs. We covered many kilometers with excellent results. We’ve also made further progress with some of the team’s processes. I’m looking forward to the season opener in Daytona feeling very confident.”

“Stepping into a new season as a team always brings a mix of anticipation and trepidation. The clean scoreboard puts all manufacturers on the starting line together and the upcoming season rests in our hands,” comments Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport. “On the flip side however, we’re all aware that the off-season is when championships are really won. Until the green flag falls at the start of the race, we don’t really know how we stack up against our competitors. I am confident and proud of the efforts our team has made over the off-season to ensure we are prepared for the challenge that the Daytona 24 Hours presents. In 2023, we scored three victories, two pole positions and four further podium results – but there were certainly some areas of improvement. We’ve made some operational changes and worked on improving the car, and we saw the benefits of these adjustments at our recent test sessions. The reality is that we go to the 24 Hours of Daytona to win and, to do so, we need to be near-perfect. In season two there are no excuses for being anything less.”

The race

The Daytona International Speedway in Florida, which opened in 1959, distinguishes itself from other tracks most notably by its steeply banked turns. The banking’s incline reaches up to 31 degrees in the oval sections of the 3.56-mile (5.73-kilometer) racetrack. This requires a special vehicle setup. With 18 overall wins as a constructor and four as an engine partner, Porsche is the most successful manufacturer at Daytona. A further 80 class wins round off this impressive scorecard. The classic event has been contested on the combination of the tri-oval and the infield road course since 1966.

The event starts with the “Roar Before the 24”. As part of the three-day tests before the new IMSA season gets underway, participants will qualify for the 24-hour race. The 24 Hours of Daytona also

marks the start of the IMSA Michelin Endurance Cup. This long-distance classification awards points for the best-placed vehicles after six, 12 and 18 hours as well as for crossing the finish line. In addition to the season-opening round in Florida, the championship includes the 12 Hours of Sebring, the six-hour races at Watkins Glen and Indianapolis as well as the "Petit Le Mans". The IMSA season wraps up in October with this 10-hour race on the Michelin Raceway Road Atlanta circuit.

The "works" cars

Four factory drivers will crew each of the two Porsche Penske Motorsport Porsche 963 race machine. Nick Tandy of the United Kingdom and Mathieu Jaminet from France share the No. 6 cockpit with Laurens Vanthoor from Belgium and the Frenchman Kévin Estre. In the No. 7 sister car, Felipe Nasr from Brazil and Dane Cameron (Glen Ellen, California) receive support from the IndyCar star Josef Newgarden (Nashville, Tennessee) and Matt Campbell (Australia). Cameron and Campbell are swapping series for the 2024 season: The American is fully committed to the IMSA series, with the Australian contesting the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC).

The customer teams

The customer squads JDC-Miller MotorSports and Proton Competition each campaign one Porsche 963 in the top GTP class. The Proton team's No. 5 car is shared by the Porsche works drivers Gianmaria Bruni from Italy and Romain Dumas from France with Belgium's Alessio Picariello and Neel Jani from Switzerland. Tijmen van der Helm from the Netherlands and the seasoned race driver Richard Westbrook of the United Kingdom make up the regular crew in JDC-Miller MotorSports' No. 85 car. For the endurance race, they receive support from Englishman Phil Hanson, with successful amateur driver Ben Keating (Victoria, Texas) joining them as the fourth driver in Daytona.

The Porsche 911 GT3 R race car fielded by AO Racing will tackle the GTD Pro category. Former Porsche Junior Laurin Heinrich from Germany and Sebastian Priaulx from the United Kingdom are the regular drivers in the No. 77 car. At Daytona, they will be supported by Michael Christensen. The Dane is part of Porsche's works driver squad, as is the experienced Frenchman Frédéric Makowiecki, who will drive the No. 120 Porsche 911 GT3 R for Wright Motorsports at the 2024 season opener. The same applies to Austrian Thomas Preining. The defending DTM champion will share Andretti Motorsports' No. 43 car with Jarett Andretti (Indianapolis, Indiana), Colombian Gabby Chaves and Scott Hargrove from Canada. Julien Andlauer, Preining, Campbell, Jaminet, Christensen and Klaus Bachler have also come up through the ranks of the Porsche Junior program while Priaulx was the 2021 Porsche Carrera Cup North America champion.

Drivers' comments before the race

Mathieu Jaminet (Porsche 963 #6): "The new season is starting and finally it's time to get going again!"

After last year's experiences, we have a score to settle. I very much hope that we'll have a little more luck on our side in the major endurance classics in 2024. Our entire team has been working hard to make further progress. With that in mind, I believe we'll be competitive in Daytona. In 2023, the battle between the GTP manufacturers was always very close. It'll be no different this season. We have to do everything perfectly. If we can do that, we have a chance of winning."

Felipe Nasr (Porsche 963 #7): "Here we go again – I'm ready. It was nice to spend some time in my home country of Brazil during the break and prepare for the upcoming season. 2023 was a steep learning curve for our Porsche Penske Motorsport team. We were able to make significant progress in many areas. It's a shame that it ultimately wasn't enough to win the title. The season opener at Daytona is always a big highlight. Everyone really wants to win this race. With a year's experience, I think we're in a much better position, especially in terms of reliability. Our driver crew is strong. I expect we'll be in with a chance for victory."

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 963 #5): "I'm thrilled to be competing in the top class at Daytona and be in the fight for overall victory. Unfortunately, we're lacking test kilometers. Other competitors are certainly much better prepared. I'll be contesting the entire IMSA season and I'm looking forward to seeing how we perform as a team over the year."

Tijmen van der Helm (Porsche 963 #85): "We performed very well in our test drives – that gives me confidence for the upcoming challenges. I'm really looking forward to the start of the season and an exciting Daytona 24-hour race. Even though Florida is the 'Sunshine State' of the USA, we always have to be prepared for capricious weather, especially in January. It can get very cold and sometimes there's torrential rain. That throws a spanner in the works, but it also opens up opportunities."

Laurin Heinrich (Porsche 911 GT3 R #77): "It was a childhood dream of mine to represent Porsche at the 24-hour race in Daytona. This is now coming true for me in AO Racing's 911 GT3 R. I'm heading into the season feeling highly motivated and with hopes of contributing some of my experience, for example, from the DTM. We've already completed the first tests. They gave me a lot of confidence. It's a huge adventure for me to compete in the GTD Pro class throughout the year. I've worked hard on it and have made guest appearances in North America from time to time to prepare myself for something like this. At the age of just 22, I now have the opportunity to drive in this incredible series – it's just fantastic!"

Thomas Preining (Porsche 911 GT3 R #43): "My very first race in the North American IMSA series is coming up, which will definitely be cool. Our driver line-up is strong. I'm assuming we can make something really good happen in Daytona. That being said, 24-hour races are notorious for surprises. Sometimes you think you're perfectly set up, but then suddenly nothing works. Other times, it's the other way around. Let's see what it looks like when it counts. I don't know the series, the track or the team so it's completely new territory for me. Fortunately, we have the 'Roar' in advance, so we can get used to each other and the team processes during the test."

Klaus Bachler (Porsche 911 GT3 R #86): "I always do everything I can to be on the grid at Daytona – it's simply perfect that it's happening again this year. The race there is always action-packed with plenty of suspense and it's usually wide open until the very end. This will be my ninth start at Daytona. Often, I've narrowly missed out on victory. I definitely want to change that! We're all working hard and systematically as a team to turn the dream of standing on the top step of the podium after 24 hours into reality."

Julien Andlauer (Porsche 911 GT3 R #92): "I'm a massive fan of the 24-hour race in Daytona. That's why I was so thrilled when I got the call in mid-December informing me that I'll be racing with Kellymoss with Riley. I competed for the team several times in the 2023 season – it's almost my IMSA home. My teammates David Brule and Alec Udell are also back – perfect! Together, our sights are set on a top result."

Adam Adelson (Porsche 911 GT3 R #120): "I'm very grateful and excited to be competing in the IMSA with Wright Motorsports in the 2024 season. It's a great step to be already racing in the top class in my second year of competition in the GT3 category. I'll be sharing the Porsche in the IMSA Michelin Endurance Cup races with my teammate from last year, Elliott Skeer, and Jan Heylen. Jan has an incredible amount of experience. I hope to learn a lot from him."

An overview of the drivers and teams

GTP class (Porsche 963):

Proton Competition #5: Gianmaria Bruni (I) / Romain Dumas (F) / Alessio Picariello (B) / Neel Jani (CH)

Porsche Penske Motorsport #6: Mathieu Jaminet (F) / Nick Tandy (UK) / Laurens Vanthoor (B) / Kévin Estre (F)

Porsche Penske Motorsport #7: Dane Cameron (USA) / Felipe Nasr (BR) / Josef Newgarden (USA) / Matt Campbell (AUS)

JDC-Miller MotorSports #85: Tijmen van der Helm (NL) / Richard Westbrook (UK) / Ben Keating (USA) / Phil Hanson (UK)

GTD-Pro class (Porsche 911 GT3 R):

AO Racing #77: Laurin Heinrich (D) / Sebastian Priaulx (UK) / Michael Christensen (DK)

GTD class (Porsche 911 GT3 R):

Andretti Motorsports #43: Jarett Andretti (USA) / Gabby Chaves (COL) / Scott Hargrove (CDN) / Thomas Preining (A)

MDK Motorsports #86: Anders Fjordbach (DK) / Kerong Li (CHN) / Klaus Bachler (A) / Larry ten Voorde (NL)

Kellymoss with Riley #92: David Brule (USA) / Alec Udell (USA) / Trent Hindman (USA) / Julien Andlauer (F)

Wright Motorsports #120: Adam Adelson (USA) / Elliott Skeer (USA) / Jan Heylen (B) / Frédéric Makowiecki (F)

The schedule (local time)

Friday, January 19

11:00 am to 12:30 pm: Test session 1

4:15 pm to 6:00 pm: Test session 2

Saturday, January 20

11:15 am – 12:45 pm: Test session 3

3:10 pm – 4:10 pm: Test session 4

6:30 pm – 8:30 pm: Test session 5

Sunday, January 21

1:25 pm – 1:50 pm: Test session 6 (only GTP class)

1:55 pm – 2:10 pm: Qualifying GTD Pro/GTD

2:45 pm – 3:00 pm: Qualifying GTP

Thursday, January 25

10:05 am – 11:35 am: Free practice 1

2:10 pm – 3:55 pm: Free practice 2

6:35 pm – 8:05 pm: Free practice 3

Friday, January 26

11:20 am – 12:20 pm: Free practice 4

Saturday, January 27

1:40 pm: Start of the 24 Hours of Daytona

Sunday, January 28

1:40 pm: Finish of the 24 Hours of Daytona

Porsche's overall wins at the 24 Hours of Daytona

1968 – Elford/Neerpasch/Stommelen/Herrmann/Siffert (Porsche 907 LH)
1970 – Rodríguez/Kinnunen/Redman (Porsche 917 K)
1971 – Rodríguez/Oliver (Porsche 917 K)
1973 – Gregg/Haywood (Porsche Carrera RSR)
1975 – Gregg/Haywood (Porsche Carrera RSR)
1977 – Graves/Haywood/Helmick (Porsche Carrera RSR)
1978 – Gregg/Hezemans/Stommelen (Porsche 935)
1979 – Field/Haywood/Ongais (Porsche 935)
1980 – Merl/Joest/Stommelen (Porsche 935)
1981 – Rahal/Garretson/Redman (Porsche 935)
1982 – Paul Sr./Paul Jr./Stommelen (Porsche 935)
1983 – Foyt/Ballot-Léna/Wollek/Henn (Porsche 935)
1985 – Foyt/Unser/Wollek/Boutsen (Porsche 962)
1986 – Holbert/Bell/Unser (Porsche 962)
1987 – Holbert/Bell/Unser/Robinson (Porsche 962)
1989 – Andretti/Bell/Wollek (Porsche 962)
1991 – Jelinski/Haywood/Wollek/Pescarolo/Krages (Porsche 962)
2003 – Buckler/Schrom/Bernhard/Bergmeister (Porsche 911 GT3 RS)

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