

Porsche aims for 20th Le Mans victory

15/02/2026 With its new 963 hybrid race car, Porsche returns to fight for overall victories in the world's major endurance races.

The motorsport department of the Stuttgart-based car manufacturer is pursuing a clear goal with the newly developed Porsche 963: the 500 kW (680 PS) race car is intended to continue the sports car manufacturer's long tradition of success at the 24 Hours of Le Mans, but also at the US endurance classics in Daytona and Sebring. Porsche has already won the overall classification 19 times on the Circuit des 24 Heures in France, making it the record holder – most recently with the high-tech 919 Hybrid race car, which triumphed three times in a row from 2015 to 2017. The aim now is that the return to the top class of prototype racing will result in a unique all-round success: Porsche's 20th overall victory at Le Mans would coincide with the 100th anniversary of the traditional event in 2023. The organisers are expecting over 250,000 spectators to attend this major motorsport festival in France on the weekend of 10-11 June. By competing in the 91st edition of the classic race, Porsche would also like to take the anniversary trophy, which weighs some 70 kilograms, back home to Zuffenhausen.

V8 engine with the RS Spyder's DNA

Those responsible for the carmaker's motorsport activities are focusing on high cost efficiency. The Porsche 963 complies with the new LMDh regulations. The "**L**e **M**ans **D**aytona **h**ybrid" prototypes are based on chassis from selected external suppliers. In the case of the 963, they are supplied by Canadian specialist Multimatic. The hybrid component delivering up to 50 kW (68 PS) is a standard system. This reduces the high cost of in-house development. The conventional drive of the new prototype racing car is provided by a 4.6-litre twin turbo engine based on the V8 unit of the 918 Spyder super sports car. The DNA of this high-revving power unit goes back to the legendary RS Spyder, with which Porsche and Team Penske won all the titles in the American Le Mans Series from 2006 to 2008.

Porsche faces renowned competition

The new Porsche Penske Motorsport works team will be fielding two of its 330 km/h race cars each in the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) and the North American IMSA series. A total of 18 races in eight countries on three continents lie ahead. The major highlights are the 24-hour race in Daytona, which was held on 28-29 January, and in Le Mans in June. There will also be great classics, such as the 12-hour race in Sebring, the "Petit Le Mans" on the Road Atlanta and the traditional 6-hour race at Spa-Francorchamps, Belgium.

The ten-man driver line-up is both strong and experienced. In addition to the former Formula 1 driver Felipe Nasr from Brazil, it also includes Le Mans winners Nick Tandy from Great Britain and André Lotterer from Duisburg, Germany. The two Porsche 963 for the World Endurance Championship, including the 24 Hours of Le Mans, are being prepared in a new operations centre in Mannheim, Germany. At the US location of the Porsche partner Team Penske in Mooresville in the state of North Carolina, work was also in full swing over the New Year. The first race, the famous 24 Hours of Daytona in Florida, was held on the last weekend in January. To prepare to take on prestigious rivals from BMW, Cadillac and the Honda subsidiary Acura, for example, the Porsche 963 had previously completed almost 30,000 test kilometres – nevertheless, both cars lost ground due to technical defects. In the WEC hypercar top class Porsche will also be competing against cars from Ferrari, Toyota and Peugeot.

Customers take over from the first year

With the introduction of the new rules, endurance racing is about to enter a new era. This is reminiscent of the glorious Group C days in the 1980s. Some 40 years ago, Porsche set the benchmark with the 956 and the 962. At that time, the German works team and numerous professional customer teams won virtually every trophy there was to be won. Porsche would now like to continue this tradition: the 963 is to be made available for partner teams from the 2023 season onwards. In this debut year, experienced racing teams such as Hertz Team Jota, JDC Miller MotorSports and Proton Competition have already decided on the racing car from Weissach.

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