

Strong performance earns Porsche Penske Motorsport another podium spot

21/04/2024 The Porsche 963 shared by works drivers Dane Cameron from the USA and Felipe Nasr from Brazil wrapped up the 100-minute race in Long Beach on the podium. The two winners of the Daytona season opener clinched third place at round three of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship.

The race

This makes the duo the sole leaders of the drivers' championship. The sister car driven by Nick Tandy (United Kingdom) and Mathieu Jaminet (France) finished fourth. The customer-run hybrid cars fielded by Proton Competition and JDC-Miller MotorSports concluded the city race in positions five and seven respectively.

In bright sunshine and temperatures of around 22 degrees Celsius, the IMSA championship once again offered fans in the packed grandstands some action-packed racing. After just eleven minutes, the safety car was deployed for the first time following an incident. Shortly after, both of the works team's Porsche 963 racers made their first and only pit stop. This clever strategy bore fruit for Porsche Penske Motorsport: The two hybrid racing cars advanced to positions three and four.

Initially, Mathieu Jaminet remained on course for a podium result at the wheel of the No. 6 car, only to be hampered by an incident with around 20 minutes of racing to go. While lapping a GT vehicle, the Frenchman's Porsche spun, opening the way for Felipe Nasr to slip past in the sister car. The two works vehicles crossed the finish line in this order. After its victory at Daytona and third place in Sebring, Porsche Penske Motorsport continues its podium streak.

"Congratulations to our IMSA team and to everyone who has contributed to our podium success with the Porsche 963," explains Thomas Laudenbach, Vice President Porsche Motorsport. "The sprint through the streets of Long Beach was once again a spectacular event this year – a celebration for fans and participants alike. Our Porsche Penske Motorsport works team again delivered a flawless performance and reaped the well-deserved rewards. Thanks to today's success, we have further strengthened our position in the drivers' and teams' championships. May it continue like this in tomorrow's FIA WEC race in Imola!"

"What a great day for our team in Long Beach," states Jonathan Diuguid. The Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport adds: "Compared to qualifying, we've worked our way up the order with both cars, and our No. 7 has continued its series of podium finishes. Our team did a first-class job with the pit stops. We'd hoped to make further progress through our strategy but unfortunately that didn't work out. Still, we can live with the overall result."

Cameron and Nasr are now the sole leaders in the drivers' championship with 1,032 points. In the team classification, the No. 7 crew is leading. In the manufacturers' championship, Porsche ranks second after the third race of the season.

The customer squads Proton Competition and JDC-Miller MotorSports underlined the huge potential of the Porsche 963 with positions five and seven. In the GTD class, however, Porsche Motorsport's partners struggled: The two Porsche 911 GT3 R campaigned by Andretti Motorsports and MDK Motorsports finished the race in ninth and 13th place, while the identical model fielded by Wright Motorsport was eliminated after just nine laps when an accident shunted it out of contention.

Round four of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship will be contested on 12 May at the Laguna Seca Raceway close to the California harbour city of Monterey.

Drivers' comments after the race

Felipe Nasr (Porsche 963 #7): "That was an extremely challenging race. We managed to get back on

track for the podium at the last minute. The team played a major part in this because the strategy was perfect and it helped us a lot. At times I had to fend off attacks from the competition but it worked brilliantly. We climbed the winners' podium again and took home a lot of points. That was important and good."

Mathieu Jaminet (Porsche 963 #6): "We had a great strategy and a truly fast car. I was strong in third place for long stretches until a GT car sent me spinning in the last corner. I could say goodbye to the anticipated podium finish. At least I was able to maintain a decent pace and successfully limit the damage. We started from fourth on the grid and finished fourth. We're eager to finally take home major trophies at the next race in Laguna Seca."

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 963 #5): "Our car was significantly better in the race than in qualifying. We're a small customer team and were still able to match the pace of the factory cars – that's something to celebrate. Our team tweaked the setup of the Porsche 963 overnight and it was perfect. I really enjoyed working alongside Mike Rockenfeller this weekend. Now I'm looking forward to the next race, where we want to continue our good form."

Richard Westbrook (Porsche 963 #85): "It was a typical racing battle on a street circuit. At least we achieved a decent result. We could've certainly done a bit better because our car was incredibly fast. The entire weekend in Long Beach was positive for us. We're systematically working our way forward. Minor issues prevented an even better result here. There's no doubt at all about the speed of the car. Knowing this, we can now travel with confidence to the next race in Laguna Seca."

Race result

GTP class:
1. Bourdais/Van der Zande (F/NL), Cadillac #01, 68 laps
2. Derani/Aitken (BR/UK), Cadillac #31, + 0.546 seconds
3. Nasr/Cameron (BR/USA), Porsche 963 #7, + 1.675 seconds
4. Jaminet/Tandy (F/UK), Porsche 963 #6, + 2.913 seconds
5. Bruni/Rockenfeller (I/D), Porsche 963 #5, + 4.297 seconds
7. Van der Helm/Westbrook (NL/UK), Porsche 963 #85, + 6.892 seconds

GTD class:
1. Barnicoat/Thompson (UK/CDN), Lexus #89, 65 laps
2. Foley/Gallagher (USA/USA), BMW #96, + 1.449 seconds
3. Skeen/Grenier (USA/CDN), Mercedes-AMG #32, + 2.194 seconds
9. Andretti/Chaves (USA/USA), Porsche 911 GT3 R #43, + 7.227 seconds
13. Li/Fjordbach (CHN/DK), Porsche 911 GT3 R #86, + 1 lap
DNF. Adelson/Skeer (USA/USA), Porsche 911 GT3 R #120, + 57 laps

Qualifying

The No. 6 Porsche 963 fielded by the Porsche Penske Motorsport works team heads into the Long Beach city race of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship from position four. In the 15-minute session, British works driver Nick Tandy qualified on the second grid row. His Porsche teammate Dane Cameron from the USA scored P5 at the wheel of the No. 7 sister car. The customer 963 racers run by JDC-Miller MotorSports and Proton Competition tackle race three of 2024 from seventh and tenth place respectively.

In sunny spring weather and air temperatures of 18 degrees Celsius, the two Porsche 963 race cars from the Porsche Penske Motorsport works team topped the timesheets halfway through the qualifying session. In the remaining time, however, both hybrid racing cars from Weissach were unable to match the pace of some of their rivals. Tandy was the only driver to improve his time slightly shortly before the end of qualifying, handing him and his teammate Mathieu Jaminet (France) fourth place.

“We put in a strong performance as a team,” says Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport. “What I find most satisfying is the fact that we’ve made significant progress in terms of vehicle balance since last year. Nick and Dane made the most of the potential in qualifying. Our car is pretty easy on the tyres, which makes me confident for tomorrow’s race. We aim to win again in Long Beach.”

Dutchman Tijmen van der Helm put in an impressive drive at the wheel of the No. 85 car fielded by the JDC-Miller MotorSports customer team. The 20-year-old picked up speed as the qualifying progressed and by the end of the session, he was only two-tenths of a second behind the factory cars in seventh place. Germany’s Mike Rockenfeller planted Proton Competition’s No. 5 car on the tenth grid spot.

In the GTD class, the customer teams experienced a difficult qualifying with their Porsche 911 GT3 R. The GT3 racing vehicles from Wright Motorsports, Andretti Motorsports and MDK Motorsports will contest the city race outside Los Angeles from positions eleven, 13 and 14.

Round three of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship season gets underway on Saturday, 20 April at 1:35 pm local time (10:35 pm CEST). The GTP and GTD classes contest the sprint through the streets of Long Beach. The GTD Pro category with AO Racing’s Porsche 911 GT3 R will not compete again until round four of the year at Laguna Seca on 12 May.

Qualifying result:

GTP class:
1. Derani/Aitken (BR/UK), Cadillac #31, 1:11.388 min.
2. De Phillippi/Yelloly (USA/UK), BMW #25, 1:11.397 min.
3. Bourdais/Van der Zande (F/NL), Cadillac #01, 1:11.411 min.

4. Jaminet/Tandy (F/UK), Porsche 963 #6, 1:11.629 min.
5. Nasr/Cameron (BR/USA), Porsche 963 #7, 1:11.741 min.
7. Van der Helm/Westbrook (NL/UK), Porsche 963 #85, 1:11.930 min.
10. Bruni/Rockenfeller (I/D), Porsche 963 #5, 1:13.143 min.

GTD class:
1. Barnicoat/Thompson (UK/CDN), Lexus #89, 1:17.357 min.
2. Montecalvo/Hawksworth (USA/UK), Lexus #12, 1:17.619 min.
3. Franco/Costa (USA/E), Lamborghini #34, 1:17.679 min.
11. Adelson/Skeer (USA/USA), Porsche 911 GT3 R #120, 1:18.457 min.
13. Andretti/Chavez (USA/USA), Porsche 911 GT3 R #43, 1:19.335 min.
14. Li/Fjordbach (CHN/DK), Porsche 911 GT3 R #86, 1:19.901 min.

Full results on https://imsa.alkamelsystems.com

Drivers' post-qualifying quotes

Nick Tandy (Porsche 963 #6): "All in all, we had a good day. The fact that we have both cars on the first five grid positions makes me optimistic for the race. Once again, the great progress that we've made since last year is obvious. For us, everything ran extremely cleanly and without any issues. Now we're looking forward to an exciting race. There's always a lot going on in Long Beach. After our great Friday, we want to experience an even better Saturday."

Dane Cameron (Porsche 963 #7): "That was my first qualifying in what felt like ages. I've never taken part in a qualifying session in Long Beach so I didn't really know what to expect. It was okay in the end. Compared to 2023, we're significantly closer to the fastest times. Everything needs to run flawlessly on race day: from pit stops to driver changes and strategy. If we can do that, then anything's possible!"

Mike Rockenfeller (Porsche 963 #5): "Climbing into the car in Long Beach without any real preparation is anything but easy. The circuit is great. Unfortunately, we haven't yet found the best setup for our Porsche 963 – at least when it comes to a single flying lap. I think we'll look a little better in the race. We're a bit too far from the top, but we aim to work our way up."

Tijmen van der Helm (Porsche 963 #85): "Our performance as a team was strong. I think we still have some room for improvement. In the race, the distance to the front should be less. We're getting closer and closer and constantly learning. Our goal is clear: we want to fight at the top soon. Our path so far looks promising."

Preview

This coming Saturday (20 April), Porsche Penske Motorsport will race through the streets of Long

Beach with two Porsche 963. In 2023, the German sports car brand's new hybrid prototype achieved its maiden win on the spectacular street circuit. Porsche travels to round three of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship season as the series leader. Thanks to its victory at the Daytona season opener and another podium result in Sebring, Porsche Penske Motorsport are joint leaders at the top of the manufacturers' standings heading into the Long Beach race.

After the 24-hour race in Daytona and the twelve-hour race in Sebring, Long Beach will host a short 100-minute sprint. Last year the IMSA team showed its full potential here. UK driver Nick Tandy and Mathieu Jaminet from France clinched the first race victory for the Porsche 963 thanks to a brilliant tactical masterstroke by the team. The outfit now aims to repeat this success next weekend.

"The race in Long Beach was a major milestone for us last year. The first victory with our new car, both vehicles on the podium – simply fantastic," recalls Thomas Laudenbach. The Vice President of Porsche Motorsport added: "Our goal is to repeat such a success and defend our championship lead. After two real long-distance races, we're now facing a short sprint on a spectacular street circuit. The conditions are completely different than at Daytona and Sebring, but we are perfectly prepared."

"The streets of Long Beach are a special place for the Porsche Penske Motorsport team. It's here that we took the first-ever win for the Porsche 963," explains Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director of Porsche Penske Motorsport. "This is the first of the shorter format races and it will take perfect execution by the team and the drivers to repeat last year's triumph. Our global team has been performing at a very high level in 2024, and we look forward to the next challenge."

The race

The Long Beach Grand Prix Circuit hosts round three of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship. The 3.167-kilometre street circuit features eleven turns and is regarded as the American equivalent of the Monaco Grand Prix. The Long Beach Street Course runs in a clockwise direction around the Convention Center. Its special features include the sweeping start-finish straight along the Pacific coast and the sharp right-hander at the end of the lap.

Along with the Detroit Grand Prix in June, the sprint over 100 minutes is the shortest race of the year. The temporary circuit has served as a racetrack since 1975 and hosted Formula 1 eight times between 1976 and 1983. On the third weekend in April, the popular American IndyCar series will also be contested at Long Beach, in which Penske Motorsport is represented with three cars.

Drivers' comments ahead of the race

Mathieu Jaminet (Porsche 963 #6): "Since the end of last year, we've struck bad luck with our number 6 car – on the way to possible success, we were hampered by one thing or another at the 2023 season finale and in the first two races of this year. Let's hope that changes. Twelve months ago we won in

Long Beach thanks to first-class tactics. At that time we were down to the last tread on our tyres. This season we are competing with a new product from Michelin. Let's see how the modified tyre will hold up in Long Beach. I'm really looking forward to the race and I'm determined to go home with as big a trophy as possible at the end."

Dane Cameron (Porsche 963 #7):"After the two longest races of the year, now comes the shortest of the entire season. That's always a bit of a shock on the IMSA calendar. I really like the special challenges that the Long Beach street circuit throws at us. In 2023 I was racing in the FIA WEC and so I missed this sprint – such a shame. The narrow circuit takes no prisoners when you make a mistake. If we get over the distance cleanly, we'll hopefully have a chance of scoring our second win of the season."

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 963 #5): "The last time I was in Long Beach was in 2010. Back then the racing series was still called the American Le Mans Series – that was a long time ago! At last, I get the chance to push the Porsche 963 to the limit on a street circuit. The track is steeped in tradition and simply wonderful. Driving a Le Mans prototype there will be truly spectacular. I need to prepare for the twisty course in the race simulator over the coming days. I'm very excited to see what we'll achieve there."

Richard Westbrook (Porsche 963 #85): "Long Beach is something completely different than the venues of the first two races of the season. But there are parallels when it comes to the setup: the track is about as bumpy as Sebring but a street circuit doesn't have many direction changes. The race only lasts 100 minutes so it's not a classic endurance event. Our GTP cars can drive around 55 minutes per stint so I expect it'll be a classic one-stop race for everyone – it's a shame really because this leaves little room for different strategies. Tyre durability is the focus. In Long Beach, I hope we can maintain the same good pace as in Sebring."

An overview of the drivers and teams

GTP class (Porsche 963)
Proton Competition #5: Gianmaria Bruni (I) / Mike Rockenfeller (D)
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)

GTD class (Porsche 911 GT3 R)
Andretti Motorsports #43: Jarett Andretti (USA) / Gabby Chaves (COL)
MDK Motorsports #86: Anders Fjordbach (DK) / Kerong Li (CHN)
Wright Motorsports #120: Adam Adelson (USA) / Elliott Skeer (USA)

The schedule (local time, CEST -9 hours)

Friday, 19 April
09:00 hrs – 10:00 hrs: Free practice 1
12:50 hrs – 14:20 hrs: Free practice 2
17:00 hrs – 17:15 hrs: Qualifying GTD class
17:25 hrs – 17:40 hrs: Qualifying GTP class

Saturday, 20 April
13:35 hrs – 15:15 hrs: Race

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Path: Strong performance earns Porsche Penske Motorsport another podium spot/Images/img_2.jpg
Title: Dane Cameron (USA), Felipe Nasr (BR), Porsche Penske Motorsport (#7) (l-r), IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, Race 3, Long Beach, USA, 2024, Porsche AG
Subline: Dane Cameron and Felipe Nasr

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Subline: JDC-Miller MotorSports

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Subline: Thomas Laudenbach, Vice President of Porsche Motorsport

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Subline: Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director of Porsche Penske Motorsport

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