

Porsche at the Le Mans 24-hour race

11/06/2024 Porsche takes on this year's 24 Hours of Le Mans (15/16 June) as the most successful manufacturer. Before the 92nd edition of the classic gets underway, teams and drivers prepared for the unique characteristics of the Circuit des 24 Heures at an official test day last Sunday (9 June). Public roads make up a good nine kilometres of the 13.626-kilometre-long circuit. They are only closed to everyday traffic for the practices, qualifying and race. Racing cars from the Stuttgart sportscar manufacturer have contested the world's largest endurance race since 1951. This year, more than 320,000 spectators are expected.

Statistics, drivers' comments, schedule

The Le Mans event marks the annual highlight on the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC calendar. The first running of the race was in 1923 to showcase automotive innovation, durability and performance. The only time the classic was not contested was in 1936 due to a general strike in France as well as during WWII and the reconstruction between 1940 and 1948. The famous 24 Hours of Le

Mans will be contested at the Sarthe for the 92nd time this year.

In addition to the prospect of securing its 20th outright victory at Le Mans, Porsche celebrates a special anniversary: 50 Years of the Porsche Turbo. The turbocharged engines were developed in motorsport from 1971 and migrated into the road-going 911 just three years later. In 2024, the Porsche 963 hybrid prototype will also be powered by a bi-turbo engine. A classic example of the motorsport commitments from Stuttgart: Porsche advances innovations on the racetrack, subjects them to the toughest tests in fierce competition before they successfully flow into series production shortly afterwards.

Drivers' comments ahead of the race

Mathieu Jaminet (Porsche 963 #4):
"The 24 Hours of Le Mans is without a doubt the most important race of the year. I'm not the only one who thinks this, all drivers feel the same. As a Frenchman, this is particularly true. Even on the test day, we local heroes noticed the special attention. It's great to feel like stars for a week! After the race, however, it's back to normal life very quickly."

Michael Christensen (Porsche 963 #5):"It's always incredibly difficult to gauge your chances before the start of the race. Nobody knows how the competition will stack up. We've already achieved some excellent results in this year's FIA WEC and the IMSA series. The car's great, the team is in top form and the drivers are fighting fit. Everything's ready. We'll do our best to be in the lead at the flag."

Kévin Estre (Porsche 963 #6): "Judging from the way the WEC season has panned out so far, we're heading into the highlight event with high expectations and great anticipation. As a first step, we want to perfect the setup then qualify well and advance into the Hyperpole. It's the only time I'm competing at home in France and it's the biggest event. It'll be a memorable experience to drive in front of so many spectators again. I can hardly wait to get going on Saturday at 4 pm."

Will Stevens (Porsche 963 #12): "It's wonderful to be driving in Le Mans again. Our team has already achieved big successes on this racetrack in the LMP2 class. We're very familiar with this race and its special features. We've learned a lot from the races so far this season and now we're keen to implement this knowledge to the best of our ability and prepare ourselves perfectly for the big Le Mans challenge."

Jenson Button (Porsche 963 #38): "I've contested Le Mans twice so far and this year I'm racing for a team with extremely high ambitions. I really like that. At the WEC race in Spa, we showed that we're able to run at the front if everything goes right. That gave us a great deal of confidence. If we draw on all our experience, then there's no doubt we have every opportunity to achieve something really big."

Neel Jani (Porsche 963 #99): "We believe we have a good chance. It's not that we're dreaming of an overall win, but we might be good for a podium spot. That's our goal. We still have some work to do on the setup and we still need to figure out our race strategy. We'll implement all the insights we've gained

over the past weeks and months to be as well prepared as possible in time for the start."

Morris Schuring (Porsche 911 GT3 R #91): "This is my first Le Mans race. It's quite funny looking at the numbers among our crew: My teammate Richard Lietz is competing for the 18th time and I'm only 19 years old. I'm the young rookie. I'm incredibly proud to be part of this team. We're ready. If we do everything right, we'll achieve something great – it'll be a result that will make the Porsche family proud."

Klaus Bachler (Porsche 911 GT3 R #92): "Given that the Le Mans circuit is not a dedicated racetrack, we expect the grip conditions to change a lot during the week compared to other tracks. We have the best team behind us! The goal is to win our class. We've spent months preparing for this challenge and we'll do our utmost to make our big dream come true."

Porsche's unparalleled track record at Le Mans

In 1951, Porsche sent a delegation to the 24-hour race in Le Mans for the first time. With success: the two Frenchmen Auguste Veuillet and Edmond Mouche promptly clinched class victory at the wheel of the Porsche 365/4 SL Coupé. Since then, the Porsche brand has been represented on the grid of the world's greatest endurance race every year. To date, a total of 855 Porsche racing cars have contested the classic. Thanks to 19 overall victories and 110 class wins so far, the sports car manufacturer from Stuttgart is by far the number one on the list of achievements of the organiser Automobile Club de l'Ouest (ACO).

24 Hours of Le Mans – Porsche's outright victories

1970 – Herrmann (D) / Attwood (GB) – Porsche 917 KH
1971 – Marko (A) / Van Lennep (NL) – Porsche 917 KH
1976 – Ickx (B) / Van Lennep (NL) – Porsche 936
1977 – Ickx (B) / Haywood (USA) / Barth (D) – Porsche 936/77
1979 – Ludwig (D) / D. Whittington (USA) / B. Whittington (USA) – Porsche 935 K3
1981 – Ickx (B) / Bell (GB) – Porsche 936
1982 – Ickx (B) / Bell (GB) – Porsche 956
1983 – Schuppan (AUS) / Haywood (USA) / Holbert (USA) – Porsche 956
1984 – Pescarolo (F) / Ludwig (D) – Porsche 956
1985 – Barilla (I) / Ludwig (D) / Krages (D) – Porsche 956
1986 – Bell (GB) / Stuck (D) / Holbert (USA) – Porsche 962C
1987 – Bell (GB) / Stuck (D) / Holbert (USA) – Porsche 962C
1994 – Dalmas (F) / Haywood (USA) / Baldi (I) – Dauer Porsche 962 LM
1996 – Wurz (A) / Reuter (D) / Jones (USA) – TWR Porsche WSC-95
1997 – Kristensen (DK) / Alboreto (I) / Johansson (S) – TWR Porsche WSC-95
1998 – Aiello (F) / McNish (GB) / Ortelli (F) – Porsche 911 GT1

2015 – Bamber (NZ) / Tandy (GB) / Hülkenberg (D) – Porsche 919 Hybrid
2016 – Jani (CH) / Lieb (D) / Dumas (F) – Porsche 919 Hybrid
2017 – Bernhard (D) / Hartley (NZ) / Bamber (NZ) – Porsche 919 Hybrid

The schedule (all times CEST)

Thursday, 11 June
14:00 – 15:00 hrs: Autograph session (pit lane)
14:00 – 18:00 hrs: Pit walk
15:15 – 16:30 hrs: Pitstop Challenge

Wednesday, 12 June
14:00 – 17:00 hrs: Free practice 1
19:00 – 20:00 hrs: Qualifying
22:00 – midnight: Free practice 2

Thursday, 13 June
15:00 – 18:00 hrs: Free practice 3
20:00 – 20:30 hrs: Hyperpole
22:00 – 23:00 hrs: Free practice 4

Friday, 14 June
15:00 – 20:00 hrs: Track walk for fans
16:00 – 19:00 hrs: Drivers' parade (city centre)

Saturday, 15 June
12:00 – 12:15 hrs: Warmup
16:00 hrs: Green light 24 Hours of Le Mans

Sunday, 16 June
16:00 hrs: Chequered flag 24 Hours of Le Mans

Preview

Porsche is keen to add to its illustrious record at the 24 Hours of Le Mans. At the 92nd edition of the world's biggest endurance race, the three Porsche 963 racing cars fielded by the Porsche Penske Motorsport works team are targeting their 20th outright victory. For each lap completed by the three factory cars, Porsche will donate 750 euros towards the "Racing for Charity" initiative.

A total of 23 prototypes from nine different brands, including three customer Porsche 963 from Hertz Team Jota and Proton Competition, will pit themselves against each other in the top Hypercar class. In

the new LMGT3 category, 23 vehicles from nine manufacturers will also battle for victory. Porsche is represented in this class by two 911 GT3 R entries from its Manthey partner team.

To increase the chances of clinching its 20th overall win, Porsche Penske Motorsport again fields three Porsche 963 this year. The works cars can be differentiated by the colours of their wing mirrors, the Porsche lettering on the windshield and the rear fin. As usual, those parts of the two regular cars from the FIA WEC will be painted black (No. 5) and white (No. 6). The No. 4 vehicle will feature red accents on those areas. Top drivers from the Porsche works squad will crew the hybrid prototypes from Weissach. The odds in the fiercely contested Hypercar class also look promising for the three identical racing cars from the customer teams Hertz Team Jota and Proton Competition.

“There can only be one goal for Porsche at Le Mans – to win. We hold the record number of victories and we're determined to add another triumph to our record. That puts big pressure on everyone involved. We're by no means underestimating our rivals,” says Thomas Laudenbach, outlining the intention of the Stuttgart sports car manufacturer. The Vice President Porsche Motorsport adds: “The top Hypercar class is extremely competitive with a total of 23 prototypes from nine different manufacturers. That's precisely what motivates us. We want to underline our expertise and technical skills in the world's toughest race. That applies not only to our factory team but also to the strong customer teams with their Porsche 963. We're also looking strong in the LMGT3 category. Manthey's two 911 GT3 R will be well placed to fight for class victory.”

“Our preparations have gone very well – at the first races of the year on both sides of the Atlantic as well as at last Sunday's test drives,” explains Urs Kuratle. The Director Factory Motorsport LMDh is excited about the highlight of the FIA WEC season: “It's great to see how the suspense continues to build among everyone in the team. Everyone is working with total concentration. We're united by one big goal: we want to bring home Porsche's 20th overall victory. I'm curious to see how the competition evolves over the next few days.”

“We got off to a great start on the test day for this year's Le Mans race,” states Jonathan Diuguid, in reference to the official pre-test last Sunday. Looking ahead to the race week, the Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport adds: “We expect similarly good conditions in practice, qualifying and on both race days. If this happens, then our insights from the test will have been very valuable. We'll then need to focus on making further tweaks to the cars.”

“Racing for Charity”: Porsche donates towards helping ill children

The sports car manufacturer will donate 750 euros for each lap completed by the three works-run Porsche 963 racing vehicles. After the racing highlight of the year, the total amount will be donated to three non-profit organisations that, among other things, support and care for seriously ill children worldwide: Kinderherzen retten e.V., Interplast Germany e.V. and the Ferry Porsche Foundation.

The race

The 24 Hours of Le Mans marks the fourth round on the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC calendar and is the highlight of the season. Due to the long distance, double points will be awarded towards the world championship. Porsche tackles the 92nd edition of the world's greatest endurance race leading all world championship standings. The classic event, which was contested for the first time 101 years ago, offers other novel features: for instance, the deployment of three safety cars at once on the track. The reason for this is that each lap of the Circuit des 24 Heures in Le Mans is extremely long at 13.626 kilometres. This year's race gets underway on Saturday, 15 June, at 4 pm CEST.

The storied circuit south of the city with its 150,000 inhabitants consists mainly of public roads. Normally, hundreds of trucks and cars drive over the legendary Mulsanne Straight every day on their way from Le Mans to Tours. The fast Porsche curves are both famous and notorious: high speeds and narrow run-off zones pose special challenges and ensure spectacular race action. The unique racetrack in the Sarthe department is only open to the teams to go testing once a season. This took place last Sunday.

TV and live streaming of the race

The official apps of the FIA WEC and the Le Mans organiser ACO offer a paid live stream and live timing from the 24 Hours of Le Mans. The full TV distribution list is available at fiawec.com.

An overview of the drivers and vehicles

Hypercar class (Porsche 963):
Porsche Penske Motorsport #4: Mathieu Jaminet (F) / Felipe Nasr (BR) / Nick Tandy (UK)
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: Callum Ilott (UK) / Norman Nato (F) / Will Stevens (UK)
Hertz Team Jota #38: Jenson Button (UK) / Phil Hanson (UK) / Oliver Rasmussen (DK)
Proton Competition #99: Julien Andlauer (F) / Neel Jani (CH) / Harry Tincknell (UK)

LMGT3 class (Porsche 911 GT3 R):
Manthey EMA #91: Richard Lietz (A) / Morris Schuring (NL) / Yasser Shahin (AUS)
Manthey PureRxcing #92: Klaus Bachler (A) / Alex Malykhin (UK) / Joel Sturm (D)

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