

Best Porsche 911 GT3 R finishes fifth at the 12 Hours of Sebring

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20/03/2022 The Porsche 911 GT3 R crewed by Matt Campbell from Australia, Mathieu Jaminet from France and Felipe Nasr from Brazil has finished the 12 Hours of Sebring in fifth place.

The race

For the trio sharing the cockpit of Pfaff Motorsports' No. 9 entry, this result is enough to retain their lead in the GTD Pro class of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship. The identical model fielded by WeatherTech Racing crossed the finish line in P6.

Despite the seven caution phases, the 70th edition of the endurance classic turned out to be uncharacteristically static. In air temperatures of over 30 degrees Celsius in the Florida “Sunshine

State", the positions in the GT class were set shortly after the start. All of Porsche's strong and experienced customer teams put in flawless performances and implemented great strategies, but the cars never came within striking distance of the podium.

"After the class victories at Daytona and last year's win at Sebring, we'd expected more. Unfortunately, the performance of the Porsche 911 GT3 R wasn't what we'd hoped for," concludes Thomas Laudenbach, Vice President Porsche Motorsport. "We'll take a close look at reasons behind these disappointing performances. Facing fierce competition in the two GTD classes, our strong customer teams never gave up and they gave their utmost to the very last lap. That deserves our highest respect. I'm positive that our 911 GT3 R will be at the top again at the upcoming race in Long Beach."

"We're disappointed – obviously," states Sebastian Golz. The Porsche 911 GT3 R Project Manager adds: "Once again, our customer teams did a great job. Unfortunately, in today's race, our car wasn't as competitive as usual. We'll take a good look at whether this was due to the high temperatures or the grip conditions on the track. We're not happy with this result, but we're still confident about the upcoming races. And you mustn't forget, Porsche is the most successful manufacturer at the Sebring race. We have 100 class wins to our credit – more than all other manufacturers combined."

In the GTD category, the American Rob Ferriol, Britain's Katherine Legge and her fellow countryman Stefan Wilson finished in eighth place. After being dealt a setback in free practice, the Hardpoint squad made an impressive comeback in the race. The 367 kW (500 PS) nine-eleven (No. 99) was irreparably damaged after an accident on Thursday. The crew from the US state of Virginia built a replacement chassis in time for the start of the 12-hour race. Bad luck plagued the Daytona-winning team Wright Motorsports. Start driver Zacharie Robichon from Canada, who had planted the No. 16 car on pole position in the GTD class the previous day, came into the pits after just three laps. The technicians discovered a defect in the differential. The repairs, which took over 30 minutes, threw the outfit from the US state of Ohio 18 laps behind. Wright Motorsports' 911 GT3 R ultimately took the flag in tenth place.

Round three of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship on 10 April will be contested on the spectacular street circuit in the Californian port city of Long Beach.

Drivers' comments on the race

Mathieu Jaminet (Porsche 911 GT3 R #9): "Fifth place was the most we could achieve today. It was already clear in qualifying that it wasn't going to be easy. Unfortunately, it turned out to be even worse in the race. We just didn't have the necessary pace. We need to carefully analyse this result and react accordingly. I'm certain that we'll be fighting for the podium again at the upcoming Long Beach race."

Alessio Picariello (Porsche 911 GT3 R #79): "We never really got up to speed the whole weekend. Our race was flawless, without incidents, without mistakes and with really quick pit stops. Our team and drivers did everything possible. Unfortunately, we simply weren't the fastest on the track today."

Rob Ferriol (Porsche 911 GT3 R #99): "It wasn't our best Sebring result, but 24 hours before the race we pretty much didn't have a car. Our team built a replacement vehicle in practically no time at all and everything worked. That's a huge compliment for Porsche. You take the parts that still work from a crashed car, put them on another chassis, start from the back of the grid and finish in the top ten in the toughest race of the season. That's incredible. Hats off to our team, who demonstrated they can overcome even the greatest challenges."

Zacharie Robichon (Porsche 911 GT3 R #16): "Lately, we've always been lucky and had a really great run. It was clear that this had to end at some point. Of course, it was a real shame that this happened only a few minutes into the Sebring race. The defect threw us back a long way, but we never gave up. Our team repaired the car quickly, we caught up and finished in the top ten. Not the desired result, but that's what happens sometimes."

Results

Result GTD-Pro class
1. Garcia/Taylor/Catsburg (E/USA/NL), Corvette C8.R GTD #3, 323 laps
2. Bortolotti/Mapelli/Caldarelli (I/I/I), Lamborghini Huracan GT3 #63, 323 laps
3. MacNeil/Engel/Gounon (USA/D/F), Mercedes-AMG GT3 #97, 322 laps
5. Campbell/Jaminet/Nasr (AUS/F/BR), Porsche 911 GT3 R #9, 322 laps
6. Andlauer/Picariello/MacNeil (F/B/USA), Porsche 911 GT3 R #79, 322 laps

Result GTD class
1. Lacorte/Sernagiotto/Fuoco (I/I/I), Ferrari 488 GT3 #47, 321 laps
2. Skeen/McAleer/Juncadella (USA/GB/E), Mercedes-AMG GT3 #32, 321 laps
3. Mann/Perez Companc/Vilander (USA/ARG/FIN), Ferrari 488 GT3 #21, 321 laps
8. Ferriol/Legge/Wilson (USA/GB/GB), Porsche 911 GT3 R #88, 318 laps
10. Hardwick/Heylen/Robichon (USA/B/CDN), Porsche 911 GT3 R #16, 305 laps

The qualifiying

Porsche customer teams head to the 12 Hours of Sebring as the leaders of the GTD-Pro and GTD classes. Four Porsche 911 GT3 R racing cars will tackle round two of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship. For the race, the Canadian shares driving duties in the nine-eleven with Jan Heylen from Belgium and Ryan Hardwick from the USA. In January, the trio had won the 24 Hours of Daytona with Porsche works driver Richard Lietz (Austria) and thus took the lead of the championship. The two 911 GT3 R in the GTD-Pro class qualified on positions five and ten.

"Congratulations to the Wright Motorsports customer squad. The grid position for the upcoming endurance classic is ideal," says Sebastian Golz, Project Manager Porsche 911 GT3 R. "In the GTD-Pro

class, the qualifying drivers from Pfaff Motorsports and WeatherTech Racing experienced a bit of bad luck with heavy traffic. The fact that the short 15-minute session was interrupted by red flags didn't help either. The race will be long and tough and the gaps in both classes are very close. It'll definitely be exciting and spectacular."

All three Porsche customer teams immediately went in pursuit of top times

In temperatures of 19 degrees Celsius and a light mist over the 6.02-kilometre racetrack in Florida, all three Porsche customer teams immediately went in pursuit of top times. However, a damaged vehicle interrupted the session early on. When the track finally went green again with six minutes left on the clock, Zacharie Robichon was ready: On the storied racetrack, famed for its gruelling bumps, the Canadian made the best use of his tyres to turn the fastest time in 1:59.763 minutes. In the GTD-Pro class, the Australian Matt Campbell scored P5 in Pfaff Motorsports' No. 9 entry shortly before the finish. Julien Andlauer (France) was hampered by heavy traffic in WeatherTech Racing's No. 79 car and came tenth.

The American customer squad Hardpoint was unable to take part in qualifying for the 70th edition of the endurance classic in Florida. The No. 99 Porsche 911 GT3 R was damaged in an accident during free practice on Thursday evening. The team from the US state of Virginia are currently building a replacement chassis and will start the second race of the season from the back of the grid.

Drivers' qualifying quotes

Zacharie Robichon (Porsche 911 GT3 R #16): "It was clear before the start of our qualifying that the car was really good, but we still didn't really know how we would perform in one fast lap. I tackled the matter strategically and drove cautiously in the first couple of laps. When a clear run opened up, it was all or nothing. I only had this one chance without the pesky traffic – and everything came together perfectly! Pole position doesn't really play a major role in a 12-hour race, but it's a great feeling and it gives you extra motivation."

Matt Campbell (Porsche 911 GT3 R #9): "Fifth place is what we'd expected for the qualifying prior to the session. Obviously, we would've preferred pole position, but that wasn't realistic. We're satisfied because our car is well balanced. We now have the rest of the day to take another close look at the data. Perhaps we'll find an even better setup for the race. Let's see."

Julien Andlauer (Porsche 911 GT3 R #79): "I was held up by traffic but we also made some set-up adjustments prior to the qualifying. Unfortunately, that went in the wrong direction. We urgently need to make some noticeable improvements before the race starts, otherwise it'll be difficult. The balance isn't great, so the performance is currently not there. But I'm confident that we'll make good progress."

The results

Result GTD-Pro class
1. Serra/Rigon/Cheever (I/I/USA), Ferrari 488 GT3 #62, 1:59.414 minutes
2. Bortolotti/Mapelli/Caldarelli (I/I/I), Lamborghini Huracan GT3 #63, 1:59.431 minutes
3. Garcia/Taylor/Catsburg (E/USA/NL), Corvette C8.R GTD #3, 1:59.927 minutes
5. Campbell/Jaminet/Nasr (AUS/F/BR), Porsche 911 GT3 R #9, 1:59.982 minutes
10. Andlauer/Picariello/MacNeil (F/B/USA), Porsche 911 GT3 R #79, 2:00.951 minutes

Result GTD class
1. Hardwick/Heylen/Robichon (USA/B/CDN), Porsche 911 GT3 R #16, 1:59.763 minutes
2. Foley/Auberlen/Dinan (USA/USA/USA), BMW M4 GT3 #96, 1:59.788 minutes
3. Ward/Ellis/Dienst (USA/CH/D), Mercedes-AMG GT3 #57, 1:59.848 minutes
DNS. Ferriol/Legge/Wilson (USA/GB/GB), Porsche 911 GT3 R #88, no lap time

The preview

Porsche customer teams head to the 12 Hours of Sebring as the leaders of the GTD-Pro and GTD classes. Four Porsche 911 GT3 R racing cars will tackle round two of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship. Pfaff Motorsports and WeatherTech Racing will contest the GTD-Pro category. Wright Motorsports and the Hardpoint squad have entered their nine-elevens in the GTD class. The 70th running of the endurance classic in the US state of Florida counts towards the IMSA Michelin Endurance Cup, which also includes the races at Daytona, Watkins Glen and Road Atlanta.

The Sebring International Raceway throws major challenges at man and machine. About a third of the 6.02-kilometre racetrack consists of concrete slabs, which were previously part of the runway at the former Hendricks Army Airfield. The racetrack is known for its hefty bumps – especially on these sections. Due to this special feature, the racetrack located about 100 kilometres south of Orlando is often mentioned on social media with the hashtag #RespectTheBumps.

“320 laps, each six kilometres long – and at an average speed of almost 180 km/h. The stresses are huge. But more than anything else, the uneven track surface pushes the drivers and their vehicles to the limit,” explains Sebastian Golz, Project Manager Porsche 911 GT3 R. “Our car is fully developed, durable and competitive – we very clearly underlined this recently with our class wins at Daytona and also with Pfaff Motorsports’ victory at Sebring last year. So I’m convinced that our customer teams can again race at the front this coming weekend. I’m particularly excited about this year’s event. The season opener for our FIA WEC colleagues running the 911 RSR will be contested the day before, customer teams will field the new 718 Cayman GT4 RS Clubsport in the IMSA Michelin Pilot Challenge, plus the grid lineup for the Carrera Cup North America is huge. So many members of the Porsche family in one place - that will make it an emotional experience.”

The customer teams and drivers

In the new GTD-Pro class, the customer teams Pfaff Motorsports and WeatherTech Racing field one Porsche 911 GT3 R each for the whole 2022 season. The three works drivers Matt Campbell from Australia, Mathieu Jaminet from France and Felipe Nasr from Brazil, share driving duties in Pfaff Motorsports's No. 9 entry. The trio won the season-opening round at Daytona in late January and currently ranks first in the championship. For WeatherTech Racing, Julien Andlauer from France and Belgium's Alessio Picariello join forces with the American amateur racer Cooper MacNeil in the No. 79 car.

Two Porsche customer teams contest the GTD category. In this class, too, Porsche 911 GT3 R racing cars complying with the GT3 regulations are fielded. Wright Motorsports run the No. 16 car with drivers Jan Heylen from Belgium, Ryan Hardwick from the USA and Zacharie Robichon from Canada. Thanks to the class win at the opening round of the season at Daytona, the team from the US state of Ohio leads the championship as well as the IMSA Michelin Endurance Cup. British driver Katherine Legge teams up with her fellow countryman Stefan Wilson and the American Rob Ferriol to compete in the Hardpoint team's No. 99 entry.

An overview of the drivers and teams

GTD-Pro class:
#9 Pfaff Motorsports – Campbell (AUS) / Jaminet (F) / Nasr (BR)
#79 WeatherTech Racing – Andlauer (F) / Picariello (B) / MacNeil (USA)

GTD class:
#16 Wright Motorsports – Hardwick (USA) / Heylen (B) / Robichon (CDN)
#99 Team Hardpoint – Legge (GB) / Ferriol (USA) / Wilson (GB)

Live streaming of the race

The 12-hour race of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship on the Sebring International Raceway gets underway on Saturday, 19 March at 10:10 am local time (3:10 pm CET). The entire race can be viewed live outside the USA and Canada on www.imsa.com. Live timing of all sessions is available at scoring.imsa.com.

The schedule (local time, CET -5 hours)

Thursday, 17 March
10:15 – 11:45: Free practice 1

14:25 – 15:55: Free practice 2
19:45 – 21:15: Free practice 3

Friday, 18 March
8:55 – 9:10: Free practice 4
9:20 – 9:35: Qualifying

Saturday, 19 March
8:00 – 8:20: Warmup
10:10 – 22:10: Race

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



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