Porsche defends manufacturers' crown in the global GT3 series IGTC

14/12/2020 Porsche has won the manufacturers' title in the Intercontinental GT Challenge (IGTC) for the second time in a row.

The race

At the final race of the season on the Kyalami Grand Prix Circuit in South Africa, Matt Campbell from Australia and the two Frenchmen Mathieu Jaminet and Patrick Pilet finished in third place with GPX Racing's Porsche 911 GT3 R. With this result, the driver trio earned crucial points towards reclaiming the championship title, but narrowly missed out on the drivers' crown. Ultimately, they were just five points off first place. In heavy rain, the 911 GT3 R fielded by Dinamic Motorsport scored seventh place at Kyalami. The 500+hp vehicle campaigned by Lechner Racing scored tenth and won the Pro-Am class.

The nine-hour race on the famous venue close to the metropolis of Johannesburg started in sunny and humid conditions. On a dry track, the two GT3 vehicles from Weissach contesting the Pro category stayed within striking distance of the leaders, however at the midway mark, a puncture threw the No. 12 car of GPX Racing down the field. While Campbell, Jaminet and Pilet were able to work their way back up the order, their brand teammates Laurens Vanthoor from Belgium, Kévin Estre from France and New Zealander Earl Bamber were robbed of all chances of a victory. Repairs to a broken front splitter cost the crew two laps.

With around 80 minutes left on the clock, heavy rain added to the tension. The field bunched together behind the safety car, and suddenly the No. 12 vehicle was back in the fight for victory. The weather, however, thwarted the team's plans. After setting a new track record with his fastest lap in the early afternoon, Matt Campbell's chance to put in a final push for victory vanished: with vehicles at risk of serious aquaplaning, the race concluded behind the safety car. The two South Africans Saul Hack and Andre Bezuidenhout as well as Dylan Pereira from Luxembourg put in a flawless drive at the wheel of their Porsche 911 GT3 R, and were rewarded after nine hours of racing with tenth place overall and victory in the Pro-Am class.

Positions three and seven in the Pro category yielded Porsche another 21 points in the championship. With a total of 100 points, the sports car manufacturer from Stuttgart successfully defended the manufacturers' crown after 2019.

Comments on the race

Sebastian Golz (Project Manager Porsche 911 GT3 R): "Winning the title for Porsche was our big goal – and that's what we did. The drivers' crown would have been the icing on the cake, but we missed out by a mere five points. Still, reclaiming the manufacturers' championship title shows just how hard everyone worked on this joint success in 2020. That applies to the customer teams and drivers as well as to our Porsche employees and partners. Congratulations as well to Lechner Racing. Despite the incredibly difficult conditions, they did a flawless job in the Pro-Am class.

Matt Campbell (Porsche 911 GT3 R #12): "We climbed the podium. Third place is a decent result, but unfortunately, it wasn't enough to take the drivers' title. That's a great shame. But we're not going to let that spoil our mood. Porsche pocketed the manufacturers' title, and we were well on our way with third. The team did a great job. We tried our best and did everything right, but it just wasn't meant to be today."

Mathieu Jaminet (Porsche 911 GT3 R #12): "I'm so disappointed because this is the second time in a row after 2019 that the drivers' title slipped out of my hands at the season finale in Kyalami. I first have to digest this. Something minor like a puncture has unravelled all our good work. Still, Porsche won the manufacturers' title – that's a great success. I'm proud that I was able to contribute to that."

Patrick Pilet (Porsche 911 GT3 R #12): "We were well on track until the puncture threw us back. We never gave up and worked our way up the field again with strong stints and a smart strategy. We could've done even better, but unfortunately, the race remained under yellow to the end. We would've loved to have had one last chance to pull out all stops in a thrilling finale and fight for victory and the drivers' championship – unfortunately, that didn't happen."

Race result

1. Farfus/Catsburg/van der Linde (BR/NL/ZA), BMW M6 GT3, 277 laps
2. Bortolotti/Weerts/Vervisch (I/B/B), Audi R8 LMS GT3, 277 laps
3. Campbell/Pilet/Jaminet (AUS/F/F), Porsche 911 GT3 R #12, 277 laps
7. Bamber/Vanthoor/Estre (NZ/B/F), Porsche 911 GT3 R #54, 276 laps
10. Hack/Bezuidenhout/Pereira (ZA/ZA/L), Porsche 911 GT3 R #9, 271 laps

The qualifying

The Porsche customer teams have secured solid starting positions in the qualifying for the nine-hour race in Kyalami. The 911 GT3 R fielded by GPX Racing takes up the final round of the Intercontinental GT Challenge season from the fifth grid spot. In Friday's Pole Shootout, works driver Matt Campbell turned his flying lap on the 4.522-kilometre Kyalami Grand Prix Circuit in 1:42.274 minutes. For the

race, the Australian shares the cockpit of the No. 12 car with the two Frenchmen Mathieu Jaminet and Patrick Pilet. In the drivers' championship, the trio currently ranks second just one point behind the leaders. Porsche heads to the fourth and final round holding the lead in the manufacturers' classification.

The other two Porsche 911 GT3 R missed out on making it into the shootout of the six fastest contenders. The crew sharing Dinamic Motorsport's No. 54 car used the qualifying session to prepare for the race. After the balance of the GT3 vehicle fielded by the Italian customer squad proved not ideal in the previous sessions, Kévin Estre trialled the setup changes in Q1 with more fuel on board. The lag that the Frenchman experienced due to the unfavourable conditions could no longer be offset. New Zealander Earl Bamber and Laurens Vanthoor from Belgium, however, planted their car on the tenth grid spot in Q2 and Q3. The pair leads the drivers' championship. The identical vehicle campaigned by Lechner Racing (No. 9, Pro-Am class) and driven by South Africans Saul Hack and Andre Bezuidenhout as well as Dylan Pereira from Luxembourg claimed P11.

The nine-hour race at Kyalami takes off on Saturday, 12 December, at 11am local time (10am CET). The website airs the entire season finale via a free live stream. This website also provides live timing.

Quotes on the qualifying and pole shootout

Sebastian Golz (Project Manager Porsche 911 GT3 R): "Our starting positions are okay. We're expecting a close race that, despite the nine-hour duration, will have a real sprint character. The GPX team's car will start in the top group; Dinamic Motorsport's entry simply hasn't had the necessary performance yet. We will take a close look with the team at why this might be and work systematically to ensure that the number 54 car can also race amongst the frontrunners. Lechner Racing put in a strong qualifying performance. Rain and thunderstorms are forecast on race day. Anything is possible under such conditions. Our aim is still to win the championship."

Matt Campbell (Porsche 911 GT3 R #12): "Our starting position for the race is good. Taking up the nine-hour race from the third grid row is promising. The gaps were relatively big in the pole shootout, but I'm confident that this will be different in the race. We expect the competition to be very close and tough over the whole distance. Not too many cars are competing this year, so the likelihood of incidents is considerably lower. It could very well be that we don't have any caution phases during the entire race. That would make it an exciting and exhausting sprint over nine hours. We'd like to conclude the race with a win and the championship title."

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 GT3 R #54): "Somehow there was a glitch with our car at the beginning of the weekend. Because of the poor vehicle balance, we tried a different setup in the first qualifying sessions. Unfortunately, that took us in an even worse direction. Our car oversteers on many sections of the track. The rear gets unstable out of the blue. Our team will now check everything again thoroughly before the start of the race. We hope that we can get rid of the 'gremlins' in time for the season finale. If we manage that, everything is still possible in a nine-hour race, even after a disappointing qualifying."

Qualifying result

1. Farnbacher/v. d. Zande/Baguette (D/NL/B), Honda NSX GT3 #30, 1:41.581 minutes
2. Gounon/Soulet/Pepper (F/B/ZA), Bentley Continental GT3 #7, 1:41,723 minutes
3. Farfus/Catsburg/van der Linde (BR/NL/ZA), BMW M6 GT3 #34, 1:41.891 minutes
5. Campbell/Pilet/Jaminet (AUS/F/F), Porsche 911 GT3 R #12, 1:42.274 minutes
10. Bamber/Vanthoor/Estre (NZ/B/F), Porsche 911 GT3 R #54, 1:43.151 minutes
11. Hack/Beziudenhout/Pereira (ZA/ZA/L), Porsche 911 GT3 R #9, 1:44.961 minutes

The preview

Porsche heads to the final round of the Intercontinental GT Challenge (IGTC) with a very clear goal: the sports car manufacturer from Stuttgart is eager to defend its titles at the nine-hour race in Kyalami. The customer squads GPX Racing and Dinamic Motorsport will each field a Porsche 911 GT3 R in the Pro-category at the South African racetrack close to Johannesburg. In the Pro-Am class, the Hack Racing team campaigns the identical model of the GT3 racer from Weissach.

The race

Between 1967 and 1993, the Kyalami Grand Prix Circuit hosted a total of 20 Formula One Grands Prix. Under the aegis of Porsche South Africa, the storied racetrack underwent extensive renovations and was revamped to meet modern standards prior to the 2019 season. International motor racing returned to Kyalami last year. Many motorsport fans celebrated the comeback at the 4.522-kilometre circuit with its 16 corners, which is run as part of the spectacular IGTC nine-hour race. At last year's season finale of the global GT3 championship, Porsche not only scored a victory but also clinched the manufacturers' and drivers' championship titles. The experienced customer squads now travel to this year's race with the clear aim of defending those titles. In the manufacturers' classification, Porsche heads to the final race of the season with a 29-point lead.

The Porsche teams and drivers

The Porsche works drivers Earl Bamber from New Zealand and Laurens Vanthoor from Belgium currently lead the IGTC drivers' championship. The winners of the 24-hour race at Spa-Francorchamps share Dinamic Motorsport's No. 54 cockpit at Kyalami with Frenchman Kévin Estre.

Matt Campbell from Australia and the two Frenchmen Mathieu Jaminet and Patrick Pilet rank second just one point behind the leaders. The works driver trio share driving duties in the No. 12 car fielded by GPX Racing.

In the Pro-Am class, Hack Racing campaigns the Porsche 911 GT3 R. The vehicle, which is run by the seasoned Lechner Racing squad, is driven by the South Africans Saul Hack and Andre Bezuidenhout. Dylan Pereira from Luxembourg, the vice-champion of the Porsche Carrera Cup Deutschland, joins the pair as the third driver.

Comments before the race

Sebastian Golz (Project Manager Porsche 911 GT3 R):"The time has finally come: we're returning to the venue where we took the IGTC championship trophy home to Weissach in 2019. A rollercoaster ride awaits us at Kyalami. We'll reach average speeds of almost 160 km/h on the challenging South African circuit – and the run-off zones are tiny. We also have to expect rain at any time – last year's severe thunderstorms are still etched in our memory. So, we still have some obstacles to overcome before we can achieve our big goal. However, we're very well positioned with our experienced teams Lechner Racing, Dinamic Motorsport and GPX Racing."

Earl Bamber (Porsche 911 GT3 R #54): "First of all, I'm thrilled that the organiser SRO managed to plan and run this event under such difficult conditions. I'm really looking forward to the event on the beautiful racetrack in South Africa. Our main goal is to reclaim the manufacturers' title for Porsche – and the best way to do this is to win. The Dinamic Motorsport team is experienced and highly professional, so the groundwork to success has already been laid. I'd like to wrap up the year with a highlight."

Laurens Vanthoor (Porsche 911 GT3 R #54): "In 2019, the Porsche 911 GT3 R was extremely strong on the Kyalami circuit. There's no reason why it should be any different this year. We're tackling the task with confidence. After our win at the 24 Hours of Spa, we're just one point ahead of our Porsche teammates in GPX Racing's 911 GT3 R in the championship standings. It'll be exciting. It would be a dream to end this unusual 2020 season with a title."

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 GT3 R #54): "I was really impressed by the South African event in 2019. The track is an old school one. It's huge fun. The people in Kyalami were very friendly and there was a very special atmosphere over the race weekend. In terms of racing, things went well for Porsche last year. I'm competing this time with Earl and Laurens. We have a strong line-up. Dinamic Motorsport underlined its expertise with the podium finish at Spa. We want to win the last race of the season."

The schedule

Thursday, 10 December
10:00 – midday: Test session 1
13:35 pm – 15:35 pm: Test session 2
17:35 pm – 19:05 pm: Free practice

Friday, 11 December
10:50 am – 12:35 pm: Pre-qualifying
14:45 pm – 15:45 pm: Qualifying
16:25 pm – 16:40 pm: Pole shootout (Top 10)

Saturday, 12 December
Midday – 21:00 pm: Race (Kyalami 9 Hour)

Link Collection

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External Links
https://www.intercontinentalgtchallenge.com/

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