

Porsche Penske Motorsport wins the 6-hour race in Watkins Glen

23/06/2024 Porsche Penske Motorsport's No. 7 Porsche 963 has won the IMSA race in Watkins Glen. The Daytona winners and championship leaders Felipe Nasr and Dane Cameron beat their rivals to the finish line after a gripping and rain-sodden six-hour race. The sister car driven by Nick Tandy and Mathieu Jaminet wrapped up the day in third place.

The race

With this success in the US state of New York, Porsche, the works team and the drivers Nasr and Cameron have extended their position at the top of the championship standings. The Stuttgart sports car manufacturer now also leads all classifications of the IMSA Michelin Endurance Cup.

Round six of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship began with a rollercoaster ride that lasted almost five hours. The field was turned upside down due to the multiple safety car deployments, rain showers in the first half and a torrential downpour around two and half hours before the flag.

Almost all cars in the top GTP class spent time at the front – including both of Porsche Penske Motorsport's Porsche 963. The cards were then reshuffled: With 1:20 hours remaining, there was so much water on the tradition-steeped racetrack that the race director red-flagged the event.

Victory was ultimately decided in a thrilling 17-minute showdown. Felipe Nasr and Mathieu Jaminet launched their last-gasp sprint from second and fourth place. After the restart, the Brazilian grabbed the first opportunity and, with an impressive move, swept past the leading Acura. Jaminet also ploughed his way up to third place shortly before the chequered flag and took his place on the winners' podium.

"What a nail-biting race in Watkins Glen," grinned Thomas Laudenbach, Vice President Porsche Motorsport. "This is our third victory of the season, we've climbed the podium at every race so far and have extended our lead in the championship – things couldn't be better! A huge compliment to our Porsche Penske Motorsport works team and to the drivers, who put in a stellar performance under the trickiest conditions. Many thanks as well to all the employees back in Weissach and our strong partners, who give us excellent support in this project."

"Our strategists, drivers and the pit crew did an awesome job in a truly crazy race," states Urs Kuratle, Director Factory Motorsport LMDh. "We demonstrated that we're adept at handling extremely difficult situations. After our performance in Le Mans, this is great for everyone. Our customer team JDC-Miller MotorSports put in an extremely strong drive today. Unfortunately, they received a major penalty. Still, congratulations to the team on its first-class work."

"It's a banner day for our whole team and it's wonderful to see the Porsche 963 in victory lane," explains Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport. "Our cars were incredibly fast in the race. The team did a great job under changeable conditions. I'm particularly pleased that our number 7 advanced to the top of the overall leaderboard thanks to this victory. We now have a longer break until the next race at Road America. It's nice to head into this break with a victorious feeling."

Porsche now holds a 41-point advantage at the top of the manufacturers' championship. The crew of the No. 7 car and the works drivers Felipe Nasr and Dane Cameron lead the team and drivers' championships with a clear buffer of 93 points. Nick Tandy and Mathieu Jaminet currently rank third. Porsche now ranks first in the IMSA Michelin Endurance Cup, a special classification that includes the five longest races of the year.

JDC-Miller MotorSports customer team dominates in the early phase

The customer team JDC-Miller MotorSports put in an inspired drive during the first hour of the Watkins Glen race. After planting the No. 85 Porsche 963 on P4 in qualifying on Saturday, Phil Hanson set a blistering pace in his opening stint. In the first two laps, the UK driver swept past two rivals and

promptly catapulted the bright yellow hybrid prototype into the lead.

His teammate Tijmen van der Helm, however, was unable to maintain this position, and bad luck hit Richard Westbrook two hours before the flag. While driving out of the pit lane, the Englishman accidentally knocked over the RFID system of tyre partner Michelin. Consequently, he was handed a five-minute penalty, which heralded the end of his dream of victory. Proton Competition's identical car took the flag in seventh place overall without any major incidents.

GT classes: Wright Motorsport's Porsche 911 GT3 R stripped of podium spot

In the GTD class, Wright Motorsport's Porsche 911 GT3 R crossed the finish line in second place after six hours – only for the team with drivers Adam Adelson, Eliott Skeer and Jan Heylen to lose its podium place shortly afterwards. The crew of the No. 120 car had violated the regulations regarding the minimum driving time. Wright Motorsport's 911 was relegated to 21st place, with the identical cars from MDK Motorsports and Andretti Motorsports taking the flag in ninth and eleventh positions. In the GTD Pro class, AO Racing's 911 GT3 R dubbed "Rexy" finished sixth. As a result, Sebastian Priaulx and the former Porsche Junior Laurin Heinrich defended their championship lead.

Round seven of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship season will be contested on the second weekend in July at the Canadian Tire Motorsport Park – however, only the two GT classes and the LMP2 category will compete there. The next outing for Porsche Penske Motorsport's two Porsche 963 and the identical cars from the customer teams will be at Road America in Elkhart Lake on 4 August.

Drivers' comments after the race

Dane Cameron (Porsche 963 #7): "It's wonderful to win at Watkins Glen and to have the sister car on the podium as well. This victory is a huge step for us in terms of our championship ambitions. Ten years ago, I celebrated a class win at Watkins Glen – now I've finally clinched overall victory. What a fantastic feeling."

Felipe Nasr (Porsche 963 #6): "This victory comes at just the right time, as we're now entering the hot phase in the bid for the championship title. It was an enormous challenge for our team in these chaotic conditions but the crew handled it masterfully. Everyone stayed calm and made smart decisions – just fantastic. I can't wait for the next race."

Nick Tandy (Porsche 963 #6): "Both cars on the podium – what a result. The race was extremely interesting. So much happened. At the end of the day, we had two really fast Porsche 963 for the final sprint to the finish and we scored a heap of points. These last few days at Watkins Glen were a

welcome change after our not-so-favourable experience at Le Mans."

Richard Westbrook (Porsche 963 #85): "I'm incredibly disappointed. After we switched to wet tyres, I had to adjust the steering wheel on the way out. That's when I made the mistake and nudged Michelin's ID system. I had expected to get a drive-through penalty, but the five-minute penalty was a killer for us. There was nothing we could do. I feel so sorry for the team, especially since our car was so strong this weekend. It's a super bitter pill to swallow."

Laurin Heinrich (Porsche 911 GT3 R #77): "After our wins at Laguna Seca and Detroit, our spirits and expectations were high coming to Watkins Glen. Nevertheless, we always knew that the racetrack wasn't the best fit for our 911 GT3 R. We were running among the top three at times but lost a lot of ground due to making the wrong tyre decision, among other factors. Ultimately, it was the last-ditch sprint that resulted in sixth place for us. At least we defended our lead in the championship."

Adam Adelson (Porsche 911 GT3 R #120): "We put in an outstanding performance as a team, and I think I drove my best stint ever today. As always, my teammates Elliott and Jan were great. Unfortunately, the red flags thwarted our plan and ultimately meant that we broke the rules regarding driving times. I don't quite know how to deal with that now. I think we would've deserved second place."

Race result

GTP class:
1. Cameron/Nasr (USA/BR), Porsche 963 #7, 148 laps
2. Bourdais/van der Zande (F/NL), Cadillac #01, + 0.749 seconds
3. Jaminet/Tandy (F/UK), Porsche 963 #6, + 2.819 seconds
7. Bruni/Viscaal (I/NL), Porsche 963 #5, 1 lap down
9. Hanson/Van der Helm/Westbrook (UK/NL/UK), Porsche 963 #85, 2 laps down

GTD-Pro class:
1. Gunn/Riberas (UK/E), Aston Martin #23, 140 laps
2. Kirchhöfer/Jarvis (CH/UK), McLaren #9, + 1.340 seconds
3. Garcia/Sims (E/UK), Corvette #3, + 2.517 seconds
5. Heinrich/Priaulx (D/UK), Porsche 911 GT3 R #77, + 3.976 seconds

GTD class:
1. Ward/Ellis/Dontje (USA/UK/NL), Mercedes-AMG #57, 140 laps
2. Franco/Costa/Sbirrazzuoli (USA/E/MC), Ferrari #34, + 1.651 seconds
3. Potter/Lally/Pumpelly (USA/USA/USA), Aston Martin #44, + 2.891 seconds
7. Li/Fjordbach/Bachler (CHN/DK/A), Porsche 911 GT3 R #86, + 10.276 seconds
8. Andretti/Chaves/Hargrove (USA/USA/CDN), Porsche 911 GT3 R #43, + 14.971 seconds
21. Adelson/Skeer/Heylen (USA/USA/USA), Porsche 911 GT3 R #120, + 0.884 seconds

Full results and championship standings https://imsa.alkamelsystems.com.

Qualifying

The Porsche 963 fielded by the customer team JDC-Miller MotorSports will tackle the 6-hour race at Watkins Glen from the fourth grid spot. In the hunt for top times on Saturday, Phil Hanson from the UK narrowly outpaced Porsche Penske Motorsport's two works cars. Frenchman Mathieu Jaminet and Felipe Nasr from Brazil qualified in positions five and six. Proton Competition's identical hybrid prototype will line up on the grid for round six of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship season in tenth place.

The works team opted for different strategies for its two Porsche 963 racing cars during the qualifying. As soon as the session got the green light, Felipe Nasr went straight out onto the track in his No. 7 car, while Mathieu Jaminet in the sister car initially waited in the pit lane. The Frenchman only joined the session in the No. 6 car after the first third of the 15-minute session. Nasr improved during his first four laps but was unable to advance further up the timesheets. Jaminet set his best time shortly before the end of the session and pushed past his teammate. Both works drivers, however, were slightly behind Phil Hanson, who put in an inspired drive at the wheel of the yellow No. 85 customer 963.

“Congratulations to our JDC-Miller MotorSports customer squad. What a brilliant performance,” concludes Urs Kuratle. The Director of Factory Motorsport LMDh adds: “We'd have preferred to have finished further up the timesheets with our two Porsche Penske Motorsport 963. Our drivers were quite satisfied with the handling of their cars, however, there are a few things we need to take a good look at before the race begins. A lot can happen in the six-hour race on Sunday.”

“That was a fiercely contested qualifying session on the spectacular Watkins Glen course,” states Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport. “Mathieu and Felipe did a good job. Positions five and six are okay. We'll be right in the middle of it and have six hours on race day to work our way up the order as far as possible.”

GT classes: Porsche 911 GT3 R off the pace in qualifying

AO Racing's Porsche 911 GT3 R experienced difficulties in the GTD Pro class during qualifying. UK driver Sebastian Priaulx turned the eighth quickest time at the wheel of the “Rexy” 911. The American Porsche customer team had won its class at the previous races in Laguna Seca and Detroit and is currently leading the rankings. In the GTD category, the three ca. 415 kW (565 PS) cars fielded by Wright Motorsports, Andretti Motorsports and MDK Motorsports qualified in 13th, 20th and 21st respectively.

Round six on the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship calendar at the Watkins Glen International racetrack is contested over six hours. The long-distance event is part of the Michelin

Endurance Cup – a special classification that includes the five longest races of the year. The race gets underway on Sunday, 23 June at 11:10 hrs local time (17:10 hrs CEST). Outside of North America, the race can be watched over the entire distance in a free live stream on IMSA.tv.

Drivers' comments post-qualifying

Mathieu Jaminet (Porsche 963 #6): "Fifth is not what I'd hoped for. I'm sure we could've done better. I made a minor error on my flying lap. An unnecessary gear change in the last corner hampered me from advancing to third place. Still, your grid position isn't so important. Our car will be stronger in the race than it was on a single flying qualifying lap. I'm curious to see how the weather develops. We might be in for a wet race day."

Felipe Nasr (Porsche 963 #7): "I tried everything. I reckon our car still understeers a little too much. That doesn't feel great when you're attempting your flying lap. On the other hand, such vehicle handling is good for Sunday's long race. I'm confident that we can pull something out of the hat. Weather, strategy, tyre durability – many factors will play a very important role in the fight for victory."

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 963 #5): "We've made noticeable improvements to our car compared to the first free practice session. The grip during qualifying was pretty good and my hot lap was clean. We're still experiencing issues with the rear axle – we're sliding around too much. Now we'll take a close look at the data and hope to make some improvements for race day."

Phil Hanson (Porsche 963 #85): "My goal wasn't about qualifying ahead of the works cars – it's always about going for pole position. I wasn't that far off. The car felt great. I got a clean qualifying lap – and a spot on the second grid row is our reward. In my last IMSA race at the Sebring 12 Hours, we didn't tap our full potential. We want to do things differently in the race tomorrow."

Sebastian Priaulx (Porsche 911 GT3 R #77): "I expected to do a bit better. It seems that we're a little behind when temperatures exceed 30 degrees Celsius. Other cars are obviously less sensitive to the high temperatures. We now just have to deal with it. I'm confident that we'll be extremely fast and consistent in the six-hour race. I don't doubt that we'll advance up the field. We're determined to defend our top ranking in the championship."

Qualifying result:

GTP class:

1. Deletraz/Taylor (CH/USA), Acura #40, 1:32,209 minutes
2. Bourdais/van der Zande (F/NL), Cadillac #01, + 0.038 seconds
3. Aitken/Blomqvist/Derani (UK/UK/BR), Cadillac #31, + 0.310 seconds
4. Hanson/Van der Helm/Westbrook (UK/NL/UK), Porsche 963 #85, + 0.316 seconds
5. Tandy/Jaminet (UK/F), Porsche 963 #6, + 0.370 seconds

6. Cameron/Nasr (USA/BR), Porsche 963 #7, + 0.439 seconds
10. Bruni/Viscaal (I/NL), Porsche 963 #5, + 0.714 seconds

GTD-Pro class:
1. Serra/Rigon (BR/I), Ferrari #62, 1:44.203 minutes
2. Garcia/Sims (E/UK), Corvette #3, + 0.114 seconds
3. Gunn/Riberas (UK/E), Aston Martin #23, + 0.184 seconds
8. Heinrich/Priaulx (D/UK), Porsche 911 GT3 R #77, + 0.826 seconds

GTD class:
1. Montecalvo/Thompson/Telitz (USA/CDN/USA), Lexus #12, 1:44.642 minutes
2. Triarsi/Scardina/Rovera (USA/USA/I), Ferrari #023, + 0.600 seconds
3. Skeen/Grenier/Koch (USA/CDN/USA), Mercedes-AMG #32, + 0.790 seconds
13. Adelson/Skeer/Heylen (USA/USA/B), Porsche 911 GT3 R #120, + 2.477 seconds
20. Andretti/Chaves/Hargrove (USA/COL/CDN), Porsche 911 GT3 R #43, + 4.475 seconds
21. Bachler/Fjordbach/Li (A/DK/CHN), Porsche 911 GT3 R #86, + 5.522 seconds

Preview

Porsche Penske Motorsport heads to round six of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship determined to continue its stellar form. The works team has unfailingly managed to claim a podium spot with at least one Porsche 963 at all races so far this season. Moreover, the outfit won the 24-hour races in Daytona and Laguna Seca. This puts Porsche at the top of the manufacturers' leaderboard ahead of the six-hour race in Watkins Glen. Porsche Penske Motorsport currently ranks first in the team standings, with Daytona winners Felipe Nasr and Dane Cameron leading the drivers' championship.

The time-honoured races on the Watkins Glen International circuit are contested over six hours. In addition to the endurance classics at Daytona, Sebring, Indianapolis and Road Atlanta, this event counts towards the Michelin Endurance Cup, a special classification within the IMSA championship. At the first Watkins Glen race for the 512 kW (696 PS) hybrid prototype from Weissach last year, the No. 6 car driven by Nick Tandy and Mathieu Jaminet crossed the finish line first. Shortly after the race, however, the vehicle was removed from the classification because the front skid wear was 0.1-millimetre outside the legal tolerance.

“Our Porsche 963 showed strong form last year in Watkins Glen. The circuit seems to suit us,” explains Urs Kuratle, Director Factory Motorsport LMDh. “In preparation for this year’s race, we went testing there with some other teams and manufacturers. From our perspective, the findings and results were good. I expect us to be at the very front again. We want to extend our lead in the championship and advance to the top of the IMSA Michelin Endurance Cup.”

Watkins Glen is the third major endurance event of the IMSA season. But at six hours it's one of the shorter races,” says Jonathan Diuguid. The Managing Director of Porsche Penske Motorsport adds: “Our

Porsche 963 was extremely quick there last year. In Watkins Glen, we're opting for the hardest tyre compound for the first time this season. We trialled it successfully in a test a few weeks ago. I think we're heading into the race weekend with a solid baseline. We aim to further consolidate our overall ranking at the top."

The race

The six-hour race in the US state of New York has its roots in the Grand Prix Watkins Glen, which was contested on public roads for the first time in 1948. Eight years later, it became a purpose-built permanent racetrack under the name Watkins Glen International. From 1961 to 1980, Formula One was contested regularly on the 5.47-kilometre course. At the same time, the endurance race became a regular fixture at the circuit, which features eleven turns and spectacular uphill and downhill passages.

To date, Porsche has notched up eleven overall victories at Watkins Glen. The course flows harmoniously through the forested and undulating landscape of the Finger Lakes, which lie close to the Canadian border. Fast and flowing with dramatic elevation changes make it a favourite among drivers. Like on almost all North American racetracks, Watkins Glen has very few run-off zones. This adds to the thrill for drivers and spectators alike.

Live stream of the race

Outside the USA and Canada, the race will be broadcast live over the full six-hour distance in a free stream on imsa.tv. The website scoring.imsa.com offers live timing. Round six of the season gets underway on Sunday, 23 June at 11:10 am local time (5:10 pm CEST).

Drivers' comments ahead of the race

Mathieu Jaminet (Porsche 963 #6): "We're coming straight from Le Mans to Watkins Glen. It's been an eventful month. Exhausting on the one hand, but also very enjoyable in sporting terms. We get to spend a lot of time in the cockpit of the 963 – that's always a pleasure. Last year we crossed the finish line first but were subsequently disqualified. So, we have a score to settle there. Looking at the past three IMSA races, it's striking – our number 6 car has scored the most points. We want to continue to progress in the championship."

Felipe Nasr (Porsche 963 #7):"The track at Watkins Glen flows wonderfully and includes some extremely high-speed corners. Our team is doing everything they can to optimally prepare for the event. We're looking to continue our strong run. We're currently leading the championship. That's the reward for all our hard work. Another victory at the endurance race in Watkins Glen would be a dream come true. We're doing our absolute utmost to stay at the top of the overall standings."

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 963 #5): "I'm delighted to have the opportunity to drive the Porsche 963 on such a fast and stunning track. Unfortunately, our team didn't go testing there. This means we need to learn as much as possible during the practice sessions to make up for our lack of experience. In that respect, the fact that there are only two of us sharing the cockpit is an advantage. We both get more track time."

Tijmen van der Helm (Porsche 963 #85): "We spent two days testing with the other teams at Watkins Glen a few weeks ago. That'll definitely help us start the race weekend better prepared than at other events. The Watkins Glen race is sure to offer us some good opportunities. Let's see what we can make of them."

Laurin Heinrich (Porsche 911 GT3 R #77): "I'm particularly excited for Watkins Glen. This track is very high on my list of dream circuits that I haven't yet driven. It's great to finally get to race there. After our recent class victories at Laguna Seca and Detroit, we're heading to 'The Glen' full of confidence. That being said, the track layout is essentially the opposite of that in Detroit – so we'll have to wait and see. We've always done well in the longer races, so I'm confident."

An overview of the drivers and teams

GTP class (Porsche 963)
Proton Competition #5: Gianmaria Bruni (I) / Bent Viscaal (NL)
Porsche Penske Motorsport #6: Mathieu Jaminet (F) / Nick Tandy (UK)
Porsche Penske Motorsport #7: Dane Cameron (USA) / Felipe Nasr (BR)
JDC-Miller MotorSports #85: Tijmen van der Helm (NL) / Richard Westbrook (UK) / Phil Hanson (UK)

GTD-Pro class (Porsche 911 GT3 R)
AO Racing #77: Laurin Heinrich (D) / Sebastian Priaulx (UK)

GTD class (Porsche 911 GT3 R)
Andretti Motorsports (#43): Jarett Andretti (USA) / Gabby Chaves (COL) / Scott Hargrove (CDN)
MDK Motorsports (#86); Anders Fjordbach (DK) / Kerong Li (CHN) / Klaus Bachler (A)
Wright Motorsports (#120): Adam Adelson (USA) / Elliott Skeer (USA) / Jan Heylen (B)

The schedule (local time, CEST -6 hours)

Friday, 21 June
13:25 – 14:55 hrs: Free practice 1

Saturday, 22 June
09:10 – 10:40 hrs: Free practice 2
15:30 – 15:45 hrs: Qualifying GTD-Pro / GTD

16:15 – 16:30 hrs: Qualifying GTP

Sunday, 23 June
11:10 – 17:10 hrs: Race

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



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Video

https://newstv.porsche.com/porschevideos/287657_en_3000000.mp4
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Image Sublines

Path: Porsche Penske Motorsport wins the 6-hour race in Watkins Glen/Images/img_3.jpg
Title: Tijmen van der Helm (NL), Richard Westbrook (UK), Phil Hanson (UK), JDC-Miller MotorSports (#85), Porsche 963, IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, Race 6, Watkins Glen, 2024, Porsche AG
Subline: JDC-Miller MotorSports customer team

Path: Porsche Penske Motorsport wins the 6-hour race in Watkins Glen/Images/img_4.jpg
Title: Laurin Heinrich (D), Sebastian Priaulx (UK), AO Racing (#77), Porsche 911 GT3 R, IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, Race 6, Watkins Glen, 2024, Porsche AG
Subline: AO Racing

Path: Porsche Penske Motorsport wins the 6-hour race in Watkins Glen/Images/img_6.jpg
Title: Urs Kuratle, Director Factory Motorsport LMDh, IMSA, 2024, Porsche AG
Subline: Urs Kuratle

Path: Porsche Penske Motorsport wins the 6-hour race in Watkins Glen/Images/img_7.jpg
Title: Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport, IMSA, 2024, Porsche AG
Subline: Jonathan Diuguid

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