

Porsche Formula E drivers tackle Le Mans dress rehearsal in Belgium

06/05/2025 Porsche Penske Motorsport is eager to regain its stellar form at round three of the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) season. After disappointing results in Qatar and Italy recently, the factory team aims to finish on the podium with at least one Porsche 963 in the 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps. In the LMGT3 class, Manthey 1st Phorm and the Iron Dames squad are determined to score more top results for the 911 GT3 R after strong performances in Imola.

In 2024, two Porsche 963 clinched a one-two triumph for the hybrid prototype from Weissach. Thanks to this success and the insights gained from test days at the Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps in early April, Porsche Penske Motorsport heads to the third race of the season feeling optimistic. The factory team is making changes to its driver lineup from Qatar and Italy: Australian Matt Campbell and Frenchman Mathieu Jaminet are unable to compete in Belgium due to a scheduling conflict with the North American IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship. Instead, Porsche has signed on some well-known replacements.

Formula E champion Pascal Wehrlein will join reigning drivers' world champions Kévin Estre of France

and Belgium's Laurens Vanthoor in the No. 6 car. The factory driver from the TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E Team stands in for Campbell and prepares for his upcoming debut at the 24 Hours of Le Mans at the wheel of the Porsche 963. Swiss driver Nico Müller, who competes in Formula E for the Porsche customer team Andretti, will share the No. 5 car with regular drivers Julien Andlauer of France and Michael Christensen of Denmark. Müller has been nominated as reserve driver for the 24 Hours of Le Mans on 14-15 June.

"I'm thrilled we could offer our Formula E factory drivers a cockpit at Spa and confident that Pascal and Nico will handle the Porsche 963 brilliantly," states Thomas Laudenbach. The Vice President Porsche Motorsport adds: "After disappointing results in Qatar and Imola, we're determined to turn things around in time for the season highlight in Le Mans. I'm hoping it'll be an open, fair, and close race among all manufacturers and teams in Belgium. If this happens, I believe our Porsche Penske Motorsport team has a good chance."

"The Porsche 963 achieved a one-two result at Spa last year so that makes me confident," explains Urs Kuratle, Director of Factory Racing LMDh. "The data and experience from the 2024 season as well as the insights from the recent tests in Belgium will help us. In the first three races of this season's IMSA championship, our Porsche Penske Motorsport team has demonstrated that great successes are possible against fierce rivalry. If every manufacturer competes on an equal footing, podium results are definitely within our reach."

"Spa is an iconic circuit, which seems to suit the Porsche 963 extremely well," states Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport. „It has been resurfaced since last year's race and, from our recent test, the track grip has increased. This is going to lead to quicker lap times. We look forward to the 6 Hours of Spa. It is the closest thing to what we can call a home race for the European-based arm of our team. As a team there will be many family and friends present as well, and we aim to have a strong result as with Spa being the last racing opportunity in the WEC prior to heading to Le Mans."

In the top Hypercar class, the Porsche customer team Proton Competition fields another Porsche 963. Swiss driver Neel Jani shares driving duties in the German team's No. 99 entry with his teammates Nico Pino from Chile and the Argentinian Nico Varrone.

LMGT3 class: Manthey targets the next triumph after Imola

The Manthey 1st Phorm customer team travels to round three of the FIA WEC season with a tailwind. The squad from Germany's Eifel region recently won the LMGT3 class in Italy with the Porsche 911 GT3 R. Factory driver Richard Lietz from Austria will be joined in the No. 92 cockpit by Ryan Hardwick from the USA and Italian Riccardo Pera. Iron Dames will be represented by Rahel Frey from Switzerland, Michelle Gatting from Denmark, and Frenchwoman Célia Martin in an identical 911.

The race

The Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps lies in eastern Belgium close to the German border. The racetrack, which opened in 1921, measures 7.004 kilometres and is the longest permanent circuit on the FIA WEC calendar. Featuring 21 corners and several relatively long straights, the storied racetrack rolls uphill and down dale through dense forest – hence its nickname the "Ardennes rollercoaster".

Renovations over the last two years have improved the run-off areas in the legendary Eau Rouge-Raidillon corner combination. Additional grandstands have been constructed here and at other points along the track. While the basic layout is unchanged, some sections have been resealed. The six-hour race has been a regular fixture on the calendar from the very first FIA WEC season.

Drivers' comments ahead of the race

Julien Andlauer (Porsche 963 #5): "I'm particularly fond of the Spa-Francorchamps racetrack. I did well there last year in the Proton Competition's Porsche 963. I hope to be as fast in Porsche Penske Motorsport factory car this season. We're determined to be in the running for podium finishes. We were too far off the pace of the frontrunners at the first two races in Qatar and Imola. We need to give it our very best shot."

Laurens Vanthoor (Porsche 963 #6): "As my home race, Spa is one of my favourites on the calendar. After our disappointments in Qatar and Imola, we're determined to fight back. The race in Belgium is critical because it's considered a dress rehearsal for the 24 Hours of Le Mans. We're expecting more attention, more fans, and more action but once the race gets underway, it'll be like any other. Let's see what we can achieve."

Neel Jani (Porsche 963 #99): "We're returning to Spa with very fond memories. Last year was our best race by far. We spent a lot of time in the lead and had a realistic chance of finishing on the podium. Unfortunately, the red flag thwarted our plans. Fifth place was still a decent result, and we'd like to repeat that. Many of our rivals tested in Spa recently, but we didn't. I hope we can find a good setup again based on last year's data."

Célia Martin (Porsche 911 GT3 R #85): "We scored our first world championship points in Imola, which was a noticeable improvement on the first race of the season. The fact that our sister car won gives us even more of a boost. We're still in the phase where everything needs to align but we now have a much better idea of our individual strengths. Imola was well suited to the Porsche 911 GT3 R. While Spa-Francorchamps is significantly different, we're still aiming for a good result."

Riccardo Pera (Porsche 911 GT3 R #92): "To win our class at the previous world championship race in Imola gave us a huge boost – especially for me because winning a home race is a dream come true. We're now heading to Spa-Francorchamps. The Belgian circuit is one of the most beautiful in the world,

so we're very excited. We aim to continue our top form there."

Porsche racing cars and drivers in Spa-Francorchamps

Hypercar class (Porsche 963):
Porsche Penske Motorsport #5: Julien Andlauer (FRA), Michael Christensen (DNK), Nico Müller (SUI)
Porsche Penske Motorsport #6: Kévin Estre (FRA), Laurens Vanthoor (BEL), Pascal Wehrlein (DEU)
Proton Competition #99: Neel Jani (SUI), Nico Pino (CHL), Nico Varrone (ARG)

LMGT3 class (Porsche 911 GT3 R):
Iron Dames #85: Rahel Frey (SUI), Michelle Gatting (DNK), Célia Martin (FRA)
Manthey 1st Phorm #92: Ryan Hardwick (USA), Richard Lietz (AUT), Riccardo Pera (ITA)

The schedule (all times CEST)

Thursday, 8 May
11:30 – 13:00 hrs: Free practice 1
16:30 – 18:00 hrs: Free practice 2

Friday, 9 May
11:00 – 12:00 hrs: Free practice 3
14:40 – 14:55 hrs: Qualifying LMGT3
15:03 – 15:15 hrs: Hyperpole LMGT3
15:25 – 15:40 hrs: Qualifying Hypercar
15:48 – 16:00 hrs: Hyperpole Hypercar

Saturday, 10 May
14:00 – 20:00 hrs: Race 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps

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Title: Pascal Wehrlein (GER), 2024, Porsche AG
Subline: Pascal Wehrlein

Path: Porsche Formula E drivers tackle Le Mans dress rehearsal in Belgium/Images/img_2.jpg
Title: Thomas Laudenbach, Vice President Porsche Motorsport, FIA WEC, Spa-Francorchamps, Preview, 2025, Porsche AG
Subline: Thomas Laudenbach, Vice President Porsche Motorsport

Path: Porsche Formula E drivers tackle Le Mans dress rehearsal in Belgium/Images/img_4.jpg
Title: Porsche 911 GT3 R, Manthey 1st Phorm (#92), Ryan Hardwick (USA), Richard Lietz (AUT), Riccardo Pera (ITA), FIA WEC, Spa-Francorchamps, Preview, 2025, Porsche AG
Subline: Manthey 1st Phorm

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