

Porsche Penske Motorsport eager to reclaim the lead at Road America

02/08/2023 Preview, IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, Round 8, Elkhart Lake (USA)

Preview

- Porsche Penske Motorsport targets second win of the season with the 963
- Proton Competition's hybrid prototype makes its IMSA debut in the GTP class
- A total of five Porsche 911 GT3 R tackle the two GTD classes
- New asphalt surface makes the spectacular Road America track even faster

Porsche Penske Motorsport is keen to return to its winning form in round eight of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship. In the 2:40-hour race at Road America in Wisconsin, the works team's two Porsche 963 are determined to again fight for podium places. For the first time, four of the

hybrid prototypes from Weissach will compete in the top class, GTP. In addition to the customer team JDC-Miller MotorSports, Proton Competition will field a Porsche 963 on the first weekend in August. In the two GTD classes, four partner teams will compete with a total of five Porsche 911 GT3 R cars.

Atlanta. Porsche Penske Motorsport heads to the eighth round of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship season with a clear goal. After some mediocre results recently, the team wants to build on the good performances from earlier in the year with the two Porsche 963 at Road America. In the 2:40-hour race on the Road America circuit, which is highly popular with fans and drivers, the two cars hope to finish on the podium and bring home a bundle of points towards the championship. In the team standings, the crew sharing the No. 6 factory car currently occupies fourth place. The gap to the top, however, is only 63 points. There are 350 points for a race win and 35 for pole position.

“After our unsatisfactory results in the FIA WEC and the IMSA series recently, we have to turn things around quickly,” asserts Thomas Laudenbach, Vice President of Porsche Motorsport. “We want to get back on the path to success, and at least achieve podium results. I’m confident that we’ll be able to match the pace of the competition in the GTP class at Road America. The race track is a big challenge for the drivers and engineers. I hope that we were able to gain a small advantage during our test drives in June and turn the full potential of the Porsche 963 into a top result.”

“The IMSA championship is heading into the home stretch, and Road America will be a crucial part as the Porsche Penske Motorsport team chases the GTP Championship over the final three races of the year,” describes Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport. “Road America will be a unique challenge as it has undergone a full repave in the offseason. This serves as a reset and erases some of the historical characteristics of this long and unique track. All of the notes from previous years won't directly apply. We had the ability to test in early June at the circuit to get some exposure to the ideal setup for the new surface, but the track surface will continue to evolve all the way up to the race weekend. Road America one of the most scenic and beautiful road courses in the country, so it would look good to have one of our Porsche 963s in Victory Lane and bring home a 1-2 finish for the entire organization.”

The race

Road America near the town of Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin is a favorite among many drivers. The 4.048-mile (6.515-kilometer) circuit featuring 14 turns blends perfectly into the parklike landscape. The undulating course offers several overtaking opportunities and several daring sections – one of which is the “kink” on the back straight, an extremely fast right-hander with minimal run-off zones. The facility, north of Milwaukee, was opened in 1955.

The extremely popular racetrack was resurfaced for the 2023 season and the already high average speeds of up to 133 mph (215 km/h) – based on 2022 DPi class qualifying – will rise. The enormous increase in grip became obvious in June during the IndyCar series appearance. The single-seater cars were three seconds faster per lap than last year.

The works cars

The cockpits of Porsche Penske Motorsport's two Porsche 963s will be crewed by this season's regular drivers with Englishman Nick Tandy and Frenchman Mathieu Jaminet sharing driving duties in the No. 6 car. At Long Beach in April, the duo claimed the first victory for Porsche's new LMDh prototype. Currently, Tandy and Jaminet occupy fourth place in the drivers' standings and are within striking distance of the top. Their brand colleagues Matt Campbell from Australia and Felipe Nasr from Brazil rank seventh with the No. 7 Porsche 963. Porsche currently sits fourth in the manufacturers' championship.

The customer teams

Also in the top GTP class, Proton Competition will field the Porsche 963 for the first time. The squad owned by the German entrepreneur and race driver Christian Ried will tackle Road America with works driver Gianmaria Bruni from Italy and the experienced UK driver Harry Tincknell. "During our debut with the Porsche 963 at the FIA WEC race in Monza, we learned a lot and our pace was immediately very good. We now want to use those insights in the IMSA series and get as far to the front of the field as possible at our first event," explains Ried. "We have a strong team and an experienced, fast driver crew. The ingredients for possible success should be there."

The customer team JDC-Miller MotorSports also contests the GTP class with another Porsche 963. Germany's Mike Rockenfeller and Dutchman Tijmen van der Helm take turns in the cockpit of the American team's hybrid prototype. The squad from Minneapolis, Minnesota, which finished the last two races in fourth place overall, regard the event at Elkhart Lake as a home race.

Pfaff Motorsports' Porsche 911 GT3 R race car will line up on the grid in the GTD Pro category. The No. 9 car fielded by the Canadian customer team is shared by Austrian Klaus Bachler and Patrick Pilet from France. Last year, the team finished second here. In the GTD class, three other customers campaign a total of four up to 515 HP GT3 cars from Weissach, Germany. Local Madison, Wisconsin based Kellymoss with Riley brings the No. 91 for Porsche Selected Driver Kay van Berlo (Netherlands) and Porsche Deluxe Carrera Cup North America Am class champion Alan Metni (Austin, Texas). The operation also fields the No. 92 for David Brule (West Palm Beach, Florida) and veteran Porsche one-make racer Alec Udell (The Woodlands, Texas). Wright Motorsports returns with the Volt Racing No. 77 for Alan Brynjolfsson (Tampa, Florida) and Trent Hindman (West Long Branch, New Jersey). The popular dinosaur inspired livery on AO Racing's No. 80 Porsche 911 GT3 R racer known as "Rexy" is entered with P.J. Hyett (Chicago, Illinois) and 2021 Porsche Deluxe Carrera Cup North America champion Seb Priaulx (UK) sharing driving duties.

Drivers' comments before the race

Mathieu Jaminet (Porsche Penske Motorsport, No. 6 Porsche 963): "We're currently fourth in the championship. That's not ideal, but at least the gaps to the front are relatively small. The first four crews are not separated by much at all. So, our goal must be to rake in as many points as possible at Road America to make up some positions in the drivers', teams' and manufacturers' standings. We've gone testing on the track and that'll be very helpful."

Matt Campbell (Porsche Penske Motorsport, No. 7 Porsche 963): "Road America is one of my favorite circuits in the USA. I always love driving there. We did a test at Road America right after the race weekend at Le Mans. That was hugely important because the track was re-paved at the beginning of the year. We gained some important insights in terms of performance but still have work ahead of us. Adapting the setup over the weekend for the race will be one of the keys to our success."

Gianmaria Bruni (No. 59 Proton Competition Porsche 963): "The event at Road America throws a huge challenge at us drivers and the entire team. After six years, I'm finally returning to the track where my great journey with Porsche began. I'm hugely grateful that Christian Ried and Porsche Motorsport are giving me this opportunity in the GTP class. I can't wait to tackle the IMSA Championship together with my colleague Harry in the Porsche 963."

Klaus Bachler (No. 9 Pfaff Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3 R): "Road America is the longest track on the IMSA series calendar and it's a really cool circuit. The fresh asphalt offers a lot of grip on the racing line, but if you stray from the line, it's extremely slippery. That'll be exciting when we overtake slower traffic. I'm hoping we can fight among the frontrunners with our Porsche 911 GT3 R. A class win would be perfect – in the context of the championship as well. We're currently in fourth place, but the gaps aren't big at all. Anything is still possible with a top result at Road America."

Overview of cars and drivers

GTP class (Porsche 963):

JDC-Miller MotorSports No. 5: Mike Rockenfeller (Germany) / Tijmen van der Helm (Netherlands)

Porsche Penske Motorsport No. 6: Mathieu Jaminet (France) / Nick Tandy (UK)

Porsche Penske Motorsport No. 7: Matt Campbell (Australia) / Felipe Nasr (Brazil)

Proton Competition No. 59: Gianmaria Bruni (Italy) / Harry Tincknell (UK)

GTD-Pro class (Porsche 911 GT3 R):

Pfaff Motorsports #9: Klaus Bachler (Austria) / Patrick Pilet (France)

GTD class (Porsche 911 GT3 R):

Wright Motorsports No. 77: Alan Brynjolfsson (USA) / Trent Hindman (USA)

AO Racing No. 80: PJ Hyett (USA) / Sebastian Priaulx (UK)

Kellymoss with Riley No. 91: Alan Metni (USA) / Kay van Berlo (Netherlands)

Kellymoss with Riley No. 92: David Brule (USA) / Alec Udell (USA)

The schedule (local time, CEST -7 hours)

Friday, 4 August
11:05 am – 12:35 pm: Free practice 1
3:15 pm – 5:00 pm: Free practice 2

Saturday, 5 August
1:15 pm – 1:30 pm: Qualifying GTD-Pro/GTD
2:05 pm – 2:25 pm: Qualifying GTP

Sunday, 6 August
08:00 am – 08:20 am: Warmup
10:10 am – 12:50 pm: Race (2:40 hours)

Further information, photo and video material are available on Porsche Newsroom: newsroom.porsche.com

The Twitter channel @PorscheRaces and Instagram @porsche.motorsport as well as @porschepenskemotorsport provides live updates from Porsche Motorsport with the latest information and photos from racetracks around the world.

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Luke Vandezande

Product Spokesperson 911 and 718 Boxster/Cayman, Motorsport and Brand Heritage
470-363-5001
luke.vandezande@porsche.us

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