

Porsche 963: The new hypercar class embodies progress and tradition

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From 2023, the new Porsche 963 will contest the two major endurance racing series in the world: the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC and the IMSA WeatherTech Sportcar Championship. While the hybrid vehicle will compete in the hypercar class in the WEC with Le Mans as the highlight on the calendar, the top category in the North American racing series is called GTP (Grand Touring Prototype). Different concepts are approved in both series. By applying balance of performance measures, the goal is to bring the lap times of the new prototypes with the LMDh designation (Le Mans Daytona hybrid) and the so-called hypercars into a performance window. This so-called BoP classification aims to ensure a level playing field and thus exciting and open competition.

“The new LMDh category allows us to fight for overall victories with a hybrid system at the endurance classics in Le Mans, Daytona and Sebring – without breaking the bank. This project is extremely

attractive for Porsche. Endurance racing is part of our brand's DNA," explains Oliver Blume, CEO at Porsche AG.

Thanks to the LMDh concept, for the first time in decades, identically constructed racing vehicles can compete in the respective top category of long-distance classics on both sides of the Atlantic – within a reasonable cost framework: The LMDh vehicles are based on newly developed LMP2 chassis, the price of which can be capped. In addition, the current regulations essentially freeze unlimited, extensive and expensive developments for at least five years.

This also applies to the standard hybrid components that all manufacturers obtain centrally from Bosch, Xtrac and Williams Advanced Engineering. Does this mean everything is the same in the new LMDh class? Not at all: the regulations allow a great deal of leeway when choosing the combustion engine. The bodywork can reflect the characteristic features of the brand and thus give the racing car a distinctive "face". In short: even in the LMDh category, despite the many identical parts, the Porsche 963 remains clearly recognisable as a Porsche. And the fact that it aims to continue the successful tradition of the legendary 962 is not only obvious by the type designation. The design of the front section shows a clear resemblance to the shape of the series-winning racing car from the 1980s.

"In the medium term, Porsche focuses on three different drive concepts: fully electric vehicles, efficient plug-in hybrids and emotional combustion engines. We want to represent this trilogy in both the development of our cutting-edge road cars and in motorsport," states Michael Steiner, Board Member for Research and Development at Porsche AG. "We use the all-electric drive to contest the FIA Formula E as part of our works commitment, and the highly efficient and emotional combustion unit in GT racing. The LMDh class closes the gap for us. There, powerful hybrid drives – like the ones that power many of our brand's models – go up against each other. The regulations specify the use of synthetic fuels. That's an even greater incentive for me in terms of sustainability."

Since the beginning of the 2022 season, the FIA WEC has been using a biofuel derived from residues from the wine industry. Le Mans organisers ACO and the International Automobile Association FIA have planned further steps in the introduction of environmentally friendly fuels for the coming years. For Porsche, this is an important and at the same time logical step in terms of corporate strategy: In the Porsche Mobil1 Supercup, the current 911 GT3 Cup racing cars run on CO2-reduced fuel. Thanks to this, the engineers at Porsche Motorsport have gained a wealth of vital experience with biofuels.

From 2023, the hybrid prototypes in the new LMDh category will also serve as rolling development labs for environmentally friendly fuels and electrified drive systems at historic venues such as Le Mans, Daytona and Sebring. Thus, modern and future-oriented technologies are combined with great traditions. In this spirit, Porsche follows a tried-and-true path: the new 963 will be available to customers from the first year of competition.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



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