

Porsche factory team with productive test drives before start of the WEC season

23/02/2025 Porsche Penske Motorsport has completed its preparations for the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC). The factory team completed a total of 618 laps with both Porsche 963 during the two-day Prologue at the Lusail International Circuit.

Proton Competition clocked 213 laps in the cumulative total of all four test sessions with an identical hybrid prototype. In LMGT3 category, the customer teams Manthey 1st Phorm and Iron Dames gained important experience with the Porsche 911 GT3 R. This year's season begins on Friday with a 10-hour race on the 5.419-kilometre circuit in the north of the capital Doha.

In total, the 508 kW (691 PS) Porsche 963 covered a distance of 4,504 kilometres on the Qatari Grand Prix circuit. The two Porsche Penske Motorsport race cars alone accounted for 3,350 kilometres, completing a total of 54 pit stops with 14 driver changes. The fastest lap was set by Julien Andlauer in 1:39.873 minutes during a qualifying simulation on Friday evening. The Frenchman is new to the

Porsche factory driver squad. He shares the number 5 car with Denmark's Michael Christensen, while his compatriot Mathieu Jaminet joins him for the longer races of the season, such as in Qatar or at the 24 Hours of Le Mans. In the number 6 sister car, the reigning drivers' world champions Kévin Estre from France and Laurens Vanthoor from Belgium will be supported by Australian Matt Campbell. In the top category of the FIA WEC, eight different car manufacturers with a total of 18 prototypes are competing for overall victories this year.

"These were two productive days: we learnt a lot and took many tasks with us for the coming days until the first free practice session," stresses Urs Kuratle, Head of Factory Motorsport LMDh. "This morning we were on top in the results list. We did not let ourselves go crazy in the evening, focused on preparing for the race and consistently worked through our long runs. Both Porsche 963 ran inconspicuously. The lap times are okay and definitely no drama. But we can also see that the competition is very, very strong – so we have to do everything right and analyse our data well."

"After the prologue, we do not know where everybody stands, but I can tell you it is going to be very tight next Friday," explains Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport. "All the manufacturers are really competitive. The Lusail International Circuit is a very demanding circuit with some high-speed corners. Porsche Penske Motorsport used the Prologue for what the Prologue is for: we worked through our test plan. Both Porsche 963 went through qualifying simulations, full race stints, different tyre compounds, brake sets and things like that. We ticked a lot of boxes. We have a lot of good information to look at the next few days to make sure we are prepared for next week."

Since its competition debut in January 2023, the Porsche 963 has been the most successful racing car in the LMDh category. In this category, Porsche can compete for overall victories with a hybrid prototype in the endurance classics at Le Mans, Daytona and Sebring. In 2025, the Porsche Penske Motorsport factory team will be the defending champion in both the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) and the North American WeatherTech Sportscar Championship (IMSA). In the top class of the WEC, the 963 should also prevail against the LMH vehicles this year and build on the great successes of legendary racing cars such as the 917, 935, 956, 962 or 919 Hybrid.

LMGT3: Important test sessions for Iron Dames and Manthey 1st Phorm

In LMGT3 class, the Porsche customer teams experienced a demanding test with the 911 GT3 R. Here too, 18 racing cars take part in the competition. They come from nine different brands. Defending champions Manthey set the twelfth-fastest lap time in the fourth and final test session with the driver trio of Richard Lietz (Austria), Ryan Hardwick (USA) and Riccardo Pera (Italy). The Iron Dames finished 13th with Porsche contract driver Michelle Gatting from Denmark, ex-DTM driver Rahel Frey from Switzerland and Célia Martin from France. The successful initiative to promote girls and women in motorsport is cooperating closely with Porsche Motorsport from this year onwards. In total, the two nine-eleven with up to 416 kW (565 PS) completed 653 laps and 3,546 kilometres on the Lusail International Circuit over the past two days.

The Race

The FIA WEC opener under the title \"Qatar 1812 km\" starts next Friday at 14:00 local time (12:00

CET). The 10-hour race is scheduled to cover 1,812 kilometres and this distance is a reference to the Qatari national holiday on 18 December. Due to the duration of the first race of the season, the normal WEC points are multiplied by a factor of 1.5. The 5.419-kilometre circuit includes 16 turns and is located in the north of the capital Doha.

Drivers' comments after the Prologue

Mathieu Jaminet (Porsche 963 #5): A lot of things are new to me – the team and the engineers, for example. Their approach is a bit more European and therefore more like what I am used to. I also had to familiarise myself with the track first, as this is my first time racing here in Qatar. So far, everything has gone smoothly for us. I had fun and was able to enjoy my first contact with the World Endurance Championship, even though I arrived here a little ill. But now I'm feeling better every day. We have done a lot of set-up work, even if we are lacking some performance compared to our competitors. But the team has collected a lot of data, which they can now analyse in order to draw the right conclusions for next week's race."

Laurens Vanthoor (Porsche 963 #6): In testing, you never know who is trying out what and who is where in terms of performance. Last year we were very good here in Qatar. Now we're trying to be even better. Our car is comparatively heavy, which plays a pretty big role on this track. We have completed our programme and now have three days to analyse everything. It's part of testing to try out things that don't work so well. Now we will put everything together to be in the best possible position for the race."

Nicolas Pino (Porsche 963 #99): My first time with the Porsche 963 in the FIA WEC is a great experience. Unfortunately, we weren't able to spend as much time on the track as we wanted. That put us a bit on the backfoot. But we have gathered a lot of information and can now work on many details in terms of set-up. Even if we are not quite where we want to be yet: We are moving in the right direction and have recently taken a big step forwards. Overall, I am satisfied with how things are developing."

Michelle Gatting (Porsche 911 GT3 R #85): During the two days of testing here in Qatar, we collected a lot of information and experience. We had to struggle a bit with some minor things – but it's better that happens in the Prologue than later on the race weekend. Tomorrow, we enjoy a day off. But on Monday we will return to the track for meetings and will also practise driver changes, for example."

Richard Lietz (Porsche 911 GT3 R #92): The track has improved significantly over the course of the Prologue and now offers more grip. In view of the strong temperature fluctuations, I assume that the race will be decided when it gets cooler at night – that would be good, because our Porsche has improved significantly as darkness falls. Although the car balance is right, we are still missing a bit of speed. The driver pairing with Ryan Hardwick, Ricciardo Pera and myself fits: We've already driven together in the Asian Le Mans Series, which worked quite well. So we're looking forward to the season positively."

Porsche race cars and drivers in Qatar

Hypercar class (Porsche 963):

Porsche Penske Motorsport #5: Julien Andlauer (FRA), Michael Christensen (DNK), Mathieu Jaminet (FRA)

Porsche Penske Motorsport #6: Matt Campbell (AUS), Kévin Estre (FRA), Laurens Vanthoor (BEL)

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 (local time = CET +2 hours)

Friday, February 21
13:00 – 16:00: Prologue Session 1
18:00 – 22:00: Prologue Session 2

Saturday, February 22
12:00 – 15:00: Prologue Session 3
17:00 – 21:00: Prologue Session 4

Wednesday, February 26
12:00 – 13:30: Free Practice 1
17:30 – 19:00: Free Practice 2

Thursday, February 27
12:00 – 13:00: Free Practice 3
17:00 – 17:12: Qualifying LMGT3
17:20 – 17:30: Hyperpole LMGT3
17:40 – 17:52: Qualifying Hypercar
18:00 – 18:10: Hyperpole Hypercar

Friday, February 28
14:00 – 00:00: Race \"Qatar 1812 km\"

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



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Video

https://newstv.porsche.com/porschevideos/newstv.porsche.com_ 308608_en.mp4

Image Sublines

Path: Porsche factory team with productive test drives before the start of the WEC season/Images/img_2.jpg
Title: Jonathan Diuguid, Executive Director Porsche Penske Motorsport, WEC, Katar, 2025, Porsche AG
Subline: Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport

Path: Porsche factory team with productive test drives before the start of the WEC season/Images/img_5.jpg
Title: Porsche Penske Motorsport (#5), Mathieu Jaminet (FRA), WEC, Qatar, 2025, Porsche AG
Subline: Mathieu Jaminet

Path: Porsche factory team with productive test drives before the start of the WEC season/Images/img_6.jpg
Title: Porsche Penske Motorsport (#5), Laurens Vanthoor (BEL), WEC, Qatar, 2025, Porsche AG
Subline: Laurens Vanthoor

Path: Porsche factory team with productive test drives before the start of the WEC season/Images/img_7.jpg
Title: Porsche 963, Proton Competition (#99), Nico Pino (CHL), WEC, Qatar, 2025, Porsche AG
Subline: Nicolas Pino

Path: Porsche factory team with productive test drives before the start of the WEC season/Images/img_8.jpg
Title: Iron Dames (#85), Michelle Gatting (DNK), WEC, Qatar, 2025, Porsche AG
Subline: Michelle Gatting

Path: Porsche factory team with productive test drives before the start of the WEC season/Images/img_9.jpg
Title: Manthey 1st Phorm (#92), Richard Lietz (AUT), WEC, Qatar, 2025, Porsche AG
Subline: Richard Lietz

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