

That was 2023 Le Mans

11/06/2023 The 24 Hours of Le Mans at a glance.

4:00 pm

The 2023 24 Hours of Le Mans is over. The best-placed Porsche 963 is car No. 5, driven to 9th place by Dane Cameron, Michael Christensen and Frederic Makowiecki in 9th place. GR Racing's No. 86 Porsche 911 RSR made it onto the podium in the GTE-Am category with a superb third place.

3:07 pm

As disappointing as the race was for the Porsche 963s, until one hour before the end, our customer teams were the dominant marque in the GTE-Am class with many as three of the five best-placed cars 911 RSRs.

2:12 pm

After a great start and having led for hours, things are not looking good for the #38 Porsche 963 fielded by Hertz Team Jota. The car has been in the pits for several hours now following heavy contact with the barriers.

1:44 pm

Almost two and a half hours are still to go. The best-placed Porsche 963 is currently in 6th place in the Hypercar class.

12:15 pm

The Iron Dames and their 911 RSR are still in the lead in the GTE-Am category.

10:40 am

Two thirds of the race distance have been completed. A challenging race for Porsche Penske Motorsport at Le Mans.

Interim report 2

Two-thirds of the way into the race, Porsche Penske Motorsport was still in the fight for a podium spot, only for the factory squad's No. 6 car to slide from the track while lapping a slower vehicle. The No. 5 sister car is currently running in eighth place. In the GTE-Am category, the customer teams Iron Dames, Project 1 – AO, GR Racing and Proton Competition are among the contenders for class victory.

The very first hours of racing on the 13.626-kilometre Circuit des 24 Heures on the centenary of the endurance classic were packed with thrills and spills. Heavy, mostly isolated rain showers, caused several incidents on the track, which in turn resulted in the safety car and yellow flags coming out. At first, the Porsche 963 fielded by the Porsche Penske Motorsport works team benefited from this. After four hours, the No. 6 hybrid prototype was in second position, with the No. 75 entry in fifth and the third car in tenth. After starting from the back of the grid, the customer team Hertz Team Jota put in a strong charge to sixth place.

When the race finally returned to green after a long stint behind the safety car, Jota driver Yifei Ye caused a sensation: the selected driver from Porsche Motorsport Asia-Pacific put in a blistering drive on the drying track and swept into the overall lead shortly before 9 pm. A little later, however, the racing driver from China slid off the track at the exit of the Porsche curves and damaged the No. 38 racing car.

After another lengthy stop for repairs, the vehicle, which Ye shares with Porsche works driver Antonio Félix da Costa from Portugal and Englishman Will Stevens, ranked 25th at around eight o'clock in the morning.

Porsche Penske Motorsport's three works cars did not escape unscathed either. At around 9.30 pm, the No. 5 racing car came to a brief halt on the track due to a sensor problem and had to be reset. Meanwhile, the car shared by Frédéric Makowiecki from France, Dane Cameron from the USA and Michael Christensen from Denmark suffered a puncture. At 1:30 am, a leak was detected in the cooling circuit. This required a 23-minute pit stop for repairs, which occurred entirely within a yellow phase. After two-thirds of the race distance, the trio was running in eighth place, five laps behind the leader.

Shortly before 10 pm, the No. 75 Porsche 963 rolled to a stop in the Têrtre Rouge area: The fuel pump could no longer build up sufficient pressure. Mathieu Jaminet's attempt to get his car back to the pits proved unsuccessful. This signalled the end of the race for the Frenchman and his teammates Nick Tandy from Great Britain and Felipe Nasr from Brazil.

At around 8:30 pm, the No. 6 car suffered a puncture for the second time. This relegated Frenchman Kévin Estre, Laurens Vanthoor from Belgium and André Lotterer one lap down to eleventh place. By dawn, the trio had managed to make up good ground and also profited from rivals' misfortune. Despite minor problems, by 8 am on Sunday, the hybrid prototype was back and again fighting for third place. However, a problem lapping an LMP2 car resulted in a trip off the track and a 42-minute stop for repairs.

“The night and the morning were all but pleasant for us,” says Urs Kuratle, looking back on the incidents during the second third of the race. The Director of Factory Motorsport LMDh adds: “The number 75 car retired early, we had a defect in the cooling system on the number 5 car and the number 6 lost a lot of time due to incidents. So we're out of the running for victory. That's a shame because at times our pace was very strong. Our hopes of success were high at times but unfortunately, this dream has been dashed. Now, we're concentrating on crossing the finish line without any further trouble if possible.”

In the fiercely contested GTE-Am category, four Porsche customer teams are looking strong in the bid for a Le Mans class victory. After two-thirds of the race distance, the 911 RSR crews from Iron Dames and Project 1 – AO are taking turns with a Ferrari at the front. GR Racing's Porsche is also still on the lead lap, as is Proton Competition's No. 911 car shared by Hollywood actor Michael Fassbender from Ireland, Porsche works driver Richard Lietz from Austria and Estonian Martin Rump. For Proton's No. 88 car, the race was over just after the 15-hour mark when it slid from the track.

Drivers' comments after two-thirds of the race

Dane Cameron (Porsche 963 #5): “We've started the new day a bit behind with our number 5 car – that's unfortunate, but we'll keep fighting. My stints during the night went pretty well. There were no further setbacks. We're no longer at the front of the field in the overall standings, but that certainly

doesn't stop us from giving everything until the end."

André Lotterer (Porsche 963 #6): "I put in a nice triple stint in the early morning. Our pace was very consistent, and the tyres were fine over the distance. In between, I pushed a little harder because we wanted to return to the same lap as the leaders. We were hoping for another safety car - that would've put us right back in the game."

Mathieu Jaminet (Porsche 963 #75): "Unfortunately, we had to retire early - a huge, huge pity. When I was driving in the rain during the night, the fuel pressure suddenly dropped. I tried everything to get our car going again, but nothing worked. We don't know the exact cause yet. Sometimes the car can be restarted by resetting the electrical system and using the electric motor to get it back to the garage. Unfortunately, that didn't work because the distance to the pit lane was much too far. It hurts that we couldn't drive to the finish. Still, it was a great experience to have competed in this race."

Yifei Ye (Porsche 963 #38): "Our car is very good and very fast, but unfortunately, we had some issues. An accident and a sensor defect threw us far back. That's a shame. We still want to learn as much as possible here. The data we generate as the race progresses will help us considerably as the season goes on."

Michelle Gatting (Porsche 911 RSR #85): "To be honest, the race has been tougher than expected. We're lacking a bit of pace, especially at the beginning of our stints. After that, it gets a little better, but clearly, we can't quite catch some of our rivals. Under these conditions, I have the feeling that I don't know the Porsche well enough yet. Nonetheless, we continue to fight and our team is pushing me hard to occasionally do things with the car that I wouldn't normally try..."

6:00 am

10 hours left on the clock.

4:00 am

Half time!

2:00 am

And we are back on the track!

1:35 am

Repair stop for the Porsche 963 with the number 5:

1:20 am

The lights turn green after the third safety car phase.

0:10 am

8 hours done - 16 hours of racing time remaining. Here are the current standings in the GTE-Am class:

11:10 pm

Unfortunately, the Porsche 963 #75 had to retire.

10:30 pm

Just over six hours have been run. Here are the current rankings:

Interim Report 1

The three Porsche 963 fielded by the Porsche Penske Motorsport works team made a strong start to the 24 Hours of Le Mans. In the first four hours of the race, Felipe Nasr in the No. 75 car and Michael Christensen in the No. 5 sister car at times led the field. The No. 6 hybrid prototype is currently defending its second place. Meanwhile, the identical model campaigned by Hertz Team Jota has launched a spirited chase to catch up. In the GTE-Am category, three Porsche 911 RSR have worked their way up to the front.

Witnessed by a large crowd of over 300,000 spectators, the 62-strong field started into the race at 4 pm on Saturday to mark the centenary of the 24 Hours of Le Mans. Just before the 91st edition of the endurance classic got underway, isolated showers on the 13.626-kilometre racetrack created difficult conditions. When an accident involving a competitor in the Hypercar class occurred after just one lap, the safety car was deployed for over 30 minutes.

Felipe Nasr has consistently run in the top 5

Thanks to a clever strategy and strong performances by the works drivers, Porsche Penske Motorsport's three Porsche 963 made up several positions in the first hour of racing. After two hours, Michael Christensen held the lead for almost 30 minutes in the No. 5 car. In the sister car flying the number 75 to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Porsche sports cars, Felipe Nasr has consistently run in the top 5. Meanwhile, the No. 6 was hampered by a minor setback: Due to pressure loss in a tyre, Laurens Vanthoor had to pit for a wheel change. The car that the Belgian shares with Frenchman Kévin Estre and German André Lotterer was around a minute behind the leaders after two and a half hours of racing. However, the redeployment of the safety car slashed this gap to just a few seconds. All three works vehicles are within striking distance of the leading car.

"The starting phase was extremely eventful with safety car phases, slow zones, yellow flags and many incidents," states Urs Kuratle. The Director Factory Motorsport LMDh adds: "Our three cars are in the leading group and have no technical defects or scratches. That's the most important thing after such a turbulent start. It's wild out there. I hope we now get a stint with a dry track so that the race can progress a little more normally."

The Porsche 963 campaigned by the Hertz Team Jota customer team missed out on setting a qualifying lap and thus had to tackle the race from the back of the grid. However, works driver António Félix da Costa quickly worked his way up the order – and also benefited from an early safety car phase.

Heavy rain on parts of the circuit

Heavy rain on parts of the circuit then shook up the field again and led to several slips and slides. This triggered another long stint behind the safety car. After a little more than four hours of racing, the No. 6 Porsche is running in second place behind the lead car, the No. 75 sister car is in fifth, the Jota Porsche in sixth and the No. 5 racer in tenth.

In the GTE-Am class, the Porsche 911 RSR entries fielded by customer squads turned heads with an impressive starting phase. After about an hour, five 911 locked out the first five positions in their class. Subsequently, however, some crews were hit by bad luck. The two 911 RSR of Proton Competition (#16) and Iron Lynx collided, while the leading No. 86 car spun into the crash barriers in the heavy rain. Dempsey-Proton Racing's No. 77 car became entangled in an incident with an LMP2 prototype. After four hours, the Iron Dames and Project1 – AO entries rank first and second. The No. 911 of Proton Competition trails in third place helmed by Hollywood star Michael Fassbender from Ireland, among others.

Drivers' comments on the early stages

Michael Christensen (Porsche 963 #5): "Wet track, safety car, slow zones, cold tyres, dirty tyres – everything was thrown at me in my first stint and a lot is happening out there! Still, I kept my cool and worked my way up the field with some great manoeuvres. It's been fun, but we still have a lot to do."

Laurens Vanthoor (Porsche 963 #6): "These stints haven't been easy in such difficult conditions. In the first two hours, I made up a lot of ground and managed to maintain a pretty decent pace. At the end of the second stint, we had some vibrations that will hopefully be remedied after the wheel change. I hope we can last the distance without incident."

Felipe Nasr (Porsche 963 #75): "The first stints have gone smoothly. It feels great to run among the top group right at the start. I think some cars were struggling with quite a bit of tyre deterioration, which led to different strategies: Some teams changed all of the wheels all at once, while others – like us – just switched the tyres on one side of the car. Our car was running really well, but we experienced a minor problem with the wipers when it started to rain. Hopefully we can get that sorted quickly, because we'll definitely need the wipers often in this race."

António Félix da Costa (Porsche 963 #38): "At the start, we had a lot of traffic in front of us because we had to line up on the grid in P60 of the 62-strong field. Still, I quickly ploughed my way through the large field of GTE-Am cars straight after the start. Our car is really fast. We now have to stay out of trouble as the race progresses, then maybe something very good can come of it."

Matteo Cairoli (Porsche 911 RSR #56): "The starting phase went perfectly – I drove from 15th to the top of our class. The 911 RSR is driving beautifully. We were watching the weather developments very closely but were still surprised by a heavy shower. It's totally unpredictable. I have my fingers crossed for my teammates PJ and Gunnar."

8:55 pm

Dane Cameron in the No. 5 Porsche 963 fought his way into second with a superb overtaking maneuver, but has since lost the position to Ferrari. The Hertz Team Jota car is in the pits after accident.

8:20 pm

The past 90 minutes have been dominated by the safety car. The race has just picked up speed again and the 963 with the numbers 38 (Hertz Team Jota) and 5 (Porsche Penske Motorsport) have taken the lead.

7:16 pm

Three Porsche 963s are currently in the top 10, with Hertz Team Jota having established itself in the leading group.

6:59 pm

Heavy rainfall at Le Mans. We're seeing crashes and safety cars are on the track. But so far there are no incidents with the 963.

6:30 pm

Close together: the Porsche 963s from Porsche Penske Motorsport after a few hours of racing.

6:04 pm

After two hours we have a promosing situation in the GTE-Am class: the first four cars are Porsche 911 RSR.

4:42 pm

Porsche has mastered the turbulent early phase well. Factory driver Felipe Nasr is currently fifth in the hypercar class with the number 75 Porsche 963.

4:00 pm

Let's go! The 24 Hours of Le Mans 2023 have started.

2:00 pm

These are the starting drivers from Porsche Penske Motorsport and Hertz Team Jota.

Hyperpole

The Porsche Penske Motorsport works team has clinched positions four and seven in the hyperpole session for the 24 Hours of Le Mans. In their Porsche 963, Felipe Nasr, Mathieu Jaminet and Nick Tandy

tackle the race on the 13,626-kilometre Circuit des 24 Heures from the second grid row. Frédéric Makowiecki, Michael Christensen and Dane Cameron line up on the grid three positions behind. The No. 6 hybrid prototype shared by Kévin Estre, André Lotterer and Laurens Vanthoor heads into the endurance classic from position nine.

In summer air and asphalt temperatures, drivers had 30 minutes on Thursday evening to fight for the best grid spots. Porsche Penske Motorsport had nominated Frenchman Frédéric Makowiecki to drive the No. 5 Porsche 963, with Felipe Nasr from Brazil at the wheel of the No. 75 car. Makowiecki only stepped in after a good 15 minutes to increase the chance of a clear run. At the end of his single flying lap, the No. 5 Porsche got caught behind a rival, lost critical fractions of seconds and clocked a time of 3:25.176 minutes.

Nasr waited three more minutes before making his attempt. When the session was red-flagged due to a burning vehicle on the Mulsanne straight, his pursuit came to an abrupt halt. With barely more than five minutes remaining on the clock, the hyperpole was restarted. While Makowiecki didn't make another attempt, the Brazilian went out on the track a second time with a fresh set of Michelin racing tyres. His time of 3:24.531 minutes planted him and his teammates Nick Tandy (United Kingdom) and Mathieu Jaminet (France) on the fourth grid spot. On Saturday, the trio Makowiecki, Dane Cameron (USA) and Michael Christensen (Denmark) line up on the grid in seventh place.

The No. 6 car shared by works drivers Kévin Estre from France, André Lotterer from Germany and Laurens Vanthoor from Belgium will tackle the centenary race of the world's largest endurance event from P9. In Wednesday's qualifying session, the trio narrowly missed out on making it into the hyperpole for the eight fastest hypercars. The Porsche 963 fielded by the customer team Hertz Team Jota heads into the classic from position 16. A total of eight Porsche 911 RSR contest the GTE-Am class.

"Fourth place – huge congratulations to the team," says Urs Kuratle, Director of Factory Motorsport LMDh. "We didn't necessarily assume that we would have the best-placed hypercar on the grid according to the LMDh regulations. But we still fought hard for it. The red flag during the session helped us a bit. It gave us a chance to sort ourselves out and make another attempt with the No. 75 car. We just had to make sure that the car returned with enough fuel in the tank. A huge thank you also goes to our people back home in Weissach. We've had a difficult week with unplanned activities and we received great support from them that went above and beyond what's normal."

"It's a nice outcome for us with grid positions four and seven," states Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director at Porsche Penske Motorsport. "Because of the red flag, we had to change our plans at short notice and quickly update our fuel and energy calculations to give Felipe Nasr a chance of a flying lap. He and Fred Makowiecki did a great job. Now we're excited to the start of the 24 Hours of Le Mans."

On Friday, 9 June, the cars contesting the 24-hour race will take a break from the racetrack. Instead, the focus at the 91st edition of the endurance classic will turn to the traditional drivers' parade in the city centre of Le Mans, which this year begins at 2 pm. An hour before the green flag, Porsche invites

media representatives to a press conference in the adjacent Théâtre des Quinconces. At 6:30 pm, fans are treated to another driver parade in front of the main grandstands at the start-finish straight. The race gets underway on Saturday at 4:00 pm (CEST).

Drivers' comments after the hyperpole session

Frédéric Makowiecki (Porsche 963 #5):"The red flag threw a spanner in the works for me, as did the fact that I was held up by a slower vehicle at the end of my flying lap. But it doesn't matter, qualifying for a 24-hour race isn't that critical. It's more important that we have a good car over the whole race distance."

Felipe Nasr (Porsche 963 #75):"That was really intense. We only had enough fuel on board for exactly two flying laps. When the red flag came out on my first run, we first had to work out whether we'd have enough fuel for another attempt. There was a lot of discussion behind the scenes, but in the end, the guys did an awesome job and made it possible for me to turn a second timed lap. I then drove my heart out and pushed to the absolute limit. I'm very pleased with the fourth grid spot and I'm happy for the team."

Grid positions for the 2023 Le Mans 24 Hours

Hypercar class:
1. Fuoco/Molina/Nielsen (I/E/DK), Ferrari #50, 3:22.982 minutes
2. Pier Guidi/Calado/Giovinazzi (I/UK/I), Ferrari #51, 3:23.755 minutes
3. Hartley/Buemi/Hirakawa (NZ/CH/J) Toyota #8, 3:24.451 minutes
4. Jaminet/Nasr/Tandy (F/BR/UK), Porsche 963 #75, 3:24.531 minutes
7. Cameron/Christensen/Makowiecki (USA/DK/F), Porsche 963 #5, 3:25.176 minutes
9. Estre/Lotterer/Vanthoor (F/D/B), Porsche 963 #6
16. Félix da Costa/Stevens/Ye (P/UK/CHN), Porsche 963 #38

GTE-Am class:
1. Catsburg/Keating/Varrone (NL/USA/ARG), Corvette #33, 3:53.092 minutes
2. Al Harthy/Dinan/Eastwood (OMN/USA/IRL), Aston Martin #25, 3:53.905 minutes
3. Flohr/Castellacci/Rigon (CH/I/I), Ferrari #54, 3:54.582 minutes
9. Andlauer/Pedersen/C. Ried (F/DK/D), Porsche 911 RSR #77
10. Barker/Pera/Wainwright (UK/I/UK), Porsche 911 RSR #86
12. Bovy/Frey/Gatting (B/CH/DK), Porsche 911 RSR #85,
13. Cressoni/Picariello/Schiavoni (I/B/I), Porsche 911 RSR #60
15. Cairoli/Hyett/Jeannette (I/USA/USA), Porsche 911 RSR #56
16. Fassbender/Rump/Lietz (IRL/EST/A), Porsche 911 RSR #911
17. Hardwick/Heylen/Robichon (USA/B/CDN), Porsche 911 RSR #16
20. J. Ried/Tincknell/Yount (D/UK/USA), Porsche 911 RSR #88

Qualifying

Porsche Penske Motorsport has qualified for the hyperpole with two Porsche 963 – and thus has a chance to claim pole position in the shootout for this year's 24 Hours of Le Mans. The factory team's two hybrid prototypes with the starting numbers 5 and 75 wrapped up the qualifying session on Wednesday on positions five and eight. With P9, the No. 6 sister car narrowly missed out on securing a crucial top-8 result. In the GTE-Am category, none of the eight Porsche 911 RSR qualified for the hyperpole, which will be held on Friday.

In sunny conditions and temperatures of around 27 degrees Celsius, the qualifying session on the 13.626-kilometre Circuit des 24 Heures proved difficult: two interruptions with red flags and numerous yellow flags repeatedly hampered the qualifying attempts of racing cars. Only in the second half of the qualifying could Frenchman Frédéric Makowiecki in the No. 5 Porsche 963 and Brazilian Felipe Nasr in the No. 75 sister car make any decisive improvement on their times.

At the end of the session, the two 515+ kW (700 PS) hybrid prototypes from Weissach initially posted the fifth and sixth fastest times. Subsequently, the two fastest lap times of the Porsche 963 which flies the starting number 75 to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Porsche sports cars were cancelled: A torque sensor had recorded performance peaks that were outside the range prescribed by the regulations. Fortunately for Nasr and his teammates Nick Tandy from Great Britain and Mathieu Jaminet from France, it was still enough for eighth place.

Towards the end of the session, the French local hero Kévin Estre put in a last-ditch sprint at the wheel of his No. 6 car, only to have his attempt at making it into the top 8 thwarted by yellow flags, heavy traffic and deteriorating tyres. The vehicle, which Estre shares with Belgian Laurens Vanthoor and German André Lotterer, will start the race to mark the centenary of the 24 Hours of Le Mans from position nine.

In today's hunt for top times, only the eight fastest cars in each class qualify for the so-called "hyperpole". This 30-minute session begins at 8 pm on Thursday (June 8) and determines the positions of the first four grid rows. The grid spots for the remaining drivers who did not qualify for the shootout have been allocated based on today's result. This applies to the Porsche 963 fielded by the customer team Hertz Team Jota in the hypercar class with 16th place and to all eight Porsche 911 RSR in the GTE-Am category.

"What a crazy qualifying! I have mixed feelings about our result," explains Urs Kuratle, Director Factory Motorsport LMDh. "Two of the three works cars made it into the hyperpole, although we were biting our nails with our number 75 car after the two fastest lap times were thrown out. It's a shame that our third car missed out on qualifying for the hyperpole by such a tiny margin, but we simply have to accept that now. I also feel very sorry for our customer team, Hertz Team Jota, whose Porsche 963 was unable to turn a timed lap due to a defect."

"A look at the result shows that things are really tight here at Le Mans," states Jonathan Diuguid. The Managing Director at Porsche Penske Motorsport adds: "The competition is fierce and exciting. We're excited to see how the order will look in the hyperpole on Thursday. Until then, I hope we can continue to improve our cars."

In the GTE-Am category, in which five customer squads campaign a total of eight Porsche 911 RSR, none of the vehicles from Weissach made it into the top eight. Ultimately, Julien Andlauer set the fastest lap time for a 911 with ninth place at the wheel of Dempsey-Proton Racing's No. 77 entry. The Frenchman was just two-tenths of a second short of qualifying for the hyperpole. The Porsche run by the Iron Dames team with drivers Rahel Frey from Switzerland, Sarah Bovy from Belgium and Michelle Gatting from Denmark tackles the 91st edition of the long-distance classic from P12. Hollywood star Michael Fassbender from Ireland and his teammates Richard Lietz from Austria and Martin Rump from Estonia qualified on P16 in their class.

On Thursday, a three-hour free practice session is scheduled at 3 pm to prepare for the 24 Hours of Le Mans. From 8 pm, a total of 24 cars in three classes will go head to head in the hyperpole session in a bid to clinch the best grid positions in the Hypercar, LMP2 and GTE-Am categories. The day wraps up with another two-hour practice from 10 pm.

Drivers' comments on the qualifying

Frédéric Makowiecki (Porsche 963 #5):"It was tricky. On my fastest lap, I got held up behind an LMP2 car in the first chicane and lost time in the process. At first, I thought I'd have to abandon my attempt, but I went full throttle instead. That was enough to put me quite far ahead. Our team did a great job in the lead-up to qualifying. I'm proud of the whole team."

Felipe Nasr (Porsche 963 #75): "I'm pleased that we made it into the hyperpole – even though it was close in the end. It's great that one of our sister cars is also in the top 8. It was difficult to attack at the right moment and it was a question of luck: will I get a clear lap or not? I'm happy that it was enough for us. This result shows that we've made noticeable progress. It's a well-deserved reward for our team's hard work."

Kévin Estre (Porsche 963 #6):"What a nightmare. During my attempts, something always got in the way: red flags, slow zones or slower cars in front of me. I didn't find one single clear lap. In the end, I didn't have any fresh tyres left for a serious attack. Today just wasn't our day. That happens sometimes. Let's now focus on the race. We need to try to have a consistently fast car over 24 hours."

Qualifying result

Hypercar class:
1. Fuoco/Molina/Nielsen (I/E/DK), Ferrari #50, 3:25.213 minutes

2. Pier Guidi/Calado/Giovinazzi (I/UK/I), Ferrari #51, 3:25.412 minutes
3. Conway/Kobayashi/Lopez (UK/J/ARG), Toyota #7, 3:25.485 minutes
5. Cameron/Christensen/Makowiecki (USA/DK/F), Porsche 963 #5, 3:25.848 minutes
8. Jaminet/Nasr/Tandy (F/BR/UK), Porsche 963 #75, 3:26.589 minutes
9. Estre/Lotterer/Vanthoor (F/D/B), Porsche 963 #6, 3:26.900 minutes
16. Félix da Costa/Stevens/Ye (P/UK/CHN), Porsche 963 #38, no lap time

GTE-Am class:
1. Perez Companc/Rovera/Wadoux (ARG/I/F), Ferrari #83, 3:51.877 minutes
2. Flohr/Castellacci/Rigon (CH/I/I), Ferrari #54, 3:51.941 minutes
3. Catsburg/Keating/Varrone (NL/USA/ARG), Corvette #33, 3:52.288 minutes
9. Andlauer/Pedersen/C. Ried (F/DK/D), Porsche 911 RSR #77, 3:53.481 minutes
10. Barker/Pera/Wainwright (UK/I/UK), Porsche 911 RSR #86, 3:53.531 minutes
12. Bovy/Frey/Gatting (B/CH/DK), Porsche 911 RSR #85, 3:53.603 minutes
13. Cressoni/Picariello/Schiavoni (I/B/I), Porsche 911 RSR #60, 3:53.626 minutes
15. Cairoli/Hyett/Jeannette (I/USA/USA), Porsche 911 RSR #56, 3:53.947 minutes
16. Fassbender/Rump/Lietz (IRL/EST/A), Porsche 911 RSR #911, 3:54.129 minutes
17. Hardwick/Heylen/Robichon (USA/B/CDN), Porsche 911 RSR #16, 3:54.293 minutes
20. J. Ried/Tincknell/Yount (D/UK/USA), Porsche 911 RSR #88, 3:58.486 minutes

Full results

Pre-Test

Porsche Penske Motorsport used the so-called pre-test at the 24 Hours of Le Mans for intensive work on the set-up of the three Porsche 963. On the 13.626-kilometre Circuit des 24 Heures in France, the hybrid prototypes in special livery completed many consistent laps. The LMDh customer squad Hertz Team Jota also impressed during the total six hours of driving at Le Mans. In the GTE Am class, the eight Porsche 911 RSR cars from five customer teams reeled off an extensive programme.

At the official test day in Le Mans, the Porsche Penske Motorsport factory team intensively adapted to the special features of the 13.626-kilometer Circuit des 24 Heures. In the two three-hour sessions, the three Porsche 963 completed a total of 142 laps (1,934.9 kilometres) in bright sunshine and temperatures of up to 27 degrees Celsius. In addition to set-up work, tyre testing was the focus of the only testing opportunity at La Sarthe. The #75 car was in the pits for around two hours in the afternoon because a component of the braking system had to be replaced. Meanwhile, Belgian Laurens Vanthoor at the wheel of the No. 6 Porsche 963 set the second fastest lap time of the entire test day in 3:29.648 minutes. The identical over 500 kW (680 PS) strong hybrid prototype of the customer squad Hertz Team Jota circled the legendary circuit in western France 55 times. In the GTE Am category, the eight Porsche 911 RSRs fielded by five privateer teams covered a total distance of 6,213 kilometres.

"Our lap times may look good, but the results from the test don't mean too much," sums up Urs Kuratle,

Director Factory Motorsport LMDh. "The most important thing is that all the cars, including the customer car from Hertz Team Jota, are in one piece. We were able to reel off plenty of laps and learned a lot about the special track at Le Mans, on which we are otherwise never able to test. We generated important data. I'm also very pleased with how smoothly the processes worked in our big team with three cars. It was a successful day for us overall."

"It was very important that we were able to put our team structure, all the tools and all the equipment to the test during this day," summarises Jonathan Diuguid. The Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport adds: "We have a third car on the grid here in addition to our two cars from the FIA WEC. The effort is enormous. Our No. 75 was in the pits for some time to replace a component but, overall, we still completed a lot of laps. It was a productive day in which we gained important knowledge, especially in the afternoon in higher temperatures."

There will be no driving at all at Le Mans on Monday (June 6). On Tuesday, too, the 62 cars entered in total will remain in the garages. However, the drivers will be available to fans both at the track and in the city centre as part of autograph sessions. The Circuit des 24 Heures, which consists of around 70 percent public roads, will not be reopened for the first practice sessions until Wednesday.

“In Le Mans, our three Porsche 963 will be truly eye-catching at the 75th anniversary of our brand and the 100th anniversary of the 24-hour race. I do not doubt that this design will immediately win the hearts of fans,” says a delighted Thomas Laudenbach. “We embraced the vehicle designs from Porsche’s rich and illustrious history at Le Mans,” adds the Vice President of Porsche Motorsport. “The 917 as a pink “pig” and the “hippie car” from 1970 – these liveries have made racing history and are still popular today. With our special design on the three Porsche 963, we’re continuing this great tradition at Le Mans.”

Drivers' comments after the test day

Dane Cameron (Porsche 963 #5): “It was an important and good test day for the entire team and for our No. 5 crew. I've been looking forward to this moment for months: finally driving the Porsche 963 at Le Mans. I enjoyed it very much. In the morning the track offered little grip, but that improved noticeably as the day went on. We completed our planned programme without mayor interruptions. Now it's time for analysis. The basis is already very good. We're now building on that."

André Lotterer (Porsche 963 #6): “In the first few laps we weren't entirely happy with the balance of the car. But we subsequently made noticeable progress. The drivability got better and better. We're at Le Mans with the Porsche 963 for the very first time. Now we've generated important data that we'll analyse intensively in the coming days. It was nice that our car worked without any technical issues throughout the day. It was also important to get to know the current condition of the track. I have the impression that the bumps have become more extreme in some places - for example in the Indianapolis area."

Felipe Nasr (Porsche 963 #75): “Unfortunately, an issue with the braking system cost us some time. We found a solution and ended up with good lap times. For me as a driver, it was a great feeling to be back at Le Mans and behind the wheel of the Porsche 963. It really is a unique experience to drive such a car on this great track. We may not have been able to complete our entire programme with our starting number 75, but we're still satisfied with the day.”

Yifei Ye (Porsche 963 #38): “Our car is running really well on this very special track. Our main aim today was to collect important data. We succeeded in doing that very well. The focus of our work wasn't on achieving the fastest possible lap times. We're learning all the time. Now we have to analyse the findings from today and translate this into further progress. For me, driving on the Le Mans track is always associated with great emotions because I lived in this city for some time as a teenager.”

Ben Barker (Porsche 911 RSR #86): “It was good that we were able to experience the changes to the track today. The curbs in the Tertre Rouge area are new, and there's also new tarmac in some sections. Le Mans is so different from other tracks, so every driver always needs a few laps to get back into the rhythm. That's exactly what we did today. So far, our car feels really good, it was a perfect test day.”

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Subline: Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport

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