

Florian Modlinger: “We've established ourselves as a top team this year"

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03/08/2023 In its most successful season to date, the TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E Team took home four victories with the Porsche 99X Electric. The squad from Weissach was fighting for the world championship title until the last race of the season in London.

“We've become stronger as a team," says Florian Modlinger, Director Factory Motorsport Formula E, in an interview. “Compared to last year, we've made a huge step forward and established ourselves among the top teams." Season 9 of the ABB FIA Formula E World Championship was gripping from start to finish, with the world championship titles going down to the wire at the season finale in London last weekend. Porsche had reason to celebrate there, too: with the Weissach-developed Porsche 99X

Electric, Jake Dennis, who races for the Porsche customer team Avalanche Andretti, was crowned world champion after an outstanding season.

Florian, you won four races this season and fought for the world championship title until the very end. What does your season tally looks like?

Florian Modlinger:"It was a successful season for Porsche because, with the Porsche 99X Electric, we developed a car capable of winning. On top of that, we've become much stronger as a team compared to last year. We've grown into a top team. With four victories, we have established ourselves firmly at the top. Nevertheless, in the end, we didn't achieve what we had set out to do and what would have been within our reach. We'll analyse everything carefully and try to raise the bar and make another step forward in season 10."

How disappointed are you that, despite the promising outlook, it wasn't enough to win the world championship? What were the reasons?

Modlinger:"In the end, the qualifying performance was decisive, especially on the last two race weekends in Rome and particularly in London. Our race performance was very good, which we saw again in the first race in London when António drove a sensational race from 17th on the grid to P2. To have only finished fourth in the teams' and drivers' championships is definitely disappointing, considering that we led the teams' championship for the majority of the season and only occasionally dropped back to second place. Clearly, more could've been possible for us this season."

Looking back at the season – what were the highlights?

Modlinger:"The strong team performance in Hyderabad comes to mind. Despite Pascal's serious accident in the free practice, we fought for P3 and P4 in the race. That was a sensational success. Highlights were of course our victories. I'm thinking in particular of Cape Town, where António secured his first win as a Porsche works driver with an outstanding charge through the field and spectacular overtaking manoeuvres. And in Jakarta, where Pascal showed what he was capable of with his spirited and flawless race. The doubleheader in Diriyah was outstanding for Pascal. To dominate and to win both races on this track was fascinating in my view."

What memories would you rather forget?

Modlinger:"The biggest disappointment was definitely the first race at the season finale in London. Both drivers were looking good for a podium result. But then Pascal was shunted out of the race by a competitor and António was denied a podium spot due to an incomprehensible penalty. To end the day in 9th place after such a strong team performance was bitterly disappointing."

After a superior performance in the first races of the season with the new Porsche 99X Electric, you weren't able to maintain the lead you had built up. How come?

Modlinger:"That superiority wasn't really there. Jaguar and Envision Racing were on par performance-wise, but they dropped a lot of points in the opening races. We didn't make any mistakes in the beginning and banked the points. That flipped as the season progressed. Punctures and collisions set us back and we went to tracks where we couldn't turn our qualifying performance into a decent result. Others were simply stronger; you have to acknowledge that. But our package was competitive all season, as Jake Dennis from our customer team Avalanche Andretti showed by winning the world title, especially in the last races."

Why, despite three victories, was it not enough for Pascal to win the title?

Modlinger:"Pascal was the only driver who only had one zero this season, he was in the points in every other race. But he didn't score enough 'big points'. He has three race wins, but in terms of podiums and top-five finishes, he hasn't been at the front. He often finished sixth to tenth place, and that just wasn't enough given the enormously competitive field. No one was in the points more often than him, but he wasn't always far enough ahead. With this in mind, we need to work on bringing home the 'big numbers' more often in the future, which means podium finishes and top-five results. For this to happen, we need to start further up the grid."

Your customer team Avalanche Andretti won two races and the drivers' world championship with Jake Dennis in the Porsche 99X Electric. What do you think of this achievement?

Modlinger:"Avalanche Andretti and Jake Dennis have maximised the package we've provided them with. Congratulations on that. We're proud that they've had such success with our Porsche 99X Electric. They experienced a strong start to the season and have come back sensationally after a dip. The two wins and a total of eleven podium finishes speak for themselves. The team, and Jake in particular, put in an extremely strong performance."

How did the collaboration with Avalanche Andretti go in your first season together? How did Porsche benefit from it?

Modlinger:"The cooperation with Avalanche Andretti was good. Both teams were completely involved. All the data and all the setups were shared right from the start. It was helpful for us to be able to analyse the data from not only two, but four cars and to gain the corresponding insights. However, one should not forget that a customer team can fully concentrate on putting a perfect car on the track for the race, whereas we as a manufacturer have the responsibility to constantly develop the package and to ensure that this complies with the complex rule book. So, the workload is much heavier on the manufacturers. It was handled extremely well by our team. I would like to express my thanks for that."

How do you see Formula E developing this season with the new Gen 3 cars like your Porsche 99X Electric?

Modlinger:"It was a very successful season for Formula E, with an attractive calendar and exciting races. The fans witnessed some spectacular racing, which was also easy to follow on television. We have to

build on this and make the sport more widely known. From a sporting and technological point of view, the course has been set for the future, with further events such as Tokyo, where we will race for the first time next year. I'm really looking forward to the new season."

What's your schedule for the off-season? When does the preparation for season 10 begin?

Modlinger:"It's full throttle. The cars come back to Weissach at the end of this week, where they are disassembled, reassembled and prepared for the new season. At the same time, we as the manufacturer will continue testing to optimise the package. And in October, the official pre-season test of Formula E is already on the agenda in Valencia. So, there isn't too much time to take a deep breath."

Porsche has extended its Formula E commitment ahead of schedule until the 2025/2026 season. What does this mean for the team?

Modlinger:"This early commitment is a great sign of confidence and brings a certain stability. We can focus our resources on the future and use them effectively. Ultimately, of course, it's also great motivation for the team."

In London, António Félix da Costa was penalised by the stewards and subsequently lost his second place. Porsche has appealed this decision. Why?

Modlinger:"António suffered a slow puncture due to debris on the track, which meant that the pressure from his front right tyre fell below the prescribed minimum. The damage occurred due to an external impact, it was not our fault. For us, this decision is incomprehensible and unacceptable. Our primary concern is a fair equal treatment in the spirit of the sport."

Porsche in Formula E

In 2023, the squad contested its fourth season in the world's first all-electric racing series with the Weissach-developed Porsche 99X Electric. With four victories thanks to Pascal Wehrlein (3) and António Félix da Costa (1), 2023 was the most successful season since the manufacturer joined the all-electric racing series in 2019. Porsche supported a customer team for the first time with Avalanche Andretti, the squad owned by the US motor racing legend Michael Andretti. With the all-electric Taycan Turbo S, Porsche again supplied the official safety car, thus underlining the importance of Formula E for Porsche Motorsport.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



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Consumption data

Taycan Turbo S (Predecessor model)

*Further information on the official fuel consumption and the official specific CO_2 emissions of new passenger cars can be found in the "Leitfaden über den Kraftstoffverbrauch, die CO_2-Emissionen und den Stromverbrauch neuer Personenkraftwagen" (Fuel Consumption, CO_2Emissions and Electricity Consumption Guide for New Passenger Cars), which is available free of charge at all sales outlets and from DAT (Deutsche Automobil Treuhand GmbH, Helmuth-Hirth-Str. 1, 73760 Ostfildern-Scharnhausen, www.dat.de).

Video

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Subline: António Félix da Costa

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Title: Pascal Wehrlein, 2023, Porsche AG
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