

Porsche eager to extend IMSA championship lead

19/06/2024 Porsche Penske Motorsport heads to round six of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship determined to continue its early season form. The factory team has unfailingly managed to claim a podium spot with the Porsche 963 at all races so far this season. The successful opening to the 2024 season, the second for the GTP class, includes victories at the 24 Hours At Daytona and the WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca round. This puts Porsche at the top of the manufacturers' leaderboard ahead of the six-hour race in Watkins Glen, New York. Porsche Penske Motorsport currently ranks first in the team standings, with Daytona winners Felipe Nasr and Dane Cameron leading the drivers' championship.

Atlanta. The time-honored six-hour race on the Watkins Glen International circuit is a keystone event for the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship. In addition to the endurance classics at Daytona, Sebring, Indianapolis and Michelin Raceway Road Atlanta, this event counts toward the Michelin Endurance Cup, a special classification within the IMSA championship. At the first Watkins Glen race for the 685 HP hybrid prototype from Germany last year, the No. 6 car driven by Nick Tandy (United Kingdom) and Mathieu Jaminet (France) crossed the finish line first. Shortly after the race, however, the

vehicle was removed from the classification because the front skid wear was 0.1 millimeter outside the legal tolerance.

“Our Porsche 963 showed strong form last year in Watkins Glen. The circuit seems to suit us,” explains Urs Kuratle, Director Factory Motorsport LMDh. “In preparation for this year’s race, we went testing there with some other teams and manufacturers. From our perspective, the findings and results were good. I expect us to be at the very front again. We want to extend our lead in the championship and advance to the top of the IMSA Michelin Endurance Cup.”

“Watkins Glen is the third major endurance event of the IMSA season. But at six hours it’s one of the shorter races,” says Jonathan Diuguid. The Managing Director of Porsche Penske Motorsport adds: “Our Porsche 963 was extremely quick there last year. In Watkins Glen, we’re opting for the hardest tire compound for the first time this season. We tried it successfully in a test a few weeks ago. I think we’re heading into the race weekend with a solid baseline. We aim to further consolidate our overall ranking at the top.”

The race

The six-hour race in the Finger Lakes Region of New York has its roots in the early days of sports car racing and was contested on public roads for the first time in 1948. It became a purpose-built permanent racetrack eight years later under the name Watkins Glen International. From 1961 to 1980, Formula One was contested regularly on the 3.4-mile (5.47-kilometer) course. At the same time, the endurance race became a regular fixture at the circuit, which features 11 turns and spectacular uphill and downhill sections. A fast and flowing layout with dramatic elevation changes make it a favorite among drivers.

To date, Porsche has notched up eleven overall victories at Watkins Glen.

Drivers’ comments ahead of the race

Mathieu Jaminet, Driver, No. 6 Porsche Penske Motorsport Porsche 963:
“We’re coming straight from Le Mans to Watkins Glen. It’s been an eventful month. Exhausting on the one hand, but also very enjoyable in sporting terms. We get to spend a lot of time in the cockpit of the 963 – that’s always a pleasure. Last year we crossed the finish line first but were subsequently disqualified. So, we have a score to settle there. Looking at the past three IMSA races, it’s striking – our number 6 car has scored the most points. We want to continue to progress in the championship.”

Felipe Nasr, Driver, No. 7 Porsche Penske Motorsport Porsche 963:
“The track at Watkins Glen flows wonderfully and includes some extremely high-speed corners. Our team is doing everything they can to optimally prepare for the event. We’re looking to continue our strong run. We’re currently leading the championship. That’s the reward for all our hard work. Another

victory at the endurance race in Watkins Glen would be a dream come true. We're doing our absolute utmost to stay at the top of the overall standings."

Gianmaria Bruni, Driver, No. 5 Proton Competition Porsche 963:
"I'm delighted to have the opportunity to drive the Porsche 963 on such a fast and stunning track. Unfortunately, our team didn't go testing there. This means we need to learn as much as possible during the practice sessions to make up for our lack of experience. In that respect, the fact that there are only two of us sharing the cockpit is an advantage. We both get more track time."

Tijmen van der Helm, Driver, No. 85 JDC-Miller MotorSports Porsche 963:
"We spent two days testing with the other teams at Watkins Glen a few weeks ago. That'll definitely help us start the race weekend better prepared than at other events. The Watkins Glen race is sure to offer us some good opportunities. Let's see what we can make of them."

Laurin Heinrich, Driver, No. 77 AO Racing Porsche 911 GT3 R:
"I'm particularly excited for Watkins Glen. This track is very high on my list of dream circuits that I haven't yet driven. It's great to finally get to race there. After our recent class victories at Laguna Seca and Detroit, we're heading to 'The Glen' full of confidence. That being said, the track layout is essentially the opposite of that in Detroit – so we'll have to wait and see. We've always done well in the longer races, so I'm confident."

An overview of the drivers and teams

GTP class (Porsche 963):
- Proton Competition No. 5: Gianmaria Bruni (Italy) / Bent Viscaal (Netherlands)
- Porsche Penske Motorsport No. 6: Mathieu Jaminet (France) / Nick Tandy (United Kingdom)
- Porsche Penske Motorsport No. 7: Dane Cameron (Huntersville, North Carolina) / Felipe Nasr (Brazil)
- JDC-Miller MotorSports No. 85: Tijmen van der Helm (Netherlands) / Richard Westbrook (United Kingdom) / Phil Hanson (United Kingdom)

GTD-Pro class (Porsche 911 GT3 R):
- AO Racing No. 77: Laurin Heinrich (Germany) / Sebastian Priaulx (United Kingdom)

GTD class (Porsche 911 GT3 R):
- Andretti Motorsports (No. 43): Jarett Andretti (Indianapolis, Indiana) / Gabby Chaves (Columbia) / Scott Hargrove (Canada)
- MDK Motorsports (No. 86); Anders Fjordbach (Denmark) / Kerong Li (China) / Klaus Bachler (Austria)
- Wright Motorsports (No. 120): Adam Adelson (Los Angeles, California) / Elliott Skeer (San Diego, California) / Jan Heylen (Belgium)

The schedule (local time, EST)

Friday, June 21:
1:25 – 12:55 p.m. – Free practice 1

Saturday, June 22:
9:10 – 10:40 a.m. – Free practice 2
3:30 – 3:45 p.m. – Qualifying: GTD Pro / GTD
4:20 – 4:35 p.m. – Qualifying: GTP

Sunday, June 23:
11:10 a.m. – 5:10 p.m. – Race: Six Hours of The Glen

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