

Porsche 911 GT3 R wins LMGT3 debut at Le Mans

16/06/2024 The 2024 Le Mans 24-hour race ended on Sunday at 4 pm with the 111th class win for a Porsche racing car. Works driver Richard Lietz, Morris Schuring and Yasser Shahin took the flag first in the new LMGT3 category in Manthey EMA's Porsche 911 GT3 R.

In the Hypercar class, Porsche Penske Motorsport's No. 6 crossed the finish line in fourth place overall as the best-placed 963. The No. 5 sister car and the two hybrid prototypes fielded by the Hertz Team Jota customer team also finished in the top 10.

Wild weather characterised the 92nd edition of the 24 Hours of Le Mans. A record crowd of 329,000 witnessed this year's endurance classic. Torrential rain saw the race director deploying the safety cars and neutralising the field. Further showers with about two hours left on the clock and during the final moments of the race pushed the battle for glory to the extreme. Thanks to a perfect strategy and strong driving performances, Richard Lietz from Austria, the Dutchman Morris Schuring and Yasser Shahin from Australia crossed the finish line first in the LMGT3 class without any major incidents. After 24 hours, the 911 GT3 R from Manthey EMA held a one-lap lead over its hottest pursuers. The sister

vehicle fielded by Manthey PureRxcing had been at the top of the new GT3 class during the first half of the race but ultimately finished in 14th after a technical issue.

“To be the first manufacturer to win at Le Mans with a GT3 race car is a unique story that nobody can take away from us,” says a delighted Sebastian Golz, Project Manager Porsche 911 GT3 R. “That's a chapter that we wrote in collaboration with all of our colleagues in Weissach. It was a new challenge for us. Congratulations to the Manthey EMA team, as well, the teamwork ran brilliantly. Things are also looking very good for us in the world championship standings, we managed to secure a lot of points. It's a shame the number 92 911 GT3 R had technical problems. Of course, we'll do a deep dive into that data afterwards. Now, it's time to go for the world championship title.”

“I'm thrilled with Manthey EMA's class victory in the LMGT3 class,” reflects Thomas Laudenbach. The Vice President Porsche Motorsport adds: “With this triumph, Porsche has cemented itself even further at the top of the GT3 classification in the WEC. Huge compliments to the team from the Eifel. This is a big win for Porsche! In light of the overall standings, I'd first like to extend my congratulations to Ferrari on their second consecutive Le Mans win. The top class was an extremely close battle. We saw multiple wheel-to-wheel duels, and then there was the ever-changing weather. It was no doubt a treat for the fans, but not so much for us as a works team. We'd hoped for more than fourth place. First, we'll let the experience sink in and then we'll get down to analysing the data. Because one thing is clear: Porsche competes at Le Mans to win.”

Polesitter Kévin Estre from France, André Lotterer from Germany and Laurens Vanthoor from Belgium battled for a spot on the podium until the end in the No. 6 car. At the flag, the best-placed works-run Porsche 963 was a mere 1.167 seconds off third place. The sister car shared by Australian Matt Campbell, Michael Christensen from Denmark and Frenchman Frédéric Makowiecki lost touch with the leading pack during the night, with the No. 5 finally crossing the finish line in sixth. For the No. 4 entry, the dream of a Le Mans victory was shattered at 9:15 am on Sunday. Brazilian Felipe Nasr slid sideways into the barriers near the Indianapolis curves, forcing the vehicle into retirement. Previously, Nasr and his teammates Mathieu Jaminet from France and Nick Tandy from Great Britain had dropped back after several penalties and a repair stop due to a shunt with another driver.

“Congratulations to Ferrari, and also to our team: we were so close to big success,” states Urs Kuratle, Director Factory Motorsport LMDh. “That said, we must admit that we weren't entirely without error today. We missed the podium by a few metres. Our Porsche 963 had the potential; our drivers and the whole team did an exemplary job. I'd like to thank them for that. We'll be back next year.”

“A very rainy 24 Hours of Le Mans has come to an end,” says Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport. “Our number 6 and 5 cars pulled out all stops during the last four hours. Our crew also pushed the strategic limits to the edge when it came to tyre choice. We really wanted to challenge Ferrari and Toyota for victory. The best position for our number 6 is fourth place. We had set ourselves higher goals. Still, things went much better than last year. And another positive: our team managed to earn a lot of points towards the World Endurance Championship and consolidate our lead.”

With these results, Porsche has defended its first place in the FIA WEC manufacturers' championship. The driver crews of the No. 6 and No. 5 racing cars head to round five of the season on July 14 in São Paulo (Brazil) ranking first and fifth. In the LMGT3 championship, the Le Mans class winners Lietz, Schuring and Shahin have advanced to first place in their class. Their brand and teammates Klaus Bachler from Austria, Joel Sturm from Germany and Alex Malykhin from the UK are just three points behind in third place.

Bad luck plagued the two customer teams Hertz Team Jota and Proton Competition with their Porsche 963 cars. The British team's No. 12 entry put in an inspired fight to ultimately take the flag in eighth overall. The vehicle needed a complete rebuild after an accident in the final practice session on Wednesday. The No. 38 sister car driven by ex-Formula 1 world champion Jenson Button wrapped up the race in ninth after several penalties. Proton Competition's No. 99 entry was hit with some technical issues and ultimately finished the race in 16th place.

Further comments on the race

Nicolas Raeder (Managing Director at Manthey): "This is Manthey's fifth Le Mans class win after 1999, 2013, 2018 and 2022. It was super exhausting, but as always it was also a very special event and a great honour. When Wolfgang Porsche came over to congratulate me, that was the moment the tears started. The decisive factor was the combination of drivers, engineers and mechanics – the whole team. Many people believe that success depends on one specific factor. But it's the whole team that makes it happen."

Morris Schuring (Porsche 911 GT3 R #91): "It was a dream come true for me! I'm only 19, so I didn't even dare to think about winning a class at my first Le Mans start! I think we drove an almost flawless race with my teammates and the Manthey squad. No mistakes, no penalties and almost always the right tyre choice – that feels like the textbook example of a successful 24-hour race. We can be proud of that."

Kévin Estre (Porsche 963 #6): "Fourth place and missing out on the podium by just one second – that's not the result we were aiming for. We were in it to win and drove a good race with just one mistake in tyre choice in the early stages. While we fought our way back up the order, in the end, we couldn't find the pace we needed to be in contention for overall victory. We must keep learning and come back stronger next year."

Michael Christensen (Porsche 963 #5): "That was a tough race. We made a lot of good strategic decisions, but we made a bad mistake at the midway mark. We stayed out too long on slicks when there was too much water on the track. At the same time, we must recognise how strong our rivals were. Our performance was better than last year but there are still some areas where we need to improve."

Nick Tandy (Porsche 963 #4): "The accident in the morning brought an abrupt end to a tough race for us. From the outset, our number 4 was plagued by penalties, mistakes and contact – totally abnormal

for us. I'm not at all blaming my teammate Felipe Nasr. Anyone driving on cold slick tyres on a track that's still damp is bound to quickly fly off. Such an accident isn't unusual. Le Mans 2024 came to a premature end for us. We're so disappointed. Now we're looking ahead: fortunately, we'll be back in the Porsche 963 next weekend at the IMSA race in Watkins Glen."

Will Stevens (Porsche 963 #12): "There are two sides to the coin of this result. To finish the race on the lead lap and without any technical problems – if someone had offered us that on Saturday, we would have accepted without hesitation. On the other hand, we didn't come here to finish eighth. We had problems with our race pace. The accident on Wednesday was a major setback. Big praise to the entire team."

Jenson Button (Porsche 963 #38): "That was one of the toughest races I've ever driven in such conditions! It was truly brutal out there; I was constantly pushing the car to the absolute limit and couldn't relax for a second. Maintaining concentration for such a long time is pretty exhausting. The result isn't what we were hoping for. But we brought both cars home on the lead lap, which is something to be proud of."

Result 24 Hours of Le Mans 2024

Hypercar class:
1. Fuoco/Molina/Nielsen (I/E/DK), Ferrari #50, 311 laps
2. De Vries/Kobayashi/Lopez (NL/J/ARG), Toyota #7, -14.221 seconds
3. Calado/Giovinazzi/Pier Guidi (UK/I/I), Ferrari #51, -36.730 seconds
4. Estre/Lotterer/Vanthoor (F/D/B), Porsche 963 #6, -37.897 seconds
6. Campbell/Christensen/Makowiecki (AUS/DK/F), Porsche 963 #5, -1:45.654 minutes
8. Ilott/Nato/Stevens (UK/F/UK), Porsche 963 #12, 311 laps, -3:02.691 minutes
9. Button/Hanson/Rasmussen (UK/UK/DK), Porsche 963 #38, -3:36.756 minutes
16. Andlauer/Jani/Tincknell (F/CH/UK), Porsche 963 #99, -60 laps
DNF. Jaminet/Nasr/Tandy (F/BR/UK), Porsche 963 #4, -100 laps

LMGT3 class:
1. Lietz/Schuring/Shahin (A/NL/AUS), Porsche 911 GT3 R #91, 281 laps
2. Farfus/Galael/Leung (BR/IDN/UK), BMW #31, -1 lap
3. Olsen/Pedersen/Roda (N/DK/I), Ford #88, -1 lap
14. Bachler/Malykhin/Sturm (A/UK/D), Porsche 911 GT3 R #92, -8 laps

All results and championship standings here.

Video

https://newstv.porsche.com/porschevideos/286080_en_3000000.mp4

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