

Porsche fields three works-963 at the 24 Hours of Le Mans

27/02/2023 The Porsche Penske Motorsport works team tackles the 24 Hours of Le Mans with three Porsche 963. Together with the two hypercar vehicles from the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC), the squad will also compete with a hybrid prototype from the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship.

For the major event on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the endurance classic, the factory team enlists personnel from both series. The customer squad Hertz Team JOTA has entered a fourth Porsche 963 to tackle the race on 10/11 June.

Porsche is determined to maximise its chances of scoring its 20th overall victory at the 24 Hours of Le Mans. To this end, the Porsche Penske Motorsport works team has entered a third Porsche 963 in the long-distance classic on 10/11 June. Today, the Le Mans organiser ACO has given the green light for the additional hybrid prototype. The vehicle tackles the race sporting the starting number 75. 2023 marks the 75th anniversary for the sports car manufacturer, with the Le Mans classic celebrating its 100th anniversary this year. The Hertz Team JOTA customer squad fields a fourth Porsche 963.

“Le Mans is the highlight of every endurance season – even more so this year in light of the 100th anniversary of the 24-hour race,” summarises Thomas Laudenbach. The Vice President Porsche Motorsport adds: “For us, it’s all about maximising our chances of scoring our 20th overall victory at Le Mans on the 75th anniversary of the Porsche brand. That's why we're fielding a third car. The history of the race has shown that the additional cars deployed are often the factor that ultimately tips the scales. We don't have to look far back in Porsche Motorsport's history to see evidence of this: in 2015, the third Porsche 919 Hybrid handed us victory at Le Mans.”

“While the choice to commit to Le Mans with three cars increases our chances, it also presents us with enormous challenges,” explains Urs Kuratle, Director Factory Motorsport LMDh. “We have to put together an additional crew and ship one of the IMSA cars to France and back again. On top of that, due to ongoing supply bottlenecks for certain assemblies, the parts supply might not be perfect. We want to do the best we can and shine in the 75th year of the Porsche brand and at the 100th anniversary of 24 Hours of Le Mans.”

“Since day one of Porsche Penske Motorsport, the 24 Hours of Le Mans has been our focus. The privilege of fielding a third Porsche 963 throws both logistical and operational challenges at us,” describes Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport. “Even when we set up our programme, we did so on the premise that we could expand it if need be. We are a global team with commitments in the World Endurance Championship and IMSA. We have highly trained and motivated personnel who support each other. Running a third car means that the participating team members from our IMSA crew will be in Germany and France for about four weeks. They’ll join forces with their colleagues from the WEC to prepare the cars and the relevant materials. Next up on the schedule is the test day and finally the race week. The IMSA calendar allows this without having to make any major concessions. We’ll have three cars on the grid that are prepared to exactly the same level.”

Sharing driving duties in the No. 5 Porsche 963 are Dane Cameron from the USA, Michael Christensen from Denmark and Frenchman Frédéric Makowiecki. Helming the No. 6 sister car are Kévin Estre from France, the Belgian Laurens Vanthoor and the three-time outright Le Mans winner André Lotterer from Germany. Felipe Nasr from Brasil will be part of the crew for the No. 75 car. His two teammates will also come from the well-known Porsche Penske Motorsport IMSA line-up. They will be announced at a later date. For the No. 38 entry, the Hertz Team JOTA customer outfit has nominated works driver António Félix da Costa from Portugal, Will Stevens from the UK and Yifei Ye. The racing driver from China receives support from Porsche Motorsport Asia-Pacific.

The 24 Hours of Le Mans was first contested in France 100 years ago. The 91st running will be held on 10/11 June. In the bid for overall victory in the new Hypercar class, Porsche will go up against manufacturers such as Ferrari, Cadillac, Toyota and Peugeot.

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